

The Furniture History Society

Newsletter 214

May 2019



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A South German Drawing for a Cupboard with Auricular Carving for the Rijksmuseum

When a group from the Furniture History Society visited Amsterdam in July 2018 on the occasion of the exhibition 'Kwab, Dutch Design in the Age of Rembrandt' at the Rijksmuseum, they spent an afternoon in the museum's print room studying a selection of drawings showing furniture designs. This was no self-evident part of the programme: until recently, the Rijksmuseum had no collection of drawn designs for the decorative arts to speak of, although some fine examples have long been kept among the general holdings of Old Master drawings. However, in order to remedy this situation as best as possible, in 2013 the Rijksmuseum Decorative Art Fund was established by private benefactors, with the express purpose of purchasing European design drawings from 1500–1900.¹ Over the past six years, a considerable number have been acquired, and, although the collection is still in its infancy, it was possible to put together a display of about thirty-five furniture drawings, ranging from a late sixteenth-century Parisian design for a cupboard to some late nineteenth-century German and French material, which sparked lively discussions among the members of the Society.

During their visit, the Furniture History Society group very kindly made a generous

contribution to the Rijksmuseum's Decorative Art Fund. Fittingly, this has been deployed towards the purchase of a German drawing showing a cupboard with 'kwab', or rather *Ohrmuschelstil*, carvings.



Fig. 1 Design for a two-door cupboard. Graphite, pen and brown ink, blue wash, 278 × 184 mm. Southern Germany, c. 1650–75. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; purchased with support from the Furniture History Society and the Decorative Art Fund/Rijksmuseum Fonds

The *Schrank* has two doors, each one carved with a pelican in its piety underneath a large mask-shaped cartouche framing a boy, who pours a liquid from a jug. The cartouches, which are continued in the surrounds of the pelicans, are couched in bold auricular forms, among which masks figure prominently; this ornament is carried through on the central stile, the decoration along the top, and the lower rail, above the bulbous feet.

The cupboard is reminiscent of the designs by Friedrich Unteutsch, a *Schreiner* or furniture-maker from Frankfurt am Main, published in Nuremberg around 1650 in his *Neues Zieratenbuch*.² This has remained the best-known book of designs in this manner, but there were others: around 1670, both Simon Cammermeir and Donath Horn published comparable *Zieratenbücher* in Nuremberg.³ The drawing's large-scale ornament, with its preponderance of masks, is particularly close to some designs in the *Säulenbuch*, or book of columns, published by Georg Caspar Erasmus in 1667, again in Nuremberg.⁴ This proximity was noticed by a former owner of the sheet, perhaps a dealer, who has written Erasmus's name on the back.

It is highly unlikely that Erasmus did in fact produce the drawing, which entirely concentrates on the carved decoration. The cupboard's structure is presented in curiously inept fashion. How the section with the doors is meant to support the pedimented top, or how it rests on the base, which seems too wide, is not elucidated, and the depiction of the extraordinary open pediment is unsatisfactory from a structural point of

view. Its large carved masks are topped by moulded sections, but it is not clear how these terminate at their outer edges. Some shaded parts towards the centre appear to suggest the depth of these mouldings, but again fail to provide clarity, and other structural features of the cupboard are equally cursorily rendered.

By contrast, the carved decoration is convincingly depicted, albeit in rather naive fashion. It seems likely, therefore, that the drawing was made by the sculptor who was to execute it. He may have been inspired by publications such as those by Unteutsch and Erasmus, but he may equally have been an agent himself in the stylistic evolution recorded in those publications. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the German-speaking lands boasted no prominent architects or designers who took the lead in ornamental inventions; many artists and craftsmen were between them responsible for a broad stylistic development, with countless local variations.⁵ Unteutsch himself, a craftsman working in Frankfurt, exemplifies this phenomenon.

Rather than just a fashionable exercise, the drawing is clearly a proposal for a particular piece of furniture, with its specific iconography. The fact that the artist took the trouble to draw both doors, which are each other's mirror image, suggests that it is a presentation drawing, made to convince a patron to commission the piece; for practical use as a design, a single door would have sufficed. Nonetheless, the drawing does to some extent have the character of a design as well. There are passages where the artist has tried out alternative solutions, which,

as they did not please him, he subsequently attempted to obliterate (clearly visible in the right-hand section of the pediment and the lower right-hand corner of the door to the right).

With the exception of some rare documented pieces, the identity of the artists responsible for the carved decoration of German seventeenth-century furniture (or, indeed, that of any other country) is not known, and the drawing will therefore almost certainly remain anonymous, although it may plausibly be localized in southern Germany and dated to about 1650–75. The attempt to link it with Erasmus's name reflects the preoccupation with attributions that is shared by almost every student of drawings. Anonymous sheets receive scant attention, especially if through their artisan quality any search for the artist's identity is doomed to failure. Even published catalogues of museum collections of drawings tend to exclude material of this kind. Judging from the available literature, the design acquired by the Rijksmuseum would appear to be very rare, but comparable ones may lurk unheeded in museums, archives or private collections.

There does exist a type of drawing by German furniture-makers that has been fairly well published: the *Meisterriss*, or drawing, which an aspiring furniture-maker had to provide of the trial piece he proposed to make in order to gain admittance to the guild. This seems to have been obligatory in each city in the German-speaking lands, unlike most other European countries. For example, in the northern and southern Netherlands trial pieces were apparently often made after a

pre-existing drawing, which sometimes served as a model for many years.⁶

More or less complete runs of *Meisterrisse* are preserved from the cities of Mainz,⁷ Ingolstadt,⁸ Bremen,⁹ Oldenburg¹⁰ and Brunswick,¹¹ and isolated examples survive from a number of other towns.¹² With the exception of the series at Ingolstadt, very few date from before the end of the seventeenth century. The nature of the drawings varies significantly from city to city, but they all present a piece of furniture in a detailed frontal view, proportioned according to a specific architectural order. This is often accompanied by a plan, and sometimes also a side view that may incorporate constructional features. The drawings are usually signed and dated, and annotated by the masters from the guild who supervised the making of the trial piece.

The *Meisterrisse* point to the central role played by the art of drawing in the training of furniture-makers in the German-speaking lands. Elsewhere, too, furniture-makers must have acquired at least some ability to draw, but there is less evidence of this, and even beyond the collections of *Meisterrisse*, Germanic furniture drawings seem to survive in greater numbers than those from elsewhere.¹³

As an example that was probably connected with a commission, the drawing acquired by the Rijksmuseum provides information of a different kind than the *Meisterrisse*; it demonstrates the role played by the carvers, who collaborated with furniture-makers. A drawing of a Mainz *Cantourgen*, or writing desk, of about 1760 does the same, but in a

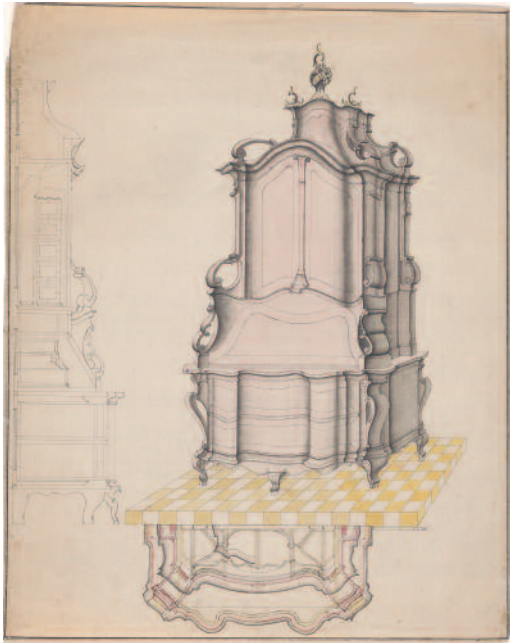


Fig. 2 Design for a writing desk. Pen and black ink, watercolour, 530 × 421 mm. Mainz, c. 1755–70. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; purchased with funds from the Decorative Art Fund/Rijksmuseum Fonds

different way. With its plan and side-view, it conforms to the *Meisterrisse* from that city, but the draughtsman, presumably a cabinet-maker, has here set himself the difficult task of showing the piece at an angle. He has not fully mastered the perspective, and obviously felt himself unequal to the task of drawing carved ornament: the modest scrolled decoration on top of the piece is clearly done in a different hand, which may reflect the division of labour in producing the actual desk.

The Germans were the cabinet-makers of Europe. It is well known that many of the most celebrated *ébénistes* of eighteenth-century Paris hailed from Germany, but this was equally the case in sixteenth-century Florence, seventeenth-century

Antwerp or eighteenth-century Amsterdam. It is all the more surprising that drawings by furniture-makers from these cities seem to be so rare. A coloured drawing of two drop-front secretaires, made in Paris by an artist called Bajjer whose initials appear to read 'J L Th', shows a German at work in the French capital.

He was probably related to the German-born *ébéniste* François Bayer, who was elected master in 1764; in the Residenz in Ansbach, there is a table attributed to this maker with a marquetry top for which a drawing by our Bajjer survives.¹⁴ Our Bajjer almost certainly worked with the well-known *ébéniste* Roger Vandercruse, called Lacroix: another drawing by him, also now in the Rijksmuseum, represents a drop-front secretaire, of which two examples stamped by Vandercruse are known.¹⁵

By acquiring as large and varied a collection of design drawings as possible, the Rijksmuseum hopes to contribute to clarifying their role and importance in ways suggested in this short contribution. The seventeenth-century furniture design bought with the aid of the Furniture History Society is a wonderful addition to the fast-growing group in Amsterdam.

REINIER BAARSEN

- 1 This initiative, as well as a first selection of acquisitions, is discussed in *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*, 64, no. 2 (2016), pp. 99–119 and 140–91.
- 2 Erik Forssman, *Säule und Ornament* (Stockholm, 1956), pp. 197–201, 248, no. 92, fig. 57; Heinrich Kreisel and Georg Himmelheber, *Die Kunst des deutschen Möbels*, vol. 1, *Von den Anfängen bis zum Hochbarock* (Munich, 1981), 194–96.
- 3 Forssmann, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 198–203, 240, 244, nos 14, 50, figs 52, 55, 56.

