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Baron de Besenval's Eclectic Eye

The following article by Paul Gallois is a synopsis of a more extensive article to be published in the future. It will discuss some of the ormolu-mounted porcelain and furniture formerly in the collection of the Baron de Besenval. As an exception, this synopsis is longer than is customary for the Newsletter.

The fascinating life of Pierre-Victor de Besenval, baron de Brünstatt (1721–91) — the dazzling courtier and *homme de guerre* — was discussed in Jean-Jacques Fiechter's biography (published in 1993).¹ The object of this study is to explore a lesser-known although equally fascinating aspect of his life as a discerning collector of decorative arts and its varied, even opposing styles.

Born in Schloss Waldegg near Solothurn in Switzerland, Pierre-Victor was the son of Jean-Victor de Besenval (1671–1736), colonel of the Swiss guards, who had the rare stature as Ambassador of France. The latter's Polish wife — cousin of Marie Leszczyńska — gave both father and son privileged access to the court of Louis XV. Besenval quickly ascended in the military ranks when serving under Louis Philippe I, duc d'Orléans, during the Seven Years War, and was noticed by the comte d'Artois, who granted him an audience with the young King Louis XVI in 1775. Through Besenval's charm, wit and political vision, he became a notable courtier at the end of the *ancien régime*

as well as companion of none other than Marie-Antoinette. During the Revolution, he remained firmly attached to the court, playing a key role leading the troops, which the King had gathered in Paris in July 1789.² This tactic led to the storming of the Bastille on 14 July, at which point Besenval took the historic decision to withdraw these troops to avoid triggering further civil uproar. Despite this moderate decision, he was arrested and tried by the tribunal du Châtelet and miraculously acquitted thanks to the indefatigable support of his soldiers, who testified in his favour. Saved from the guillotine and released from prison, he returned to his *hôtel* in rue de Grenelle where he died peacefully on 2 June 1791 among his friends and his beloved art collection.

The *hôtel particulier* Besenval acquired in 1767 to house his growing collection was built in 1704 by the celebrated architect Pierre-Alexis Delamair (c. 1676–1745) for abbé Chanac de Pompadour (now the Swiss Embassy, no. 142 rue de Grenelle, Paris).³ Besenval had significant alterations carried out to the interiors — for example, installing a remarkably modern *salle de bains à l'antique* in the basement designed by Alexandre Brongniart with vases and bas-relief sculpted by Clodion as well as a long gallery with ethereal light from above.⁴ Nevertheless, he was apparently content to retain some of the late Louis

XIV interiors designed by Delamair and later *rocaille* elements installed during the early years of the reign of Louis XV. A close-up of these eclectic interiors was immortalized by his portrait by Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753–1809), now at the National Gallery, London, where the Baron is shown aged seventy, a year after his imprisonment, reflecting nonchalantly and leaning against a sinuous *brèche* marble chimneypiece in the *salon de compagnie* (see Front Cover).⁵ This intimate portrait, together with the description of baron de Besenval's *hôtel* by Luc-Vincent Thiéry, published in 1787, as well as Besenval's 1795 collection sale catalogue, offer a remarkably comprehensive picture of his distinctive taste for luxurious furniture and objets d'art.⁶

According to Thiéry, Besenval's *cabinet* was primarily renowned for the remarkable collection of contemporary and earlier pictures of the Flemish, Italian and French schools. Some of these were identified by Colin B. Bailey in Danloux's portrait, such as canvases by Cornelis van Poelenburgh, Willem Van de Velde, David Teniers the Younger, Aelbert Cuyp, Claude-Joseph Vernet and Carlo Maratta, densely hung and almost completely covering the green damask of the salon.⁷ A preparatory drawing of this portrait shows the Baron seated with his face and upper body turned toward the viewer instead of the profile view.⁸ By changing the pose from frontal to profile, Danloux focuses the attention less on the sitter himself and more on the objects in the room depicted minutely, particularly those displayed on the mantelpiece: a precious garniture of

Chinese celadon porcelain vases mounted in ormolu.