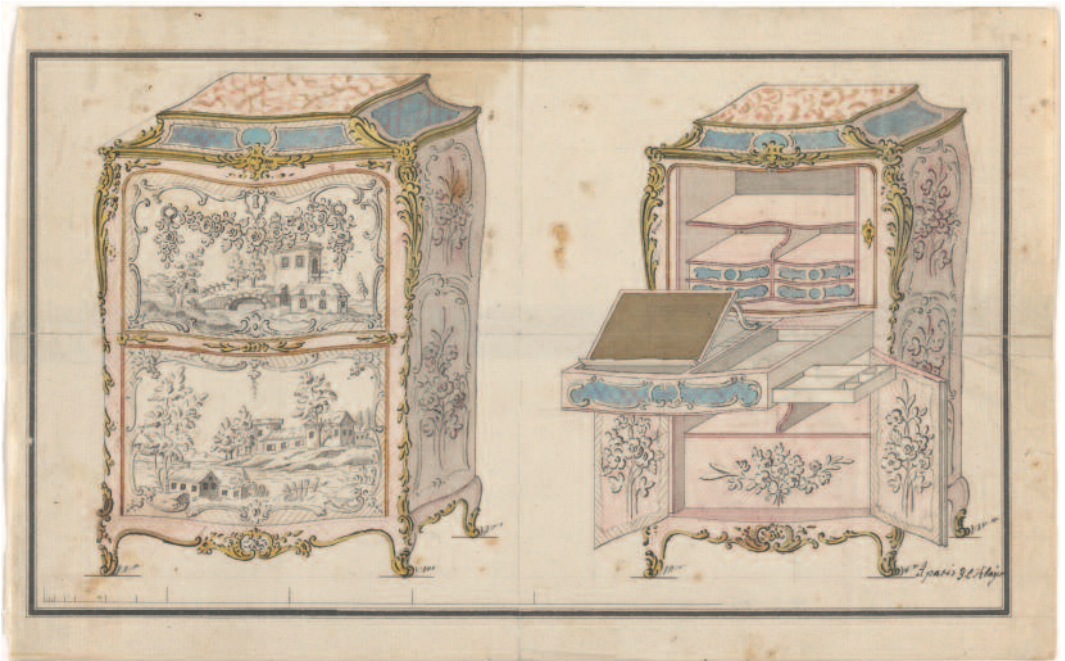


Fig. 3 J. L. Th. [?] Baijer, Two secretaires. Graphite, pen and black ink, watercolour, 183 × 292 mm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, purchased with funds from the Decorative Art Fund / Rijksmuseum Fonds

- 4 Forssmann, op. cit. (note 2), p. 242, no. 28.
- 5 For a brief summary in English of this situation, see Reinier Baarsen, *Kwab. Ornament as Art in the Age of Rembrandt* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2018), pp. 228–37.
- 6 C. Willemijn Fock, 'Master-pieces and Marks of the Leiden Furniture Guilds in the Eighteenth Century', *Furniture History*, XXI (1985), 61–67; Johan de Haan, 'Hier ziet men uit paleizen'. *Het Groninger interieur in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Assen, 2005), pp. 76–77, 135, 145–46, figs 11, 51; J. Vandenbrugge, 'Uitgetekende meesterproeven van de schrijnwerkers te Antwerpen (1693), te Leuven (1744) en te Mechelen', *Antiek*, 22 (1987–88), 227–36.
- 7 Fritz Arens, *Meisterrisse und Möbel der Mainzer Schreiner* (Mainz, 1955).
- 8 Uta-Christiane Bergemann, *Die Meisterrisse der Ingolstädter Schreiner 1617–1742* (Ingolstadt, 1999).
- 9 V. C. Habicht, 'Die Meisterzeichnungen der Möbeltischler im Besitze des Gewerbemuseums zu Bremen', *Der Cicerone*, 5 (1913), 865–78.
- 10 W. Dieck, 'Die Entwürfe zu Meisterstücken Oldenburgischer Tischler im Landesmuseum', *Oldenburger Jahrbuch* (1927), pp. 303–18.
- 11 Franz-Josef Christiani, *Schreibmöbelentwürfe zu Meisterstücken Braunschweiger Tischler aus der 1. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Brunswick, 1979); Andrea Winter, *Meisterstücke der Braunschweiger Tischlergilde. Die grossen Braunschweiger Schränke von 1685 bis 1789*, dissertation (Brunswick, 1995), pp. 81–89.
- 12 See Bergemann, op. cit. (note 8), p. 37. In addition, the Focke-Museum in Bremen holds a series of three eighteenth-century *Meisterrisse* from an unidentified city in Northern Germany.
- 13 See, for example, Ellen Redlefsen, 'Randfragen zur Geschichte des Möbels in Schleswig-Holstein', *Nordelbingen*, 42 (1973), 70–84, for a survey of furniture drawings from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, made in various cities in Schleswig-Holstein.
- 14 Christoph Graf von Pfeil, *Die Möbel der Residenz Ansbach* (Munich-London-New York, 1999), pp. 204–09, cat. no. 74.
- 15 Inv. no. RP-T-2017-3-9; one of the secretaires, which is closely related to those depicted in the drawing in Fig. 3, is illustrated in Alexandre Pradère, *Les ébénistes français de Louis XIV à la Révolution* (Paris, 1989), p. 286, fig. 309.

Save the Dates

Annual Lecture, Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J OBE

'Fait à Paris' and Made for Dresden. The Furniture of the *Ébéniste* Jean-Pierre Latz in the Saxon Court Collection

TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2019

6 PM FOR 6.30 PM START

Christiane Ernek-van der Goes, Research Assistant at the Kunstgerwerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts) in Dresden, will give this year's lecture, drawing on the work of the research and restoration project 'Jean-Pierre Latz. Fait à Paris' that she is conducting in a team together with conservators and natural scientists.

Jean-Pierre Latz (c. 1691–1754), a native of the Cologne region, became one of the best-known furniture-makers of the Rococo period in Paris. He had a strongly personal style, producing flamboyant pieces in wood and bouble marquetry; he defied Parisian guild regulations to make his own gilt-bronze mounts, often elaborately sculptural in form.

Though working in Paris and having purchased the status of an 'Marchand



ébéniste privilégié du roi suivant la Cour et des Conseils', no direct connection to the French court can be drawn. However, he supplied highly luxurious pieces to courtly patrons in other European states, including the Elector Augustus III of Saxony (also King of Poland) and his first minister, Count Brühl, as well as to Frederick II of Prussia and to Marie Louise Élisabeth de Bourbon, Duchess of Parma. The Dresden Collection — unique in its composition and quantity as well as its well preserved authentic conditions — includes some of his most dramatic pieces, some of them authenticated by handwritten short messages, including his signature and the date of manufacturing.

Admission to the lecture is free, but attendance is by ticket only, which must be acquired in advance. Please apply to the Events Secretary. Numbers are limited to 90.

Annual General Meeting & Works in Progress East India Club, 16 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LH

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2019

11.00 AM–1.00 PM

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30 June 2019 will be held in the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00 am (coffee from 10.30 am). Details on the meeting and accompanying talks will be published in the August *Newsletter* and on the FHS website.

Call for Papers

The fifth Research Seminar for emerging scholars will be held at the Wallace Collection on Friday, 22 November, the day before the AGM. The seminar will provide an exceptional opportunity for young scholars to meet and discuss their work with members of the Furniture History Society while contributing to the development of new research in the field of furniture history.

The Grants Committee invites submissions from PhD students, post-doctorates and emerging museum scholars showing new research in the history of British, Continental and American furniture of any period. We are particularly interested in research on the transmission of design and manufacture as a result of immigration and emigration to and from the different countries.

Applicants are requested to send a current CV and a 300-word abstract outlining the topic of a 20 minute paper to grants@furniturehistorysociety.org by 1 July, 2019.

For more information, contact Jill Bace, Grants Secretary, at the email address above.

New Subscription Rates

At the Annual General Meeting, members approved an increase in the Society's subscription rates to take effect from 1 July 2019. The new rates are overleaf.

Members who have supplied the Society with their email addresses will have received a reminder telling them how to renew online using the new renewals page on the Society's website and providing them with a unique membership number.

Membership Category	Subscription Rate
UK Sole membership	£60 (or £55 if paid by direct debit)
UK Young Sole membership (aged under 35)	£35 (or £30 if paid by direct debit)
UK Joint membership (i.e., two people receiving one mailing at the same address)	£70 (or £65 if paid by direct debit)
UK Institutional or Corporate membership	£80
International Sole membership	£75 (\$100, €85)
International Young Sole membership (aged under 35)	£45 (\$60, €50)
International Joint membership	£85 (\$115, €95)
International Institutional or Corporate membership	£100 (\$130, €115)

Members will need this number, and their email address, to renew online.

To ensure that members renew at the correct rate, please note the methods of payment and the action required in each case.

Direct Debit. No action is required. Your bank account will be debited at the new rate on or soon after 1 July.

Standing Order. Please inform your bank of the increased sum required. Members who pay in this way may like to note that their subscription is reduced by £5 per annum if they switch to a direct debit. To do this please instruct your bank to cancel the standing order, and log on to the Society's website www.furniturehistorysociety.org/membership for a direct debit instruction form.

Credit/Debit Card. You may now pay online at the Society's website www.furniturehistorysociety.org/membership. Please note that if you are paying online by a debit/credit card, you will be offered the opportunity to pay in advance for up to three years.

Cheque. We strongly encourage members to use the online facility to pay by debit/credit card or to set up a direct

debit. To pay by cheque, please send it by post to the Society's Finance Officer, Keith Nicholls, 37 Railway Road, Teddington TW11 8SD together with your name and address. Please note that payment by direct debit is only available to members with UK bank accounts.

If you have any questions about the correct rate for you, or are unsure of the payment method you currently use, please contact the Society's Finance Officer, Keith Nicholls, at finance@furniturehistorysociety.org or +44 (0)7951 211 996.

Rules

At the recent Special General Meeting, the Rules were amended so as to enable the Society to strike-off members who are more than eight months in arrears as, in certain cases, it was possible for back-sliders to receive two copies of the *Journal* without having paid a subscription. Hard copies of the new Rules are being distributed to all members. In addition, a link may be found on the Society's website at www.furniturehistorysociety.org/about-us/ or you may obtain a hard copy by post from the Finance Officer.

GRAHAM MANEY (1941–2018)



The Furniture History Society's inaugural meeting took place at Fielden House, Westminster, on 23 October 1964. When its first *Newsletter* was issued, on 1 March 1965, Lindsay Boynton, Honorary Secretary, was able to report that the publication of the first volume of the Society's journal was well in hand, and later that year *Furniture History*, edited by Geoffrey Beard, made its first appearance with, on the verso of its title, a minuscule printer's credit to 'W. S. MANEY AND SON LTD. LEEDS'. So began a relationship with Graham Maney, which was to last over fifty years, and which was commemorated on 28 March 2018 by a reception given by the Society's President, Sir Nicholas Goodison, at which Graham, guest of honour, was presented with the Honorary Life Membership of the Society.

The Maney firm of printers was founded by Graham Maney's grandfather in 1900. From his earliest years, Graham was fascinated by printing, working on the shop floor in school holidays, before

entering printing college. The firm had specialized in the production of learned journals: notably the Modern Humanities Research Association *Style Guide, Notes for Authors and Editors* (Leeds, 1971) was not only printed by Maney's, but its co-editor was A. S. Maney, Graham's father. Conscientious and meticulous care was a hallmark of the Maney approach, and Graham carried on this tradition. But he was also open to innovation, fascinated by technical developments, although careful to assess their reliability and merits before committing himself, and determined to fight for the survival of his industry through decades when the power of the unions had got out of hand.

No doubt all the journals on which he worked would attest to his care and interest but, having brought it into the world, Graham Maney always expressed a special fondness for *Furniture History*, and its successive editors all developed a special fondness for him. In March 1987, he took over the production of the previously cyclostyled *Newsletter* with a new design (No. 87, edited by Judith Goodison) and that design lasted until August 2015 (No. 199, edited by Matthew Winterbottom and Elizabeth Jamieson). He also produced all the Society's Annual Reports and other papers required for Annual General Meetings, as well as occasional ephemera such as membership leaflets. But such contributions, vital albeit run-of-the-mill, pale into insignificance

beside Graham's bold decision to take on the Society's monumental *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660–1840*, edited by Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert (Leeds, 1984), on whose title page W. S. Maney & Son Ltd is listed as publisher, together with the Society. With over a thousand densely packed double-columned pages, this was a prodigious achievement, and its success demonstrates that Graham's courage was matched by his shrewdness of instinct. Twelve years later, remarkably, again as co-publisher, he produced Christopher Gilbert's *Pictorial Dictionary of Marked London Furniture 1700–1840* (Leeds, 1996), with over a thousand illustrations on over five hundred pages, another brave success.

In 1999, Graham Maney left W. S. Maney & Son, which soon became 'Maney Publishing' (taken over by Taylor & Francis in 2015, it was dissolved in 2017), and set up a consultancy, Outset Services Ltd. His record and reputation were such that many learned journals soon entered his fold. In 2000, *Furniture History* moved its printing to Oblong Creative Ltd, with which Graham had a close relationship and, happily, he was again effectively in the saddle until his retirement in 2017 after the production of *Furniture History*, LIII. Having worked with Graham as an editor of *Furniture History* (1987–92), and on two Society books, *Printed Furniture Designs Before 1650* (1974) and, over a generation later, *British and Irish Inventories* (2010, small supplement 2012), the present writer can attest to Graham's total

professionalism and integrity: what he recommended was invariably practical and judicious, what he promised he delivered promptly and efficiently without fuss or display, and his advice in practical matters was provided calmly and clearly. Firm on occasion, but never with animus, he also evinced a wry appreciation of human vagaries.

Those of whom it can be said 'no one had a bad word' can sound bloodless and anodyne. Certainly, Graham Maney's demeanour was quintessentially modest. But there were other sides: lean and athletic, he was throughout his life a passionate and adventurous walker and climber with both family and friends, spanning the Lake District and Peru, the Pyrenees and Austria, the Grand Canyon and northern India, including Bhutan. He was equally a keen sailor from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean. The further destinations became more accessible after his retirement in 1999, but only took up part of his time and energy: much of the rest was devoted to service as a magistrate, including youth courts, and he rose to become chairman of his bench. After the retirement age he served on an Independent Prison Monitoring Board, and after that he worked for Victim Support. Such committed altruism was typical of the man. The Furniture History Society was indeed fortunate to be able to rely on Graham Maney for over half a century.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

(with acknowledgements to Anne Maney)

Future Society Events

Bookings

For places on visits please apply to the Events Secretary, Beatrice Goddard, with a separate cheque for each event. Alternatively, indicate that you wish to pay online and you will be provided with a link to a payment page and an event reference. Where possible, joining instructions will be dispatched by email, so please remember to provide your email address if you have one. There is no need to send an SAE if you provide a clearly written email address. Applications should only be made by members who intend to take part in the whole programme. No one can apply for more than one place unless they hold a joint membership, and each applicant should be identified by name. If you wish to be placed on the waiting list, please enclose a telephone number where you can be reached. Please note that a closing date for applications for visits is printed in the *Newsletter*. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available. Members are reminded that places are not allocated on a first come, first served basis, but that all applications are equally considered following the closing date. Please email events@furniturehistorysociety.org to apply for events or telephone 07775 907390.

Cancellations

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £10.00 or less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a £10.00 deduction for administrative costs. Please

note that in the rare instances where members cannot pay until the day of a visit, they will still be charged the full amount for the day if cancelling less than seven days before the visit, or if they fail to attend. This is necessary as the Society has usually paid in advance for a certain number of members to participate in, for example, a tour/lunch. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours, and terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

Autumn Study Trip — Plymouth

THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER (PM)–
SUNDAY 13 OCTOBER 2019

A study trip to Plymouth is planned for early autumn, led by Lisa White and Christopher Overton. We will be staying at Dartington Hall in Totnes where, in 1925, Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst started the 'Dartington Experiment', attracting some of the greatest artists, educators and political philosophers of the twentieth century. The rooms face the medieval listed courtyard with easy access to the gardens. Planned visits include those to the National Trust properties of Saltram, Cotehele and Anthony, as well as various private collections. Further details will be published in the early summer and will be sent to members who express their interest.

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 2 AUGUST 2019

Occasional and Overseas Visits

Visit to the Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford

CASTLE LANE, BEDFORD MK40 3XD

TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2019

10.00 AM–4.00 PM

The Higgins, Bedford unites on one site three previous venues: Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford Museum and Bedford Gallery. The Cecil Higgins Museum, as it was formerly known, opened in 1949, housed in the former family home of its founder, the philanthropic brewer, Cecil Higgins (1856–1941). The aim was to house his collection of ceramics, glass and *objets d'art* for the benefit, interest and education of the inhabitants of, and visitors to, Bedford. In 1971, over two hundred pieces of nineteenth-century decorative arts from the celebrated Handley-Read Collection, including the William Burges furniture, were purchased, and in 2005, the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery merged with Bedford Museum.

This visit will concentrate on the furniture from the Handley-Read Collection and also look at some of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pieces acquired as furnishing for the rooms of the Higgins's house. Victoria Partridge, Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art, will introduce the Museum and speak about the acquisition of Handley-Read pieces, and Max Donnelly, Curator of Nineteenth-

Century Furniture at the V&A, will lead our detailed study of the furniture. Members will receive 10% off in the shop.

We will also be visiting the Panacea Museum, which tells the remarkable story of the religious Panacea Society, formed in Bedford in the twentieth century, famous for its healing through water. There we will see the lavish cradle made for the announced child of the prophetess Joanna Southcott in 1811 by the leading firm, Seddons. There will be an opportunity to visit the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century furniture, including that in the 'Founder's House'.

COST: £60 INCLUDES LUNCH & TEA / COFFEE

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: FRIDAY 24 MAY 2019



The 'Zodiac Settle', 1869–70. The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford

Ronald Phillips: A Modern, International Antiques Business at Work

26 BRUTON STREET, LONDON W1J 6QL

MONDAY 1 JULY 2019

2.00 PM–4.00 PM

Ronald Phillips was founded in 1952, a period when war-time austerity was coming to an end and a demand for antiques grew steadily. It was at the Chelsea Antiques Fair at Chelsea Town Hall that Ronald Phillips had his first antiques fair, and the tradition of exhibiting at antiques fairs carries on today. The first showrooms in Old Brompton Road were opened later that year. The company retained the same showrooms until 1974 when Ronald Phillips Ltd moved to larger, more prominent premises in Bruton Street in London's illustrious Mayfair.

This afternoon visit includes a tour of the Gallery, Library and Research Office, as well as the Restoration and Upholstery Workshops. Attendees will receive a

complimentary Ronald Phillips catalogue of previous years and also current catalogues will be available for purchase.

COST: £28 (INCLUDING TEA/COFFEE)

LIMIT: 15

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

FRIDAY 7 JUNE 2019

Study Day at Milton Hall

MILTON PARK, PETERBOROUGH
PE3 9HD

TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

10.30 AM–4.00 PM

Milton Hall was the principal seat of the Earls Fitzwilliam until 1782 when the 4th Earl inherited Wentworth Woodhouse.

With a late sixteenth-century core, it was transformed externally and internally by Henry Flitcroft (1745–50) and Sir William Chambers (1773). It retains much outstanding (and some intriguing) furniture, mainly but not exclusively English, spanning the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, in lacquer, giltwood, marquetry and more. Makers' and designers' names to conjure with include James Moore, Matthias Lock and Wright & Elwick. This Study Day will be led by Lucy Wood and Mia Jackson.

and designers' names to conjure with include James Moore, Matthias Lock and Wright & Elwick. This Study Day will be led by Lucy Wood and Mia Jackson.

COST: £65 (INCLUDING LUNCH)

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR

APPLICATIONS: FRIDAY 26 JULY 2019





North and South Front, Milton Hall

Overseas Study Trip to the Netherlands

THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER–SUNDAY
22 SEPTEMBER 2019

This Study Weekend, organized by Steven Coerne (Keeper of the Royal Furniture) and Saskia Broekema, will cover traditional country-house furniture collections, with an international touch. Visits will include those to Amerongen Castle, which is associated with the Dukes of Portland, and thus has an English connotation, and De Haar Castle, which is connected to the Rothschild family. At Huis Doorn, we will see a large collection of German furniture from the Imperial collections in and around Berlin. Jachthuis Sint Hubertus (a hunting lodge near Otterloo) is closely related to the collectors of the Kröller-

Müller family, and we will finish the trip with a visit to an early twentieth-century ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ at the world heritage site Rietveld Schröderhuis in Utrecht.

Further details will be published in the early summer and will be sent to members who express their interest.

**CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 19 JULY 2019**



Aerial view of De Haar Castle

Other Notices

Please note that these events/notices are not organized/issued by the Furniture History Society. Information/booking instructions will be found under individual items.

Study Day: A Celebration of Ernest Gimson at Marchmont House

MARCHMONT HOUSE,
BERWICKSHIRE

SATURDAY 11 MAY 2019

Ernest Gimson (1864–1919) was famously described by Pevsner as ‘the greatest of the English artist-craftsmen’. Gimson was an architect, a maker of plasterwork and chairs, and a designer of bookbindings, embroidery and metalwork, but is probably best known for his furniture.

This study day focuses on brand-new research on Gimson’s life and work, the context of the British Arts and Crafts Movement, in which he was a central figure, and some contemporary furniture-makers whose own work has been affected by ‘the Gimson Tradition’. Marchmont House, in the Scottish Borders, is home to a superb collection of pieces by Gimson and his contemporaries, which will be available for close study. An additional attraction is a rare opportunity on Sunday 11 May to see the unusual furniture and metalwork of Gimson, Sidney Barnsley and Robert Weir Schultz at the Old Place of Mochrum, an ancient double tower house in a remote setting in Wigtownshire. Tickets are available online via Eventbrite: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ernest-gimson-celebration-marchmont-house-tickets-54717864606



Exhibition: Antique Dealers: Buying, Selling and Collecting

STANLEY & AUDREY BURTON
GALLERY, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
ENDS SATURDAY 25 MAY 2019

The exhibition focuses on three well-known dealerships — Phillips of Hitchin, Ronald A. Lee, and Roger Warner; it is based on the extraordinary antique dealer archives that have been generously donated to the Brotherton Library Special Collections in the last few years. It brings together some of the archive material back into dialogue with some objects from Temple Newsam, Leeds, as well as some wonderfully ‘quirky’ things from Roger Warner’s private collection and loaned by members of his family. See <https://library.leeds.ac.uk/events/event/1900/galleries/186/antique-dealers-buying-selling-and-collecting>

Exhibition: Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Making the Glasgow Style

WALKER ART GALLERY, LIVERPOOL
FRIDAY 15 MARCH–MONDAY 26
AUGUST 2019

Rediscover the life and work of architectural genius, designer and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) alongside the work of his closest friends and contemporaries in this must-see exhibition. Featuring more than 250 objects, ranging from furniture and embroidery to stained glass, metalwork and architectural drawings, the exhibition explores the movement that became known as ‘The Glasgow Style’ — the only Art Nouveau movement in the UK. For more information, see: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/exhibitions/mackintosh/index.aspx

Book Reviews

Suggestions for future reviews and publishers' review copies should be sent to Simon Swynfen Jervis, 45 Bedford Gardens, London W8 7EF (tel. 020 7727 8739; email: ss.jervis@btopenworld.com).

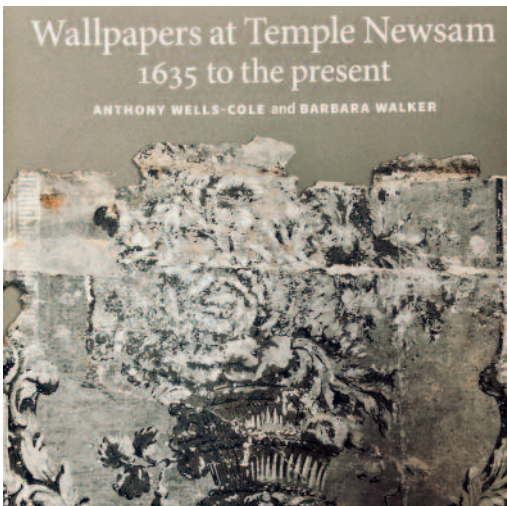
ANTHONY WELLS COLE and BARBARA WALKER, *Wallpapers at Temple Newsam 1635 to the Present* (Published by the Leeds Art Fund, 2018. Available from LAF Publications, Temple Newsam House, Leeds LS15 0AE. Price £50.00 inc. p&p UK only. Overseas postage by request). 385 pp., 774 col., 18 b.&w. illus. ISBN 978-0-9547979-5-9

Furniture History Society members will be familiar with the rich collections of Temple Newsam, the impressive Tudor-Jacobean mansion outside Leeds, through the work of FHS founder and chairman, Christopher

Gilbert, and his 1978 catalogue *Furniture at Temple Newsam and Lotherton Hall*, and as the home of the Chippendale Society collection. Less well known, but no less significant, is its collection of wallpapers, which is deservedly the subject of a scholarly and beautifully illustrated new catalogue by Anthony Wells-Cole and Barbara Walker.