Besenval's passion for oriental porcelain is particularly tangible in his sale catalogue, which comprises no fewer than thirty-nine lots of this type, including pieces from China and Japan. The celadon garniture was listed as lot 148, which included seven celadon vases mounted with mounts 'd'ancien genre, parfaitement ciselés et dorés d'or moulu', three of which are visible in Danloux's portrait, shaped as bamboo trunk, a carp, and archaic bronze-shaped vases. These vases may have been purchased from the *marchand-mercier* Lazare-Duvaux, who specialized during the reign of Louis XV in wares enhanced in fashionable *rocaille*-style mounts and whose *livre-journal* covering the years 1748–58 lists Besenval as a client (as 'baron de Busseval').⁹

Eight pairs of Chinese porcelain carp vases mounted as ewers are known to exist, including two virtually identical to the Besenval pair: a pair sold from the collection of Consuelo Vanderbilt; and a pair sold from the Wildenstein collection (Fig. 1); the other examples have slightly different mounts to the rim.¹⁰ A pair of the same model was bought from Lazare-Duvaux in 1751 for 1200 *livres* by the *receveur général des consignations* Louis-Jean Gaignat (1697–1768), one of the greatest collectors of oriental-mounted porcelain of his generation after Madame de Pompadour, and was depicted by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin as marginalia in one of his sale catalogues.¹¹

The bamboo-shaped vase, to the left on the chimneypiece, can be associated with three known pairs: one in the Victoria and



Fig. 1 The Wildenstein Collection. © Christie's Images, 2005

Albert Museum; a pair sold at auction in 1975; and a pair sold in 2008.¹² The vase to the right — modelled as an archaic bronze vessel — with mounts shaped as *putti* and garlands, is almost certainly one of the pair from the Earls de Grey.¹³ Two other pairs with almost identical late Louis XV symmetrical mounts are recorded and were both part of William Beckford's collection at Fonthill Abbey, although these have different porcelain bodies.¹⁴

On the portrait behind Besenval is another group of porcelain, apparently all Japanese wares, indicating he might have made the distinction in his collection between their origins, separating them in his interiors. This more eclectic and colourful grouping includes a polychrome Arita carp vase to the right identical to one

in a private collection, and a Kakiemon bottle.¹⁵

Other oriental porcelain vases, not depicted in Danloux's portrait but listed in Besenval's sale, can be identified, such as a pair of turquoise vases with spiralling snake handles (lot 138 in his sale), possibly the pair now in the Royal Collection.¹⁶ An example with slightly different mounts is described in the Maximilien Radix de Sainte-Foy sale, another important collector of Asian porcelain, and illustrated as marginalia by Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin in his sale catalogue.¹⁷

Apart from separating porcelain in his collection, Besenval gave approximately one-third of these pieces more prominence by placing them on variously coloured marble plinths, 'vert de mer' 'porpor',

'jaune de Sienne', 'brèche rouge' or 'rouge griotte'. The Kakiemon bottle visible in his portrait (lot 134 in his sale) is, for instance, placed on a 'vert antique' plinth. This fascinating way of displaying his porcelain collection and visually combining it with hardstones reveals the eclectic richness of his collection.

During his next collecting phase, Besenval acquired a large quantity of hardstone vases, columns and specimen marble tables which were, more than his collecting of porcelain, in tune with the neo-classical taste of the late 1760s promoted by Louis-Marie-Augustin, duc d'Aumont (1709–82), who established a hardstone cutting workshop at the Menus Plaisirs, place Louis XV (now place de la Concorde). Among the twenty lots of hard stone items listed in his sale, six were unmounted vases in porphyry, granite, alabaster or marble, and at least four marble vases were enriched with neo-classical mounts. Lot 119 lists: 'deux très forts vases en marbre vert d'Egypte ou d'Ecosse, forme d'urne & du plus beau volume, richement décorés de figures de tritons & guirlandes de chêne, en cuivre parfaitement doré [...] hauteur 28 pouces, diamètre 12'. These can be identified as the vases previously in the collection of the *intendant des Menus Plaisirs* Barthélémy-Augustin Blondel d'Azincourt (1719–83) and sold in his sale in Paris, 10 February 1783, lot 306, purchased by the *marchand* Julliot for 1,500 *livres*, who likely sold them to Besenval (Fig. 2).¹⁸ In the nineteenth century, this pair subsequently entered the collections of Sir Richard Wallace (1818–90), and comte Hubert de Givenchy (1927–2018).¹⁹



Fig. 2 One of the two vases from Besenval's collection previously in the Blondel d'Azincourt collection.