The wallpaper collection is of national importance, complementing those of the V&A and Whitworth Art Gallery. Its distinctive quality derives from Temple Newsam's hybrid character, both a historic house, with a long and architecturally layered history, and latterly, following its acquisition by Leeds Corporation in 1922, a decorative art museum. The wallpaper collection, therefore, comprises finds made during the restoration of the house between 1983 and 2008–09, augmented by broader collecting, encompassing donations from the industry and rescues from threatened properties, which place the Temple Newsam papers in a wider historic context.

What survives is often fragmentary, the outcome of the ephemerality of wallpaper; it can be used to immediate and great decorative effect, but be replaced as quickly when designs and tastes change. Following his retirement as Senior Curator at Temple Newsam, Wells-Cole, assisted by Walker, has spent a decade painstakingly recording and piecing



together the torn and damaged, the concealed and discarded, to produce a history that could easily have been lost.

Indeed, as Wells-Cole concedes in his opening essay on the history of wallpaper at Temple Newsam, the first sixty years of Leeds ownership were unhappy for the medium. This was due in part to the sale of the original furnishings by Lord Halifax, which denied the original function and decoration of rooms. Spaces were remodelled and redecorated to create gallery rooms. It enabled the highly acclaimed modern art exhibitions hosted at the house in the 1940s, but was disastrous for a property whose interior character had been defined since the early 1700s by the brilliant colour and vivid patterns of its wallpapers.

Change was initiated by the discovery of wallpapers in attic rooms during structural repairs in 1979 and led Wells-Cole to a systematic investigation of concealed examples within the house. Hitherto trapped by building modifications, concealed under light switches or floorboards or caught in the strata of subsequent papers, upwards of four hundred pieces revealed a history of domestic decoration. This compelling investigation and the resulting decorative transformation of Temple Newsam is explored in the first part of the catalogue and arranged as a tour of the house. The strength of this approach is that it maintains the extraordinary story of successive decorative layering, which would otherwise be lost were a chronological structure applied. Each entry is supported by inventory extracts and historic photographs as well as

contemporary photographs of the nineteen interiors hung with replica papers by Zoffany and Allyson McDermott. A novel highlight is the Chinese wallpaper of the Blue Drawing Room, a gift of the Prince of Wales following a visit in 1806, embellished by birds cut from John James Audubon's *Birds of America*.

The catalogue's later chapters concern collection samples from Ashburnham Place featuring mid-nineteenth-century hand-block prints of medieval designs by Duppa & Collins and papers donated by Roger Warner, grandson of Metford Warner, owner of the Victorian company, Jeffrey & Co. The latter is particularly fascinating, for amongst the many historic papers are a rare group of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Netherlandish embossed leather fragments used to inform new Jeffrey & Co. designs, and a star of their production, Walter Crane's spectacular gilt leather and frieze design, 'Peacocks and Amorini' (1879).

The wallpapers that comprise the concluding chapter arise from a broad range of British town and country houses. Arranged chronologically, they offer a wider story of wallpaper production from earliest seventeenth-century monochrome block-printed papers inspired by textile designs, through bold stylized floral designs of the eighteenth century to nineteenth-century mass production and the commissioning of 'heritage' papers in the later twentieth century, notably the 1983 Zoffany wallpaper pattern book, *The Temple Newsam Collection of Original Wallpapers*. Subtle and rare delights include a drawer front lined with seventeenth-century block-printed paper and a chimney-board that

reveals changes in domestic taste through its strata of nineteenth- and twentieth-century machine-made papers.

Wallpapers at Temple Newsam 1635 to the Present represents an important addition to the study of historic buildings and decorative interiors, and inspiration to current and future curators, conservators and historians about what can be achieved with curiosity, persistence and time.

EMMA SLOCOMBE

JAY ROBERT STIEFEL, *The Cabinet Maker's Account: John Head's Record of Craft and Commerce in Colonial Philadelphia, 1718–1753* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2019). 318 pp., 95 col., 6 b.&w. illus. ISBN 9780871692719. \$85

For anyone interested in early modern craft practices, the discovery of a document such as Philadelphia cabinet-maker John Head's account book (1718–53) is the stuff of dreams: a window on the life and practice of one of those all-too-often silent and anonymous characters, who created the objects over which we love to obsess. The way in which Jay Stiefel has analysed his discovered source and situated it in a social context of intricate merchant networks, their practices and material culture, is a masterclass in furniture history.

For the specialist reader, this study – the culmination of nearly two decades of research – provides the definitive account of Head and will be an essential reference work for research into the furniture trade and broader artisanal and mercantile networks of Philadelphia in the eighteenth century. For the generalist reader, accessible text and beautiful presentation



Dressing table, attributed to the shop of John Head, Philadelphia, c. 1726–37. Black walnut with hard pine and Atlantic white cedar. H. 293/4 in. D. 21 in. Private Collection. Photographed by Sotheby's.

work together provide fascinating insights into life and the decorative arts in early Philadelphia.

The book can be loosely divided into two parts. The first deals with the source's discovery and some essential context. It then moves on to Head's business practice, his workshop, property and home life, including numerous engaging revelations about his lifestyle — from where he chose to consume his drink to his purchase of apples or a new 'Hatt'. Such details greatly enrich our understanding of an eighteenth-century Philadelphia cabinet-maker's life, but also throw light on much broader social and cultural contexts of the time through Stiefel's analysis of the people with whom Head interacted, their leisure activities and business and artisanal practices.

The book's second half looks more closely at the furniture, and thereby

establishes itself as the definitive guide to identifying Head's work. Indeed, thanks to Stiefel's committed examination of the account book and early Philadelphia furniture, there are now over sixty pieces that can be attributed to Head. With detailed analysis of construction and design, Stiefel works through all the main product types that Head provided: from tables to 'badstads', 'cofins' to cradles. This comprehensive discussion is well supported with excellent images — close up and distance shots — and impressively thorough referencing.

Though the overall scholarly contributions of the study are clear, particularly in establishing Head's reputation, there are also numerous aspects, which have completely transformed specific or more discrete fields of study, for example the history of the slat-back chair in Philadelphia. Though

Head did not make chairs, he sold them, and the record of these transactions has made it possible to identify previously unknown chair-makers and turners. The same is true of pewterer Simon Edgell, an early Philadelphia artisan whose circumstances and career have also been exploded into life through Stiefel's rigorous research.

At first glance an account book does not make for the most exciting read, as Adam Bowett points out in the foreword, so it really is only through Stiefel's interpretation, provision of context and forensic level of analysis that this source has been given a voice. Until Stiefel discovered Head's book, this particular 'joyner' was just a name whose lifestyle and work were lost. Thanks to Stiefel's dedication, John Head has been well and truly found.

JENNY SAUNT

Reports on the Society's Events

Members will have noticed that the new *Newsletter* includes many more photographs than before. The Editor would be grateful if members could send **high quality digital photographs, 1MB minimum**, taken during Society visits and events that can be used to illustrate the reports. Where indicated, a longer version of a report is available from the Events Secretary, email: events@furniturehistorysociety.org

Visit to Brighton Pavilion

THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

We gathered at Brighton Pavilion in September to see the conserved and restored interior and furnishings of the Saloon. David Beevers, Keeper of the Royal Pavilion, gave an overview and vital context to the Pavilion and the project. He explained the development of the building by George, Prince of Wales, later George IV, from Henry Holland's original Pavilion of 1787 to John Nash's extravagant oriental design. Nash's creation was supplemented by various stages of interior decoration by Frederick Crace and Robert Jones, all of which was complete by 1823. Each architectural and decorative phase of aggrandisement was linked to the latest increase in the Prince's position. Nash's rebuilding from 1815 followed the Prince's elevation to Regent, and the addition of Robert Jones's Indian-inspired interior decoration to the Saloon in the 1820s for

George as King demonstrated the imperial aspirations of the newly-crowned patron. The principle then and now in the Pavilion's presentation to visitors is luxurious excess. David described the role of Robert Jones (active 1815–38), whose guiding hand as designer of many of the furnishings and interiors can be seen throughout the building, always working within the parameters set by an exacting client.

David explained the long history of collaboration between the curators of Brighton Pavilion and the Royal Collection. Following Queen Victoria's sale

of the Pavilion in 1850, many of its exotic and exuberant objects, fixtures and fittings were re-homed in the new wing of Buckingham Palace built for the Queen's growing family and court, as well as at Windsor Castle and Kensington Palace. From an early date some of these collections began their journey back to Brighton. A significant repatriation by Queen Victoria was the return of the Banqueting Room chandeliers in 1862. George V was responsible for an important milestone, the first return of freestanding furniture rather than fittings, when he gifted a set of blue porcelain and gilt metal *torchères*, again from the Banqueting Room, in recognition of the Pavilion's use as a military hospital for Indian soldiers during the Great War. The opportunity to reunite objects with their original context at Brighton has been the driving force behind many of the restoration projects at the Pavilion.

The Saloon is one such example. Jones's interior of 1823, George IV's final scheme for the room, was a lavish setting for the King's sumptuous entertainments at the Pavilion. A recently loaned Celadon porcelain vase mounted as a pot-pourri with gilt bronze by Samuel Parker takes its place in the centre of the room's bay window, flanked by part of a set of Bailey & Sanders carved giltwood side chairs, all broadly in the positions that they occupied historically and captured in a watercolour image of the room in 1823 from Nash's *Views*.

Two cabinets of c. 1822, on loan from the Royal Collection since 1952, again made by Bailey & Sanders, designed by Robert Jones and with ormolu mounts by Samuel



Bailey & Sanders' carved 'Hillwood' side chairs

Parker, have been conserved by Brighton's conservator Andy Thackray, who was on hand to explain the challenges of working on the cabinets.

Having been restored previously, and with new research informing the recent treatment as well as historic descriptions of the painted surface imitating polished ivory, these cabinets offered knotty issues to resolve: how far to take the conservation work, how interventive an approach to adopt and how to deal sympathetically and consistently with the many layers of the object's decorative history and subsequent treatment.

The crowning glory of the Saloon is undoubtedly the bringing together of original objects with the restored interior. The latter is a showpiece of Regency eclecticism, mixing classical and eastern-inspired decoration, British and French taste, and gold and silver decoration. The restoration of the 1823 interior replaces a twentieth-century scheme of Chinese wallpaper below an earlier *trompe-l'œil* painted sky ceiling. Annabel Westman described the painstaking research and at



Cabinet, c. 1822, by Bailey & Sanders, designed by Robert Jones with ormolu mounts by Samuel Parker, on loan from the Royal Collection

times serendipitous discoveries that led to the recreation of the silk wall panels. The design is French, selected by Robert Jones rather than made by him, and recreated from descriptions of the bird and scroll pattern and colour ('geranium and gold-coloured silk' in an inventory by Jones), the watercolour image of the room in 1823 and archival evidence in the Warner archive, V&A and in Paris. The new silk was woven by Humphries Weaving.

The surrounding wall decoration, often mistakenly thought to be wallpaper, consists of 12,000 individual leaf motifs each applied by hand. This decoration was originally in silver, but has been put back using platinum instead to prevent tarnishing. The design of the curtains and pelmets were taken from the watercolour, with reproduced curtain trimmings by Brian Turner and Heritage Trimmings. The original lotus-leaf pelmet boards are rare

survivals from the stripping of the room in 1847. In amongst this detailed and visually spectacular reconstruction of Jones's 1823 interior, the project team were able to preserve a key piece of evidence of Crace wallpaper relating to an earlier scheme for George when Prince of Wales, concealed discreetly behind a small flap in the new wall scheme.

The blaze of colour and magnificence is completed by the dazzling carpet. The design of the original hand-

knotted Axminster carpet by Jones was recreated by Anne Sowden based on archival and carpet fragments. The original twenty-six colours were reduced to twelve and the carpet is woven rather than hand-knotted, a necessary compromise in order for the carpet to be remade in this country and therefore allow close collaboration between the designer and maker. The design features bright flowerheads and animals, including dragons and two imperial birds, all set within a wide lotus-leaf border. The central sunflower of the carpet is just one example among many within the room of George IV's rich use of iconography personally associated with him, especially emblems of light with all its regal connotations, as well as the King's very close involvement in the minutiae of design. The centre of the room is occupied by an ottoman, a version of the Regency original, simplified to allow it to be used as

visitor seating. Ian Block of A. T. Cronin made the ottoman and curtains and fitted the silk wall panels.

Our visit to the Pavilion was completed by a brief survey of some of the other principal rooms. Some are further examples of the happy alliance between Brighton's restored interiors and Royal Collection loans, including the recent swap of reproductions of the Bailey & Sanders chairs from the Banqueting Room, now in use at Buckingham Palace, and the return of the original chairs from the palace to Brighton. Other rooms suggest the tantalizing potential of further projects to reunite contents. A detailed and stylishly presented exhibition on the first floor of the Pavilion illustrates the research, attention to detail and discoveries that contributed to the Saloon project, including historic and new designs, a dramatic photographic record of the reinstallation of the room's furnishings and decorative scheme, and the display of the one surviving original silk curtain tassel.

TOM BOGGIS

Mount Stewart has had a lot of time, effort and £8 million spent on it in order to conserve the historic interior and fabric of the building. The house was bought in 1744 by the Stewart family. They later became the Vane-Tempest-Stewarts and were awarded the title of Marquess of Londonderry in 1816. The 2nd Marquess, Viscount Castlereagh, was one of Britain's most famous Foreign Secretaries. The 3rd Marquess married Frances Anne-Vane Tempest, a great heiress. He and his wife remodelled and extended the house in the early 1800s.

George Dance the Younger, a pioneer of neo-classicism, designed the West wing, the domed staircase hall and the music room. The magnificent north-facing Palladian portico was designed by William Vitruvius Morrison. Lady Edith Londonderry, a famous political hostess, whose salon was

Autumn Study Weekend in Northern Ireland

FRIDAY 12 OCTOBER–SUNDAY 14
OCTOBER 2018

Mount Stewart

Our tour started at one of the most important houses in Northern Ireland, recently extensively restored by the National Trust. We were warmly greeted by Francis Bailey, Head Curator for the NT in Northern Ireland. She was accompanied by Dr Neil Watt, the House and Collections Manager.

known as 'The Ark', refreshed the house interior in the 1920s and 1930s. Lady Mairi Bury, youngest daughter of the 7th Marquess, was the last of the family to live in the house. She gave Mount Stewart to the National Trust in 1977.

We inspected the important Congress of Vienna table, 1814 (see 'The British Embassy at Palais Starhemberg: Ambassadorial Furniture from the Congress of Vienna at Mount Stewart' by Christopher Rowell and Wolf Burchard, *Furniture History*, LIII (2017)). They believe the table was probably made by Joseph Ulrich Danhauser, the Viennese master. Frances Bailey demonstrated the table's details. Members gathered round for an in-depth discussion on the piece with its intricate gilt-bronze gallery.

We also inspected other furniture mentioned in the Rowell/Burchard report, including a bulky inlaid South German or Austrian walnut writing cabinet, 1721, and the fine and ornate set of twenty 1814 Viennese chairs used at the Congress of Vienna and attributed to Gregor Nutzinger. Recent work revealed small fragments of the original covers in herringbone green silk, which the NT is restoring.

Castle Coole

'The finest example in Ireland of French-inspired interiors are those of James Wyatt's great neo-classical masterpiece,

Castle Coole', wrote the Knight of Glin and James Peill in their book, *Irish Furniture*. The authors in turn quote John Cornforth's remark that Wyatt's interior 'matched its scale with a monumental style of decoration and great restraint in the use of ornament'. We were delighted to be helped again by Frances Bailey of the National Trust, along with the conservator and restorer, Christine Powell Montague. We were also fortunate to go around the house in the company of the Earl of Belmore, whose ancestor built it. Although Castle Coole is in the care of the National Trust, the contents remain in the ownership of Lord Belmore, who succeeded in 1960 and whose family continues to live on the estate. He explained that the extravagance of the furnishings was in part an attempt by the family to assert themselves and to overcome the opprobrium of having opposed the Union with Great Britain in 1800.

Wyatt's outstanding legacy includes chairs in the hall and a set of four white tripod *atheniennes*, four white-painted pier tables with 'French' legs in the upstairs lobby, and the sober library bookcases. In the dining room is his sideboard, two urns on pedestals and a large, fluted mahogany wine cooler in the shape of a Roman sarcophagus, made by John Stewart of Dublin and others.

The 2nd Earl took over a largely unfurnished house. He made up for this in the early 1800s with substantial commissions from John and Nathaniel Preston, Dublin, upholsters and cabinet-makers. Over eighteen years he paid them over £26,000. In addition, they imported furniture from London and supplied

lavish curtains in the Empire style. The prevailing style was Regency splendour, imitating Carlton House as part of the attempt to ingratiate himself with the Prince Regent.

The drawing room has more of the Prestons' gilt furniture. There is also a Broadwood piano, to a design by Sheraton and decorated with Wedgwood jasperware medallions and cameos of about 1804. This was found in an attic in the 1970s. The medallions had been removed, but have now been put back when the piano was restored. David Murdoch, part of the FHS group, was allowed to examine it. The state bedroom was furnished with a spectacular state bed provided by the Prestons in about 1821 for an anticipated visit by George IV, which never materialized. The basement service area retains many of its original cabinets and drawers. There is a rare crane to shift barrels of wine around. Finally, perhaps an FHS first, we looked in on what had been a powdering room, a reminder of a time when the servants wore wigs.

Florence Court

On Sunday, we started at Florence Court. The house was formerly the seat of the Earls of Enniskillen, now owned by the National Trust. Florence Court is named after the wife of Sir John Cole (1680–1726), the Devonian Florence Bourchier Wrey, and is one of the finest surviving Irish Palladian houses. It was built between 1756 and 1764 as a hunting lodge for John and Florence's son, also named John Cole (1709–67), who was created Lord Mount Florence in 1760. He was succeeded by his son, who became the 1st Earl of Enniskillen (1736–1803).

The interiors have Irish marble chimneypieces, including one of green Connemara; silvered and brass fenders sport the Cole coat of arms. Later architectural features are attributed to the Sardinian architect Davis Ducart. Handsome Rococo plasterwork, attributed to Robert West, survives in the principle rooms, although the interiors were restored by Albert Richardson after a fire in 1955. The family demonstrated their support for the Protestant succession by collecting furniture and memorabilia associated with William and Mary. This included a substantial leather-bound chest studded with brass-headed nails forming the initials WM for William III and Mary II (1689–94). Another, with the initials MR, is identified by Olivia Fryman as probably made for Mary of Modena, James II’s Queen, and therefore dates from 1685–88. Both chests are attributed to Richard Pigg, jun., who served as trunk-maker to the Great Wardrobe from the reign of Charles II until his death c. 1706 (Olivia Fryman, ‘Coffer-Makers to the Late Stuart Court, 1660–1714’, *Furniture History*, LII (2016), 1–15; p. 7, fig. 6 illustrates that made for Mary of Modena). These chests may have been acquired by William Willoughby Cole, 3rd Earl of Enniskillen, who collected fossils and was a passionate advocate of the Orange Order.

The National Trust purchased some important Irish furniture for the house, including in the Hall a longcase clock in a mahogany case signed Thomas Sanderson, Dublin, and in the Library a mahogany desk and bookcase, with marquetry-decorated candleholders and pull-out writing drawer on casters. This



Leather-bound chest attributed to Richard Pigg, jun., at Florence Court

compares with examples in the Art Institute, Chicago, and another at the V&A associated with Dean Swift. These are thought to have been made by the Palatinate refugee cabinet-maker John Kirckoffer, established in Dublin, who signed the underside of a drawer on the example in Chicago, which is dated 1732.



Dining Room sideboard at Florence Court

After Lady Enniskillen's death in 1998, the National Trust bought back some furniture taken by the family from the house in 1972. The dining room sideboard was made of mahogany rescued from the ship, the Royal George, which was commissioned in 1756, sunk at Spithead in 1782 and rescued in the early nineteenth century; the capstan-shaped pedestals provide a clue to the previous purpose of the wood used.

The Argory

Our penultimate destination was to another National Trust property. Now known as The Argory, roughly translating from the Irish *Ard Garraidhe* to 'the hill of the garden', it was commissioned under the title of Derrycaw House from the brothers Arthur and John Williamson of Dublin, and building works were completed in 1824. The Argory was home to four successive generations of the MacGeough Bond family and its furnishings reflect this, with layers having been added over time, including European furniture and works of art later inherited from the original McGeough home, Drumsill, that were collected in Europe in the 1820s. The west hall is dominated by a cast-iron stove designed by the Williamson brothers and for which original drawings still survive. The house itself is rich in furnishings, ranging from the plainly domestic to the rare and ornate. Among the latter are a number of pieces of distinction, including a rare cabinet barrel organ, commissioned from James Bishop of London in 1822. Set against the opposing wall is an equally impressive c. 1640 ebony and mother-of-pearl inlaid cabinet-on-stand, which has been attributed to Herman Doomer of Amsterdam by Simon

Jervis. The drawing room also contains a *vargueno*, notable for sitting atop what must be one of the very few *vargueno* stands of Irish design and manufacture.

Hillsborough Castle

The group's final stop was to the newly restored Hillsborough Castle, its imposing iron gates creating an impressive prelude to the visit.

Hillsborough Castle was built in the 1750s by Wills Hill, later 1st Marquess of Downshire, and was subsequently enlarged and modified between the 1790s and the 1840s. Following the partition of Ireland, it was purchased by the Office of Works in 1922 to serve as the home of the Governors of Northern Ireland and the Royal Family's official residence in the Province. Much of the present interior is due to a remodelling in 1935–36 following a major fire. In 2014,

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) became responsible for managing Hillsborough Castle as a visitor attraction, while it continues as a functioning royal residence and the home of the Secretary of State. Our guided tour of the State Apartments by Dr Christopher Warleigh-Lack, Senior Curator, introduced HRP's newly completed programme of redecoration and representation. The house was acquired without contents, but furniture and some pictures were acquired over the years, supplemented by loans from the Royal Collection even before the advent of HRP. The Throne Room and the Red Room have been redecorated with rich green and crimson silks respectively. Both have been splendidly re-hung, advised by Alec Cobbe, with excellent paintings mainly from the Royal Collection. Thanks to the expertise of Christopher Warley-Lack and enthusiasm of HRP, Hillsborough Castle now looks and feels like a royal palace.