© Christie's Images, 2007

Besenval's name rarely appears among buyers in auctions in the years he was collecting. He apparently preferred to make his purchases through dealers such as Lazare Duvaux for his mounted porcelain, Jean-Baptiste Pierre Lebrun for paintings and members of the Julliot family for 'Boulle' furniture, which he collected extensively. In his sale, nine lots of Boulle marquetry pieces are listed, either by André-Charles Boulle or his followers. Besenval's choice of this type of furniture epitomizes the fashionable revival for 'Boulle' furniture from the 1760s onwards, when the decorative

vocabulary of the *Grand Siècle* was rediscovered and re-interpreted by a younger generation of cabinet-makers. Claude-François Julliot (1727–94) had a pioneering role in this ‘Boulle’ revival: he collaborated closely with talented *ébénistes* such as Philippe-Claude Montigny, Joseph Baumhauer and Adam Weisweiler, restoring precious Boulle furniture, adapting and updating existing pieces as well as creating entirely new items of furniture employing marquetry panels and bronze mounts by Boulle and his contemporaries.²⁰ The need for wall space for hanging collections of smaller Dutch and Flemish pictures — a new fashion gaining momentum from the mid-eighteenth century — meant that some large Louis XIV Boulle furniture was adapted, forming items of lower height convenient to view pictures as well as supporting collections of precious bronzes and vases.

Besenal’s collection included a Louis XIV cabinet-on-stand surmounted by a clock with an allegorical figure of time (lot 181 in his sale), probably by André-Charles Boulle’s workshop and unaltered; two *armoires* (lots 182–83) with two doors each with figures of Aspasia and Socrates and *médaillles* celebrating the life of Louis XIV, a model also invented by Boulle, which proved so successful that it remained in production throughout the eighteenth century by his followers, including Montigny and Delorme.²¹ Of the fifteen pairs of *armoires* of this model recorded, the majority are in public collections and five are still in private hands. A pair of low *armoires* is listed (lots 184–85), each decorated with a large medallion

probably reusing Boulle elements and later adapted.²²

Another model invented by Boulle is described as a pair (lots 186–87): the *armoire à hauteur d’appui*, one of which is depicted in Danloux’s portrait of Besenal. The 1795 sale catalogue indicates that both *armoires* were in *contre-partie*. Four of these are known to exist: the earliest pair was delivered by André-Charles Boulle to Henri de Bourbon-Condé, prince de Condé, duc de Bourbon (1692–1740) for his gallery at the *château* de Chantilly, now at the Musée du Louvre; another pair made during Louis XV’s reign by Jean-Louis Faizelot-Delorme is at the Wallace collection; two other pairs were in the collections of Quentin Craufurd (his sale 20 November 1820, lot 466), then baron d’Ivry (8 March 1841, lot 168) and Léopold, 2nd baron d’Ivry (7 May 1884, lot 268), now in private collections.²³ From what little can be seen on one of Besenal’s cabinets as depicted in the Danloux portrait, the thick ormolu frame of the central panel and spiralling rosettes to the plinth probably identifies Besenal’s pair as one of those in the Craufurd collection, both now in private collections. Besenal’s collection of Boulle furniture also included other types such as two *gainies* with *tabliers* (aprons) in *contre-partie* (lots 187–88), a pair of which was sold from the Wildenstein collection, 4 December 2005, lot 26. A watercolour drawing of a pedestal of this model in *contre-partie* is in the Palazzo Rosso, Genoa.²⁴

The image of Besenal, the collector, as depicted in his portrait, including the aforementioned *rocaille porcelaines montées* within a seemingly dated decor including

a Louis XV sinuous *bergère à oreilles* and fire screen, is somewhat misleading.²⁵ The study of his sale catalogue in fact reveals various pieces conceived in the bold and innovative *goût à la grecque*, establishing Besenval as a member of the small circle of avant-garde patrons pioneering the neo-classical style in the 1750–60s, such as the *financier* Ange-Laurent de La Live de Jully (1725–79) or Madame de Pompadour's brother, the marquis de Marigny (1727–81), both of Besenval's generation. These pieces were all veneered in striking ebony, enriched with monumental 'antique' mounts, linked to the celebrated *bureau plat* and *cartonnier* designed by Louis-Joseph Le Lorrain and attributed to the cabinet-maker Joseph Baumhauer, with bronzes by Philippe Caffieri, and made c. 1757 for Ange-Laurent Lalive de Jully.

The precise description and measurements of a *bureau plat* and *cartonnier* in Besenval's collection (lot 191 in his sale) have enabled us to link these with an existing ensemble in the Lambert collection (Fig. 3).²⁶ This was part of the collection of Baron Gustave de Rothschild (1829–1911) and descended in the family until the present owner.²⁷ This impressive ensemble, veneered in ebony, comprising a desk attributed to Boulle and a *cartonnier à la grecque*, forming a tour de force of unparalleled richness, is exemplary of Besenval's taste for marrying the most iconic items of each style in his interiors. Recent analysis of the construction and mounts indicate the bureau was conceived c. 1720 and altered c. 1765 to fit the dimension of the monumental *cartonnier*, made by Bernard III van Risenburgh



Fig. 3 Bureau and *cartonnier* from the Lambert collection. © Christie's Images, 2021

(son of the celebrated master known as BVRB), to form an ensemble. 'E. J. Cuvellier', whose stamp appears on the bureau, became a *maître ébéniste* in 1753 and apparently specialized between 1760 and 1780 in restoring luxurious Boulle and 'à la grecque' furniture of the highest calibre. His stamp appears on a number of pieces, including earlier items of furniture, which suggests he was mainly active as a restorer.²⁸ Besenval's *cartonnier* is embellished with sculptural ormolu mounts including Apollo masks, which also appear on the bureau, two male caryatide figures and is surmounted by a magnificent sphere-shaped clock à cercles tournant, signed 'Stollewerck A Paris' — all elements described in the 1795 sale catalogue.

Interestingly, Besenval owned another clock by Stollewerck (lot 176 in his sale), together with its pendant cartel barometer (lot 177) signed 'Bourbon', now in the Wallace Collection.²⁹ With their decoration of similar patinated bronze *putti* on gilt-bronze clouds and *goût à la grecque* cases, these were conceived *en suite* with the cresting of the *cartonnier*. Lot 175 in his sale lists a further clock, by Julien Leroy, its ormolu case with a patinated bronze figure à l'étude resting on a 'richly mounted ebony base'; a clock of this model is now at the Metropolitan Museum, New York (acc. no. 1991.8) and may have been Besenval's clock.³⁰

Described as lot 179 is: 'une grande & belle commode à panneaux de laque, fond noir, à dessins de paysages Chinois, châteaux & oiseaux, tracés en or, demi-relief. Ce meuble, d'une composition mâle, est ornée de quatre fortes figures en caryatides, beaux cadres de moulures &

frises [...] Long 4 pieds 10 po., profondeur 25 po.'. This description probably corresponds to a commode in the Royal Collection decorated with Japanese lacquer panels with pagodas and birds set within large ormolu frames and flanked by four powerful male and female term figures.³¹ This impressive commode was probably conceived by the *ébéniste* Joseph Baumhauer (Fig. 4), and was purchased on behalf of George IV at a sale of effects offered by Mr Philips, the auctioneer, 23 June 1825 (lot 145), and was sent to Windsor on 17 January 1834.³² It is now supported on four ormolu hoof-feet, which were added in 1903. The Vitruvian scroll frieze of this commode is interestingly identical to the plinth of the clock now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, mentioned above. This Vitruvian scroll frieze, the ultimate *goût grec* motif, was recurrent in Besenval's collection, also adorning the impressive stove in marble, richly mounted with neo-classical style mounts, commissioned for Besenval's *hôtel*, now in a private collection.³³