Lastly, we thanked Vanne Campbell, our on-the-spot guide during the weekend. She had hugely helped Kate Dyson in the organization of the tour. Mrs Campbell opened private doors, many of the house owners being her personal friends.

REPORTS BY: PETER BOUGHTON,
MELANIE DODERER-WINKLER,
STEVEN KAYE, TESSA MURDOCH,
STEVEN O'CONNELL, MINDY PAPP,
ROBIN PURCHAS, DAVID WURTZL,
KATE DYSON

Visit to Great Chalfield Manor and Corsham Court

THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2018

Great Chalfield Manor

On a crisp autumn day, an enthusiastic group of FHS members assembled outside Great Chalfield Manor where we were



Facade of Great Chalfield Manor

given an introduction to the history of the house by our National Trust guide, Jacquetta. The house was designed and built by Thomas Tropicell between 1467 and 1488. It had been owned by the Percy family since the late twelfth century and had fallen into a state of disrepair before Tropicell purchased the manor and estate. Thomas Tropicell is buried in St Batholomew's parish church in Corsham. The house and garden were purchased in 1878 by George P. Fuller, from Sir Harry Burrard Neale's successors. The house was restored and furnished between 1905 and 1911 by his fourth son, Major Robert Fuller, under the guidance of the architect Harold Brakspear. Fuller gave the house to the National Trust in 1943. Robert Floyd, great-grandson of George Fuller, now manages the property for the National Trust.

The house is still entered using Tropicell's original front door. From there you go through the carved oak screen, an Edwardian replacement, and enter the Great Hall, which is furnished in a manner that becomes a constant throughout the house and illustrates the skill and collaborative achievement of the young Robert Fuller and Harold Brakspear. While

much of the early carved oak furniture in the house may be constructed from component parts from different eras, as a whole it hangs together well as a collection and acts as a very good example of collecting during this period.

The walls of the Great Hall are hung with Flemish tapestries along with three carved stone-looking masks, one poking fun at the monarchy as it appears to be in the form of a king wearing a crumbling crown and with pig's ears, or maybe donkey's ears as in *Rex illiteratus Asinus coronatus est*, which appears in John of Salisbury's account of Policraticus. The centre is dominated by an oak refectory table. On inspection, it was agreed that the



Side view of Great Chalfield Manor

table was made up of seventeenth-century and later elements, the twisted Solomonic legs probably taken from a staircase or gallery. At the east end of the Great Hall stand two impressive sixteenth-century cypress or cedar desks on later stands. Together with a comparable writing cabinet in the same room, this group of cabinets/desks combines to make a very rare collection — we could think of no other house in the country with so many. Although, traditionally, such pieces are thought to have come from northern Italy, there must have been a great trade in them as they occur all over; chests are known with the English royal arms and with inscriptions in both Spanish and Portuguese. There have been suggestions that they were also produced in the Azores — although this is unproven. In the north oriel of the Great Hall stands a large and impressive late seventeenth-century tropical hardwood (probably padouk) chest, Batavian, from the Dutch East Asian colonies. Unusually, the turned feet were probably original. Next to this is a 'Gothic' carved oak cupboard that Victor Chinnery has previously declared to be a fake, probably made up from sections of French wall panelling. The grey colour and scrubbed open grain also acted as indicators that it was not a period piece. In the opposing south oriel stood a large fifteenth-century carved oak coffer with a later top and replaced stiles. Next to this was a small and particularly intriguing carved oak bread cupboard. It was noted that the carved figures were similar to those found on fifteenth-century Swiss glass. After some debate, it was considered to be late sixteenth century and from the

Tyrol. One of Great Chalfield's treasures is the rare surviving cartulary that is displayed in the Great Hall. It is unusual in the amount of detail that it records.

The parlour or small dining room is centred by a fine quality twin pedestal extending dining table that dates from c. 1820, Gillows' quality or comparable. This is surrounded by a harlequin set of Chippendale period dining chairs. It was noted that the concept of forming a harlequin or mixed set of dining chairs was a popular fashion of the Edwardian period. From the same period as the dining table, and possibly from the same maker, is a highly figured wine cooler that would originally have been intended to sit under a sideboard with iced water draining from a lead-lined interior from the tap in the base. The oak furniture in the small dining room included a seventeenth-century refectory table with a replaced top and partially replaced stretcher and a court cupboard and buffet, both constructed using some early elements. In keeping with the furniture collection is a late seventeenth-century-style lantern clock which originally would have hung on the wall and worked with weights and ropes. It has since been converted, and acts as a table clock. During the Fuller/Brakspear restoration, a naive fresco of man was uncovered in the small dining room and has been preserved. The wall painting is probably of Thomas Tropnell himself. The late Paul Methuen RA, the artist Lord Methuen, who had the 1959 carpet at Corsham made, said to Robert Floyd's father that this wall painting image was the most powerful two-dimensional portrait that he knew.

The north bedroom on the first floor is dominated by a rather spectacular carved oak tester bed that has been enlarged in height to suit the scale of the room. A period bed from the seventeenth century would not have been on this scale and would have been dwarfed in that room. There are a number of good early elements to the bed and it is clear where some later elements have been carved in a matching style. The use of carved caryatids and bird-like figures can be interpreted as symbols emblematic of fertility and lust. It is interesting to note that there is no provision for hanging curtains on this enlarged mode — considered unhygienic by the mid-nineteenth century. There are four different chests of drawers in the north bedroom, one with a particularly rare painted decoration on the drawer fronts and a replaced top. On top of another sits a small intricately carved Indian bone and ivory cabinet, brought from India in about 1900 by a family member. The large carved oak wardrobe is partially constructed using medieval wall panelling.

A few small steps up from the north bedroom take you into the en suite bathroom where the full size bath is encased within an adapted carved oak coffer complete with hinged top and linenfold panels.

The Minstrel's Gallery that looks down over the Great Hall contains a curious oak cupboard carved with the date '1684'. After some debate, it was considered to be a trencher board draining cupboard. This cupboard piece has two fishes incised in the pediment, perhaps a reference to the feeding of the five thousand. The usual suggestion is that it is a dole cupboard,

and apparently there are others in both Worcester and St Albans cathedrals. At the V&A, there are similar photos of cupboards from Provence. One idea is that the racks would be used to hold unleavened bread, like 'nan' or pancakes, then those short of food for Sunday dinner could take a dole bread on their way home from church.

Walking through the house allows you to see several of the rare surviving nineteenth-century watercolour drawings of Great Chalfield that were commissioned by Admiral Burrard Neale in 1823. Neale owned Great Chalfield during the nineteenth century, and the drawings were commissioned when he rented the property to tenants. The survival of the drawings provided a great resource for Fuller and Brakspear during their restoration.

In the south oriel at the top of the stairs to the Solar sits a reclining settle with a linenfold panelled back and replaced seat. This was almost certainly adapted in the early twentieth century. Also in this space is an adapted commode chair and a rare seventeenth-century stool table with hinged lid. The Solar is considered the best



Heraldry in The Tropnell Chapel

room in the house and is marked by a grand ornate oriel window. At the foot of the window is a circular Dutch oak table with a seventeenth-century top but later base. It was noted that there was a high demand for Dutch furniture in the UK in the early twentieth century, with much being imported into England through the east coast ports, particularly Hull, in return for exports of coal. Surrounding the circular Dutch table is a group of four Charles II chairs, some in solid walnut, others in beech, with simulated rosewood decoration. Such simulation is probably a rare and luxurious finish provided at the time. There is a marquetry longcase to the left of the fireplace in the Solar, with a movement signed by Robert Wilkins, London. To the right of the fireplace is a small oak cupboard incorporating some very good French carved panels.

We were joined in the Solar by Robert Floyd, who shared a number of interesting stories. Recently, when he was clearing out an old electrical box, he came across a receipt dated 1912 from a Mr Stringer of Maidenhead for £32. Although Mr Stringer was primarily an electrical specialist, the receipt in question was for the carved oak cabinet-on-stand that is on the wall opposite the fireplace in the Solar. The cabinet is made up with timbers from various dates and includes doors carved with figures of Heloise and Abelard. This serendipitous find provides an intriguing piece of information and some early provenance on one of the few pieces in the collection. Robert was also able to tell us that he bought the Knole pattern sofa in the Solar in 1972 for £60 and had it covered in a William Morris fabric by a 'Mr

Gubby'. Behind the sofa is an early seventeenth-century oak refectory table with a turning top, but the top is only finished on one side.

We are very grateful to Robert Floyd for welcoming us to Great Chalfield and were pleased that he could join us for lunch.

Corsham Court

We were met at Corsham Court by James Methuen-Campbell, 8th Baron Methuen, and led into the Picture Gallery, where we were given a superb introduction to the patron, house and collection.

The wonderful collection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Old Master paintings at Corsham was originally assembled by Sir Paul Methuen in the first half of the eighteenth century, and a second collection was added to it through inheritance in the mid-nineteenth century. Sir Paul, who was one-time Ambassador to Portugal, never married, and housed his picture collection in his London house in Grosvenor Street. In 1745, Sir Paul's nephew and godson, Paul Methuen, bought Corsham Court in Wiltshire. Sir Paul visited his nephew at Corsham and made provisions to bequeath his collection to him.

The decision to build a picture gallery at Corsham was made before Sir Paul's death in 1757 and focused his collecting in his remaining years. It was in this last decade of Sir Paul's life that he purchased Van Dyck's large 'Crucifixion' that never hung in London but was always destined for the new picture gallery. Paul Methuen commissioned Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to enlarge the house and grounds between 1761–64, including the new picture gallery

that was always going to be open to the public. Capability Brown had designed a ceiling for Burton Constable, but it was never executed; instead, he used it for the picture gallery at Corsham. There are about 150 pictures that make up the collection as it exists today. In terms of the picture hang, the end wall is the only wall that has radically changed since Brown's day. This is due to the fact that in 1844 a large painting by Rubens was sold to fund works in the Hall. The 'Wolf and Fox Hunt' by Rubens, above the chimneypiece, has a carved giltwood frame, which we were informed is the only existing frame designed by Robert Adam.

The celebrated suite of George III mahogany and upholstered seat furniture now spread through the picture gallery and other state rooms comprises thirty armchairs, two pairs of sofas of different sizes and eight window seats. The suite was commissioned in the late 1760s, and, despite an inaccurate historical attribution to Thomas Chippendale, no evidence has come to light suggesting who the supplier might have been. Records do indicate, however, that in 1769 the suite was upholstered in crimson silk damask by Mr Cole of Golden Square and was all in place at Corsham by 1772. A watercolour from 1852 shows the suite in the picture gallery for the first time. Remarkably, some of the checked linen covers for the suite still exist. In the past, when the silk damask became too worn on the seat furniture it has been repaired using the same silk damask that lines the walls of the picture gallery. However, occasionally when a picture goes off on loan it does reveal a bare patch on the wall behind. It was fascinating to see

how the nailing on the seat upholstery matched that of the wall linings. However, while the seat furniture used metal heads, the conforming decoration on the walls was in carved wood.

The large carpet in the picture gallery was made in Madrid in 1959 by the Royal Tapestry and Carpet Factory.

Between the windows hang the remarkable set of four mirrors above the set of four giltwood tables. Confusingly, one of the table frames is marked with the initials 'TC', which has sent many a past furniture historian on a wild goose chase for Thomas Chippendale. The tables were sourced through Thomas Cole, but the maker is still unknown.

At the south end of the picture gallery are a matched pair of Japanese shagreen chests from c. 1625, on later French carved giltwood stands from c. 1700. These were bought in 1765 from Strangeway & Taylor in Pall Mall. At the north end is a pair of lacquered kneehole desks incorporating inset marble tops with engraved brass borders. One explanation for this unusual combination would be for the purpose of displaying sculpture.