The most costly item of furniture in Besenval's collection was perhaps the commode by Martin Carlin in ebony inset with precious *pietra dura* panels (Fig. 5); this was placed in his bedroom, where, together with the bureau and *cartonnier* alongside, it formed the zenith of refinement in his collection. The *pietra dura* plaques of this commode, now at Buckingham Palace, probably originate from one of the great cabinets made in the Royal workshop at the Gobelins for Louis XIV.³⁴ Two of the relief panels are signed on the back by Gian Ambrogio Giachetti, a Florentine lapidary working

Fig. 4 Commode attributed to Joseph Baumhauer, Windsor Castle, before 1903. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021



at the Gobelins between 1670 and 1675.³⁵ The first owner of this commode was the notorious Parisian opera singer Marie-Joséphine Laguerre (1754–82), whose dissolute life led her to an early grave.³⁶ It was sold in her sale after death on 10 April 1782 alongside other pieces by Carlin and Weisweiler, all probably supplied by the *marchand-mercier* Dominique Daguerre (d. 1796). Her sale was appraised by Julliot *fils*, acting as an expert, who possibly recommended Besenval to purchase this extraordinary piece.

Two further clues of Besenval's pioneering taste for neo-classicism are also visible in the Danloux portrait. The first is a wall-light to the right-hand side of the mirror embellished with ram's masks to the back-plate. Two pairs of this model are known: one at the Royal Palace, Stockholm and the other in a private collection.³⁷

This model is attributed to the celebrated sculptor and *bronzier* Philippe Caffieri (1714–74), son of Jacques Caffieri (1678–1755), who already in 1737 cast two busts of Besenval's father and grandfather.³⁸ These wall-lights are surmounted by urns on demi-columns, identical ornamentation to those on the *chenets* at his feet in the portrait, indicating these were also produced by Caffieri, probably *en suite* and forming a visual ensemble. Apart from these distinctive urns, these *chenets* are also adorned with sphinxes after a model by Boulle, again reflecting Besenval's passion for the idiom conceived by the celebrated *ébéniste* combined with neo-classical design.

Depicted in the twilight of his collecting's life, Besenval, in his portrait, is undoubtedly paying tribute to the incredible richness of the decorative arts of



Fig. 5 Commode by Martin Carlin, Buckingham Palace. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021

his century. The study of his posthumous sale catalogue reveals more tangible aspects of his taste, identifying new items

from his collection and acknowledging his role of avant-gardist yet nostalgic collector and patron.

PAUL GALLOIS

- 1 J.-J. Fiechter, *Le Baron Pierre-Victor de Besenval (1721–1791)* (Lausanne, 1993).
- 2 M. Arin, 'Nobility v. Nation: Conflicting Justices in the Early French Revolution Trials of Lambesc, Besenval, and Favras (1789–1790)', 10 May 2017, thesis, University of South Carolina, pp. 62–79.
- 3 J. J. Dardel, *L'hôtel de Besenval: siège de l'ambassade de Suisse en France* (Geneva, 2013).
- 4 Discussed in G. Scherf, 'Claude-Michel dit Clodion', in *Nouvelles acquisitions du Département des Sculptures du Musée du Louvre (1984–1987)* (Paris, 1988). Musée du Louvre: R.F. 4104, 4105, 4200.
- 5 NG 6598.
- 6 Discussed by Humphrey Wine in *The Eighteenth Century French Paintings* (London, 2018), pp. 118–41; Luc-Vincent Thiéry, *Guide des Amateurs et des étrangers*, II (1787), 574–80: 'Hôtel de M. le Baron de Bézenval'; A.-J. Paillet, *Catalogue de tableaux précieux* [...] (Paris, P. F. Julliot fils, J. Paillet, G. H. Laroche, L. F. J. Boileau, 23 Thermidor An III (10 August 1795), Lugt no. 5356.
- 7 C. B. Bailey, *The Age of Watteau, Chardin and Fragonard. Masterpieces of French Genre Painting*, exhibition catalogue (Ottawa, Washington and Berlin, 2003–04), cat. no. 105, reproduced p. 335, discussed pp. 334 and 375.
- 8 Private collection, Paris, illustrated in Wine, op. cit. (see note 6), p. 118.
- 9 L. Courajod, *Livre-journal de Lazare Duvaux, marchand bijoutier ordinaire du roy, 1748–1758*, II (Paris, 1873), nos 300, 303, 2462, 2498, pp.

- 29, 30, 280, 283; Besenval's name appears five times from 1749 until 1756. On 15 April 1756, he purchased item no. 2462: *une théière violette & bleu céleste, 120 l.* This teapot is listed in Besenval's 1795 posthumous sale as lot 140. On 3 June 1756, Besenval purchased item no. 2498: *un lustre de bohème à 6 branches, monté à consoles, 288 l.* This chandelier is listed in Besenval's 1795 posthumous sale as lot 192.
- 10 Sotheby's, New York, 9 December 1994, lot 136; Christie's, London, 14 December 2005, lot 45. Other pairs, with slightly different mounts to the carps' lips, are known: in the Royal Collection (RCIN 360); in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; in the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (1927.165; 1927.166); at Harewood House, Yorkshire; and a pair sold by Lord Robert Crichton-Stuart, Sotheby's, London, 3 July 1959, lot 114; another pair was sold (without dating) from the Basil and Elise Gouland collection at Christie's, London, 11 June 1992, lot 64.
 - 11 Lazare Duvaux's *livre-journal* lists several ormolu-mounted celadon *poissons*, the first being a pair delivered to Jeanne Antoinette Poisson, marquise de Pompadour (1721–64), purchased on 16 October 1750; a pair mounted as ewers was sold to the 'Prince de Turenne' on 13 December 1754; another pair mounted as ewers was sold on 20 March 1756 to 'Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans'; Paris, 14 February 1768, lot 86.
 - 12 Inv. nos 820, 820A, 1882; Christie's, London, 4 December 1975, lot 47; Sotheby's, Paris, 22 October 2008, lot 58.
 - 13 Christie's, London, 6 December 2007, lot 130.
 - 14 One is now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. no. 49.7.80–81; the other was sold at Christie's, London, 26 March 1953, lot 20.
 - 15 This piece has been identified by Mary-Anne Stevens and is illustrated in S. Mouquin, *Les arts décoratifs en Europe* (Paris, 2020), p. 14. I am grateful to Christophe de Quénetaïn for this reference.
 - 16 RCIN 478. Illustrated in J. Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen*, 11 (London, 2017), pp. 610–11, cat. 1429–30.
 - 17 Paris, 22 April 1782, lot 84. This sale catalogue was sold at Christie's, Paris, 2 April 2016, lot 46. These vases were bought in the Radix de Sainte-Foy sale for 923 livres by Lebrun for the duc d'Aumont, and were previously in the collection of the duchesse de Mazarin (1759–1826). These vases reappeared in the duc d'Aumont sale in December of the same year with a different base, as illustrated as marginalia in one of his sale catalogues sold at Binoche & Giquello, Paris, 28 November 2018, lot 6. A pair of similar ormolu-mounted turquoise porcelain vases with snake handles was sold at Sotheby's, New York, 6 November 2008, lot 23.
 - 18 According to Thiéry, these vases were placed in his bedroom, op. cit. (see note 6), p. 578.
 - 19 Sold at Christie's, New York, 20 April 2007, lot 170, now with Galerie Kugel, Paris.
 - 20 A. Pradère, "'Curieux des Indes'", Julliot and the Fashion for Boulle Furniture, 1750–1800', in *The Wildenstein Collection — The Compendium*, Christie's, London, 14 and 15 December 2005, pp. 20–29.
 - 21 A. Pradère, 'Les armoires à médailles de l'histoire de Louis XIV par Boulle et ses suiveurs', *Revue de l'Art*, no. 116 (1997), 42–53.
 - 22 According to the Royal Collection Trust the doors of these cabinets are possibly those reused on a pair of cabinets now in the Royal Collection (RCIN 35319).
 - 23 Inv. nos OA 5466, OA 5461; F 386–87. One of these two pairs was sold from the collection of Félix Houphouët-Boigny sold at Osenat, Fontainebleau, 29 June 2008, lot 76; the other was part of the collection of Helena Rubinstein and is now in a private collection and is illustrated in A. Pradère, *Les Ebénistes Français de Louis XIV à la Révolution* (Paris, 1989), p. 73, fig. 9.
 - 24 Illustrated in P. Fuhring, 'Designs for and after Boulle Furniture', *Burlington Magazine*, 134, no. 1071 (June 1992), p. 355. This design was probably executed for the sale of the Lalive de Jully Collection in 1770.
 - 25 A similar *bergère à oreilles* stamped by Claude Chevalignay was sold from the collection of Jean-Louis Remilleux, sold at Christie's Paris, 28 September 2015, lot 356 (previously at Brissonneau Daguerre, Paris, 9 March 2012, lot 192).
 - 26 Lot 191: 'Un grand et magnifique bureau plaqué en ébène, avec son caisson et serre-papiers, richement décoré en caryatides, masque d'Apollon, encadrement de moulures, carderon et autres ornements en cuivre doré. Ce meuble, du meilleur genre, dans le style de Boulle, est encore orné d'une superbe pendule en globe et à cadran tournant, du nom de Stollwerck à Paris. Divers accessoires bien traités contribuent à former le plus bel ensemble, & présente un des meubles distingué qui est été établi dans ce genre. Sa longueur totale est de 7 pieds, profondeur 3 pieds 5 po.'. The measurement of the desk together with the *cartonnier* indicated in the