Leaving the picture gallery, one enters into the Cabinet Room, which houses the magnificent commode and torchères by John Cobb. For some members of the group this was the first time they had seen the Cobb commode, and they were struck by the good state of preservation it was in — with much original engraving seen throughout the marquetry.

Other treasures in the Cabinet Room included the pair of carved mahogany tables to a Chippendale design with their inset porphyry tops, a Pembroke table

attributable to Henry Hill of Marlborough, a remarkable sculptural table by Thomas Johnson, with a later top and a pair of gueridons with Japanese Imari dishes that date from 1800 when Nash was working at the house.

We continued from the Cabinet Room into the State Bedroom, which continued to impress — a remarkable pair of wall mirrors by Thomas Johnson retaining their original gilded surface and a pair of dressing chests by Thomas Chippendale, likewise in a superb state of preservation. There was some discussion on timber type for a chest of drawers under the window in the State Bedroom; consensus seemed to fall on the side of fustic.

From the State Bedroom, our group continued into the Octagon Room, which is centred by a smart octagonal satinwood rent table. Interestingly, there was evidence of wax seals over the locks of the drawer fronts on this table, a feature that was seen again on the locks of a nineteenth-century walnut bookcase in the Billiard Room. The top of the rent table was inset with an unusual leather decorated with a gilt penwork type of decoration. It was noted by a member that a rent table from Powderham Castle had a similar gilt decorated leather inset. The two cabinets in the Octagon Room were studied and discussed in detail — the Florentine *pietra dura* cabinet and the ebony cabinet with silver plaques by Philipp Endres of Augsburg. Both cabinets are now on later matching ebony stands.

Finally, we moved in to the corridor outside the Octagon Room and examined the large French ebony cupboard. It was agreed that the upper section was

probably made in Paris in the mid-seventeenth century and that the lower section had been adapted. It was fascinating to note that the figures of Adam and Eve on this cabinet came from the same source as those found on the cabinet in the Octagon Room.

Moving into the Billiard Room or Music Room, we examined and discussed a fifteenth-century Italian casket that Amin Jaffer has previously confirmed as not being of Indian origin. There was also interest in a rare Mexican tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl octagonal casket/box from c. 1700. We learnt that there are several celebrated Mexican pictures and books in the Methuen collection. Other pieces of interest in the room were the nineteenth-century Italian bookcase of exhibition quality, with evidence of wax seals on its locks, and a typical mahogany hunt drinking table from c. 1820.



The Bath House, Corsham Court

By this time our group were overflowing with the treasures we had seen, examined and discussed over the course of the day, before we finally went back to the Hall at Corsham and tried to unravel the mysteries of a large carved oak coffer on stand. We all tried, but could not quite get to the bottom of its origins. Thankfully, this will hopefully leave good reason for the FHS to return to this remarkable house and its collections for further examination in the future!

Corsham is a remarkably rich house and we are very grateful to Lord Methuen for his warm welcome to a house that merits frequent return.

DANIEL MORRIS

Visit to the Holburne Museum

SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2018

Following the Society's AGM and lunch at the Guildhall in Bath, a group of twenty-two members headed to the Holburne Museum.

We were greeted by Catrin Jones, Curator of Decorative Arts, outside the main entrance, facing west down Great Pulteney Street towards Laura Place and Pulteney Bridge. Designed by the architect Thomas Baldwin, Great Pulteney Street was intended to form part of a larger development of streets and squares that never came to fruition following financial panic due to the French Revolution.

The museum is housed in what was originally the Sydney Hotel, completed in 1799. It was designed to offer a grand entrance to Sydney Gardens, pleasure gardens that were popular with visitors to

Georgian Bath, who could promenade around and enjoy music, dancing and fireworks. On moving to the city in 1801, Jane Austen wrote: 'It would be very pleasant to be near Sidney gardens — we might go into the Labrinth every day [...]'.

The core of the museum's collection was formed by Sir William Holburne (1793–1874) who inherited the baronetcy in 1820 following the death of his brother in 1814. In 1882, Sir William's collection of over 4,000 objects, pictures and books was bequeathed to the people of Bath by his sister Mary Holburne. The collection has been housed in the current building since 1916 and has subsequently been supplemented by other gifts and bequests — today Sir William's collection forms around half of the total holdings of the museum.

Our tour of the museum started in the long gallery, originally fitted with hessian-backed 'South Kensington' cabinets. Today it is dominated by a long central display filled with examples of eighteenth-century English silver and ceramics. Wall cabinets contain fine examples of early English and European silver gilt, Japanese porcelain and a display of Italian maiolica. A dish made in Siena c. 1495, depicting Diana and Actaeon, has been described by Timothy Wilson as the most important piece of maiolica in a regional museum. Whilst in the gallery, we were also able to see a late eighteenth-century chandelier and a set of 'Irish Chippendale' carved mahogany chairs. In total contrast, there was also the chance to inspect David Hockney's portrait of *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, on temporary loan from Tate Modern.

We then moved across into the new extension to the rear of the building.

Completed in 2011 to a design by Eric Parry Architects, it was not without its critics at the time, but the sympathetic use of glass and dark ceramic cladding blends in perfectly with the tree-filled gardens. The cluttered displays deliberately reflect the current fashion at the time Sir William was forming his collection, and give an idea of the interior of his home at 10 Cavendish Crescent. In the main display there are examples of satinwood furniture, whilst around the walls, drawers and cabinets contain collections of netsuke, gold boxes, intaglios, portrait miniatures, ceramics and a fine seventeenth-century beadwork basket. Many of the pieces were acquired by Sir William during a Grand Tour in 1824.

We examined a walnut and floral marquetry cabinet with later stand, profusely inlaid throughout and with a fitted interior of drawers around a central door. Although labelled as Dutch c. 1670, the consensus was that it is English and dating from the 1690s. We were fortunate to be able to examine a drawer from the fitted interior, and comparisons were made with the cabinets from Ham House. Beside it was a stained and carved beech cane seat side chair, with unusual peacock cresting. These versatile chairs could be used for a variety of rooms in a seventeenth-century house and are listed as 'Dutch chairs' in inventories of the time.

Catrin also showed us a recently 'rediscovered' Brueghel depicting a wedding scene. Following painstaking conservation work and infrared reflectography, a masterful drawing was revealed beneath the painting, enabling curators to make a firm attribution to



Seventeenth-century marquetry cabinet-on-stand

Pieter Brueghel the Younger. This brings the number of Brueghels at the museum to three, more than any other regional museum in the UK.

Our next stop was to examine the jewel in the museum's furniture collection, the Witcombe Cabinet. Records show that it was made in London for Sir Michael Hickes, of Witcombe Park, Gloucestershire, in 1697. The upper part has an ornate silvered pierced cresting with a central mask among scrolling foliage, surmounted by supports for the display of Chinese and Japanese vases. The stand is even more ornate, with cherubs among foliage framed by boldly carved figural supports. The cabinet itself is japanned and fitted with an arrangement of ten drawers enclosed by a

pair of doors painted with bold arrangements of flowers above figures in a landscape, the lock plates and hinges in pierced, silvered metal. The cabinet generated much debate. It was noted that it is a rare survivor of silvered furniture; in all probability others existed, but were gilded later, once they became tarnished. The decoration is also most unusual in being totally flat, almost in the manner of a porcelain painter. The colour of the japanned surface has tarnished over the years from the original creamy white, which would have imitated porcelain. The cabinet underwent conservation at the Wallace Collection in 2004 before being put on display, and in the future the Holburne hope to have it displayed behind glass in a temperature-controlled environment. Members may be interested to see detailed images on the museum website.

We ended our visit in the top-floor gallery surrounded by eighteenth-century portraits by Angelica Kauffmann, Gainsborough, Zoffany and Allan Ramsay. At one end of the gallery is a mahogany serpentine-fronted commode dating from c. 1760 and attributed to the workshops of

Pierre Langlois. Unlike his more extravagant commodes with marquetry or lacquer decoration, this well-drawn example is made of fine-quality, well-figured mahogany. The French construction is typical of his workshop, and the ormolu mounts, trailing to foliate sabots, were probably manufactured by his son-in-law Dominique Jean. We were fortunate to have Lucy Wood with us, who commented that the handles were especially unusual and not of a standard pattern. We were also able to hear from Piers Keating, who carried out conservation work on the commode for the museum.

Also on display in the top gallery is the superb marble carving of Diana and Endymion executed by Joseph Plura in 1752. There is also a forte piano from the 1790s by Johann Schwartz, unusually cased in yew, and a nineteenth-century Érard harp.

We are most grateful to Catrin for giving up her Saturday afternoon to give us a fascinating tour of the museum, and the opportunity to examine the furniture in such close detail.

PATRICK TOYNBEE

Publications

As a leading publisher in the field of furniture history, the Society offers for sale a wide variety of publications to both members and non-members. Among the publications that are currently available are the following:

Index to the Dictionary of English

Furniture Makers, £20 (members £18)

The London Furniture Trade 1700–1870,
Pat Kirkham, £20

Dictionary of Edinburgh Furniture Makers
1600–1840, Francis Bamford, £20

Furniture History Forty Years on, Nicholas
Goodison, £7.95 (members £5)

Thomas Johnson's The Life of the Author,
Jacob Simon, £7.75

Thomas Chippendale the Younger at
Stourhead, Judith Goodison, £6.95

Makers, Dealers and Collectors: Studies in
Honour of Geoffrey de Bellaigue, £24.95

John Stafford of Bath and his Interior
Decorations, Simon Swynfen Jervis, £6.95

British and Irish Inventories, Simon
Swynfen Jervis, £12 (members £10)

To order these or any other FHS publication, contact the Society's Publications officer, Jill Bace, at publications@furniturehistorysociety.org or 21 Keats Grove, Hampstead, London NW3 2RS. On receipt of your order, she will send you an invoice. Upon receipt of payment (which may be made by cheque, debit or credit card), orders will be despatched by the Society's printers.

Slides Looking for a Home

Noel Riley has a collection of colour slides of mainly English furniture, from the medieval period to the twentieth century, about 500–600 in all, and would like to pass them on (free) to anyone who can use them. Please telephone 01787 269315 or email nacriley@gmail.com

Grants

The Society makes grants to individuals and organizations from two funds that have been established thanks to the generosity of members of the Society. They are administered by the Society's Grants committee (Chair: Adriana Turpin), which meets quarterly to consider applications — either for independent travel for study or research, or for participation in the Society's study trips, both overseas and in the United Kingdom.

Tom Ingram Memorial Fund

Grants are awarded from the Ingram Fund towards travel and associated expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture. These grants are offered, whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society, where travel could not be undertaken without funding from the Society; and only where the study or research is likely to further the Society's objectives. Applications towards the cost of the Society's own foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars and museum professionals. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Ingram Fund in any resulting publications, and will be required to make a short report on completion of the trip.

Oliver Ford Trust

The Oliver Ford Trust supports research by emerging scholars and junior museum professionals in the fields of furniture history, the decorative arts and interior

design, mainly by sponsoring places on the Society's study weekends or foreign tours. Recent awards have included grants to enable participation in the Society's symposium at the Frick Collection in New York; a weekend visit to the TEFAF (The European Fine Art Foundation) fair; and international conferences. Applications from individuals who are not members of the Society will be considered.

For further information or to download a grant application form, please go to the Grants page of the Society's website at www.furniturehistorysociety.org/grants/enquiries. Enquiries should be addressed to the Grants Secretary, Jill Bace, at grants@furniturehistorysociety.org or at 21 Keats Grove, Hampstead, London NW3 2RS.

Grants News

Early Career Development

The highly successful series of six Early Career workshops on furniture-making techniques drew to a close in April. The last three well-attended evening events included an enlightening lecture in February on 'Recognizing Woods' by Adam Bowett, and in March an informative examination and discussion of furniture by Andre-Charles Boulle and Jean-Henri Riesener led by Helen Jacobsen. For the final evening session, Guy Apter invited the FHS members from the ECD group to his gallery, Apter-Fredericks in Fulham, where they had the opportunity to closely examine a number of spectacular pieces of eighteenth-century English furniture.

The Grants Committee wishes to thank all of those who gave their time and shared their expertise with the group of enthusiastic Early Career members of the Furniture History Society.

Visit to TEFAF

Four young museum professionals working in the fields of furniture and the decorative arts were awarded the opportunity to attend the TEFAF (The European Fine Art Foundation) fair in March thanks to the generous support of the Oliver Ford Trust.

Led by Grants Chair Adriana Turpin and Conservator Yannick Chastang, the group travelled to Maastricht, where they spent two days immersed in the study of furniture with a variety of knowledgeable dealers who willingly took time from very busy schedules to meet them for informal discussions.

A full report of the FHS visit to TEFAF will appear in the August *Newsletter*.

The 14th International Symposium on Wood and Furniture Conservation – Stichting Ebenist

FRIDAY 23–SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2019

I was fortunate to be awarded an Individual Grant by the Furniture History Society, which enabled me to attend *Stichting Ebenist 2018* at the Rijksmuseum, Netherlands. I had my heart set on attending the Symposium and, having read the programme earlier on in 2018, I recognized the pertinence of many of the talks to my own work at the Wallace Collection.

However, as is so often the case in life, I could not have anticipated how many of the themes and speakers, which I listened to during the two days, resonated with me. As an expression of my gratitude towards the Grants Committee in awarding me the funds to attend and as a consolidation of that which

I learnt and gained from the experience, I present this short report on my experience as a delegate of *Stichting Ebenist 2018*.

Since my first experience of an international conference in 2014, when I found myself so awestruck that I barely managed to speak to anyone, I have recognized the value of such events in bringing together conservators from far-flung places. For professionals who often find themselves working away in their own *atelier* or even in the isolating rhythm of their own institution's demands, the opportunity to share and to connect with peers at various stages in their careers is invaluable.

Before now, I have been able to contribute to conferences — if not as a speaker, then as a poster author, in an organizational or host capacity or assisting in answering project-specific Q&A sessions. It is, however, precisely the reason that I felt I must attend *Stichting Ebenist* that left me feeling I had yet much to learn. A window into furniture conservation has recently been opened for me in my role at the Wallace Collection, an area in which I have little experience or specialist knowledge.

On the first morning, I arrived with much eagerness to learn about technical approaches to furniture conservation and to meet conservators from whom I could learn and even perhaps meet another delegate in a similar position to myself. It was, of course, a relief to arrive and see some friendly faces whom I had met at a workshop in Maastricht.

Having wanted to make the absolute most of the experience, I had signed up to attend the Icon Furniture & Wooden Object Group's tours of the Amsterdam Historical Museum and the Mayor's House. I was immediately encouraged whilst listening to a presentation given in the museum's conservation studio.

A senior conservator, who has spent many years conserving metals and horology, had applied a rigorous research approach and transferred his many skills to the conservation of a terracotta sculpture. I was further impressed when we were shown the digital montage of images captured via CT scan comparing the surface density of two nearly identical casts. It was a very positive presentation — these were the results of collaboration between colleagues of different specialisms, from different museums, who were granted access to the expensive analytical resources belonging to a large corporation.

The visit to the Mayor's House presented more familiar territory. The eighteenth-century interiors were created by a follower of Robert Adam and much information remains in documentary and other physical evidence of craftspeople and materials from across Europe, all brought together in this now iconic Dutch edifice.

Parting from new acquaintances until the following morning, I was fortunate to be able to meet with an old colleague based in Amsterdam and working at the Mesdag Collection. I am pleased to be able to maintain these connections and really enjoyed the exchange of ideas and approaches to our respective roles, each in an historic house setting.

The following morning, after a welcome to delegates from the organizing committee, the presentations got off to a sobering start. Jonathan Ashley-Smith spoke eloquently and sincerely about the state of conservation training programmes in the UK and how this has evolved — arguably for the worst — over the past three decades. Reminding us all of our 'unique selling point' — that is, the 'ability to make a practical difference' (with our hands) — gave me encouragement. I

found this presentation very humbling but hope that the approach I have adopted upon graduating — an insistence that I must continue to learn, to train, to attend workshops and events such as this — is not a signifier of inadequacy. It is rather an acknowledgement that this long-standing profession is wrongly served up to many secondary school leavers as something that can be distilled and mastered in the space of three short years.

The proceeding speakers related the points raised by Ashley-Smith — the culture of immediacy and ephemerality — to phenomena experienced in their respective countries or institutions. By the end of the session, however, the enduring message was one encouraging a cross-specialism, multi-institutional and international exchange of expertise, resources and mentoring.

The following session transported delegates into a world of cutting-edge technologies but, in doing so, demonstrated how modernization can be harnessed to further the public consciousness with regard to cultural heritage appreciation and preservation. In this instance, 3D imaging of eighteenth-century furniture was discussed. Furthermore, modern technologies in some cases can permit the conservator to accomplish tasks that would either be impossible or totally infeasible without, and we heard of various applications of infrared lasers for cleaning, and of fledgling vacuum clamping techniques.

Flying in the face of the stereotype of the impatient, under-skilled millennial that was presented earlier, Jiří Bém rounded off the day's presentations by introducing his latest invention. Delegates huddled onto the stage for a demonstration of a machine designed to inject hot animal glue under a much greater pressure than is achievable by the

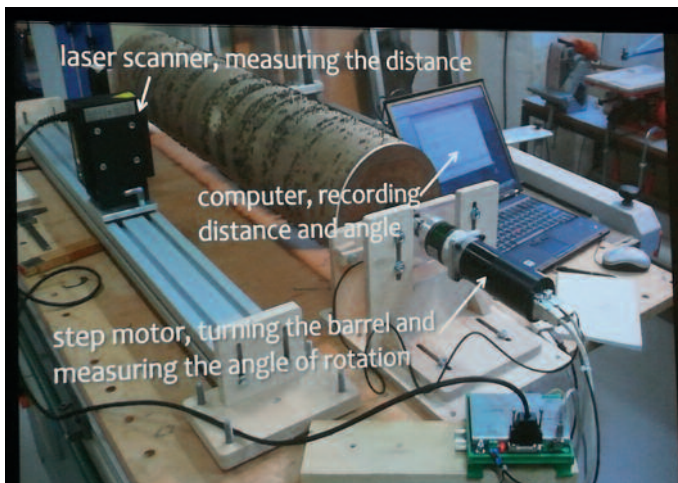
conventional syringe method. To the credit of the organizers, the day had felt somewhat of a journey, having begun with a cautionary tale and emerging on the other side with a renewed confidence that emerging talent in the field will ensure the relevance of the conservator into the future.

I was sorry to not have been able to reserve a place at the delegates' dinner that evening, but I endeavoured to make the most of the opportunity to network with others in the same boat. Sitting around a highly international table with conservators from France, Denmark, Sweden, Scotland, India and Malta, to name a few, we reflected on the topics raised that day and on our individual experiences in our home countries.

The following morning, old versus new approaches to loss compensation were compared through an array of projects: bouille marquetry, a copy of an Oeben bureau, an English bureau and even the conservation of a musical cabinet. Techniques employed varied from laser cutting, writing computer algorithms based on wood grain to manipulating live recordings of musicians in order to replicate the sound of music that may otherwise be lost forever.

Personally, there were two presentations at the end of the second afternoon that left a very great impression on me. I had met Jan Dariusz Cutajar, not in London where we have both lived and worked for many years, but the preceding evening at the end of the first day's talks. We had continued our conversation during the lunch break and I was so encouraged to have met a delegate — a speaker, in fact — who stressed that he was not in fact a furniture conservator. Having trained in archaeological object conservation, Jan applied his intellectual rigour and skills to conserve the only example of a *kussenkast* in England, belonging to the National Trust at Knole House. Learning of this highly commended project left me feeling heartened about my own skills, which I now realize could be transferred to a project such as this.

The closing presentation was a thoroughly absorbing film regarding the practice and philosophy of Caspar Labarre, a traditional chair-maker working in Amsterdam. The audience watched in admiration as the creation of one of Caspar's chairs was captured, from his felling the tree to preparing the timber and crafting every piece by hand using historic tools and techniques. I would strongly encourage



A slide from 'Reconstructing the Music in an Eighteenth-Century Cabinet Coded on Pin Barrels: The Use of 3D-Scanning Technology, Digital Photography and Software to Reconstruct the Music of the Lehmann Cabinet', Bodil Stauning, furniture conservator, the Royal Danish Collection, Copenhagen, Denmark

anyone to watch the film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNrgcP5HtPA>

It struck me that Caspar and I could not have arrived at the Symposium from more divergent paths. Seizing the opportunity to learn from and, indeed, get to know such a talented and deeply philosophical craftsman, I invited Caspar and his guest to continue conversation after the conclusion of the Symposium. I was delighted to spend the evening with them and in the company of several other speakers, international students, expert conservators and tutors in the field.

I have taken such a lot from my experience of *Stichting Ebenist*. I have met new colleagues and friends, with whom I am already maintaining communication and planning to introduce to my professional circuit in London. Not only have I met and learnt from others, but I feel I have recognized skills and qualities within myself as a result. I realize that I have a strong foundation through my training and current experience. Upon this I can build and I need not start from scratch as I had found myself contemplating previously. Certainly, there are specialist skills and knowledge that I must continue to accrue in and out of work, but I have gained confidence by recognizing familiar principles, methodologies, materials and techniques presented over the course of the Symposium.

The investment which the Furniture History Society has made in me, by sponsoring my attendance of the Symposium, I must now internalize as confidence of recognition of my potential. I am encouraged to see other specialists using their transferable skills to approach new materials, objects and challenges. The

individuals I have met and the projects I have come to learn through attending the Symposium have taught me about opportunities and craftspeople not only abroad but also in my own home city. I look forward to building on this successful experience by pursuing the professional connections I have made and will explore further subjects raised by speakers and delegates. Newly inspired by what I have learnt, I return to London with a dedication to developing my own craft skills and honing those skills already in my possession.

I take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank the Furniture History Society's Grants Committee for kindly putting their faith in me and my sincere ambition to make the most of attending *Stichting Ebenist 2018*. With much confidence, I can say that I have done so and will continue to draw on this experience for inspiration, into my future career.

FFION HOWELLS

Calling All Scholars and Museum Professionals!

The Furniture History Society is dedicated to fostering the study of furniture history and welcomes grant applications for independent travel, research or for participation in the Society's study trips both overseas and in the United Kingdom. Scholars and museum professionals working in the fields of furniture history, furniture-making, decorative arts, interior design and conservation who are in need of support for travel and research are encouraged to apply. For more information, contact Jill Bace, Grants Secretary, grants@furniturehistorysociety.org

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Copy Deadline

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next *Newsletter* is 15 June 2019.

Copy should be sent, preferably by email to Sharon Goodman, email: sctgoodman@yahoo.co.uk, or by post to 26 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0JZ. Tel. 07855 176779.

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COVER PICTURE Design for a two-door cupboard. Graphite, pen and brown ink, blue wash, 278 × 184 mm. Southern Germany, c. 1650–75. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; purchased with support from the Furniture History Society and the Decorative Art Fund/Rijksmuseum Fonds