sale catalogue (total length 7 *pieds* = app. 227.5 cm; width: 3 *pieds* 5 *pouces* = app. 111 cm) matches the measurement of the Lambert ensemble (total length without the later plinth of the *cartonnier* is approx. 230 cm; width of the desk is approx. 109 cm).

- 27 Described in A. Jacquemart, *Histoire du Mobilier, recherches et notes sur les objets d'art qui peuvent composer l'ameublement et les collections de l'homme du monde et du curieux* (Paris, 1876), p. 84. Listed in A. Cottin (Notaire), *Inventaire après le Décès de Monsieur le Baron Gustave de Rothschild*, 26 April–10 June 1912 (The Rothschild Archive, London).
- 28 His stamp also appears on a *bureau* 'à la Grecque' formerly in the collection of Sir Anthony de Rothschild, illustrated in F. J. B. Watson, *Louis XVI Furniture* (London, 1973), cat. no. 109.
- 29 Inv. nos F255, F256.
- 30 Lot 175: 'Une autre belle Pendule, par Julien Leroy, dans sa boîte en portique, sur laquelle est appuyée une figure assise, représentant l'étude en bronze verni : le tout placé sur un

grand socle d'ébène, richement décoré de bronze doré'; another example of this model called 'à la Geoffrin', with same Vitruvian scrolling frieze, was part of the collection of Horace Walpole (1717–97), and sold at Christie's, London, 23 June 1999, lot 120.

- 31 RCIN 39206.
- 32 Joseph Baumhauer, *ébéniste privilégié du Roi*, c. 1749.
- 33 J. Parker, 'A Stove from the Hôtel de Besenval: A Model for its Gilt-Bronze Ornament', *Antologia di Belle Arti*, 2728 (Turin, 1985).
- 34 RCIN 2588.
- 35 J. Roberts, *Royal Treasures, A Golden Jubilee Celebration* (London, 2002).
- 36 C. Baulez, 'Marie-Josèphe Laguerre, diva et collectionneuse', *L'Objet d'Art*, 416 (2006), 118–30.
- 37 J. Bottger, *Konstamlingarna a de Svenska Kungliga Slotten*, 11 (Stockholm, 1900), p. 5, pl. 127; Mes Couturier et de Nicolay, Paris, 31 March 1994, lot 31.
- 38 Private collection.

A Presentation Box for Nicholas Goodison

I was approached regarding making this box by John Makepeace, as he had seen my work at an exhibition and felt my work would lend itself to this particular commission. I use native timbers for my boxes and combine them with resin castings to preserve the gnarly waney edges of the wood. The request was to use English burr elm, and I happened to have a particularly good slab which I had been saving for a special occasion.

The box itself presented a challenge to my usual approach to making in that I usually work in a fluid, material-driven way and make boxes to the size that best utilizes the particular piece of timber I have chosen. With this commission, I had to work backwards from my usual approach in that I knew the dimensions

of what was to go in the box (a copy of the 2020 volume of Furniture History, dedicated to Nicholas) and had to calculate the dimensions outwards from this. Having worked out the approximate external dimensions, I made simple templates from clear plastic sheets for the lid and sides, which allowed me to position them on the piece of timber in order to align the grain, resin and lid to identify where to cut. Working with the waney edge of the timber and a resin infill requires a special awareness in understanding how the timber will look when resawn to create book-matched sides, and how the waney-edged lid will then sit within this.

Once marked out and cut roughly to size, the sides are then put into a mould and cast with the resin to create a solid plank before resawing and planing to thickness. The resin is mixed with microbubbles and graphite powder, which stabilizes the resin and reduces the chance of expansion or contraction. The sides are cut to final size and mitre joints cut before being assembled; the base is 10 mm birch ply lined on the bottom with leather, and a birch ply lid is also fitted into a rebate. The elm for the lid is then glued onto the plywood and infilled with the same resin mix as the sides. This means the lid and sides become a single piece, which makes the box more rigid and less liable to movement in the future.



The exterior



The interior

I normally make wooden strap hinges. However, this box was not as tall as my usual pieces, so I used stainless steel rail hinges from a UK manufacturer which contrasted nicely with the graphite. The box was then lined using a vivid red sheep leather with a recess created to house the book it was designed for. The finishing touch is the inner lining, which is made from English sycamore dyed black to provide a further contrast to the leather and hinges.

JONATHON VAIKSAAR

Membership Subscriptions and Emails

A significant number have yet to pay their 2020–21 subscriptions. If a renewal notice has been included with the *Newsletter*, then, according to our records, you are on the list of unpaid fees. Please complete the renewal form, together with payment by either cheque or provide credit card details. Alternatively, you can go online

and pay via debit/credit card or set up a direct debit if you have a UK bank account.

Please note that failure to renew will, as per the rules of the Society, result in no further publications being sent. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the finance and membership officer Keith Nicholls, email: finance@furniturehistorysociety.org; tel.: +44 (0) 7951 211 996.

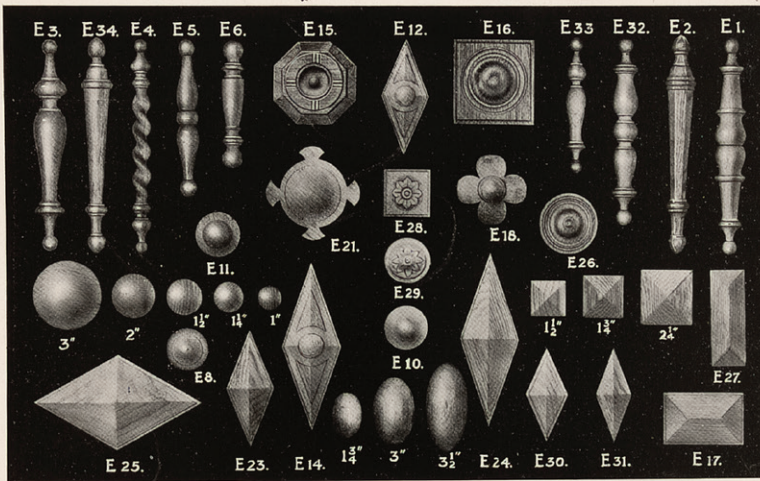
With regard to emails, a number of members have opted out of receiving communication in this format. Whilst you will not receive notification of lectures, events, etc., you will still receive emails concerning your membership as this is the most cost-effective method of communication from the Furniture History Society.

KEITH NICHOLLS

Other News

Following on from the article on coffin handles in the November *Newsletter*, members may like to know that the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) at Middlesex University holds a catalogue of the firm that made them, E. J. Sandall of Liverpool. It is undated but was almost certainly produced between the wars. This shows a large variety of ready-made furniture parts, including mouldings, legs, mirror pillars, balusters and applied 'Jacobean' ornament. The catalogue includes photographs of their mills in Great Newton Street and of the showroom at Pembroke Place, Liverpool, with a fine array of products in the window. A letter

Stocked in
American Oak,
Etc.



Various
Pattern
"Jacobean"
Ornaments,
Etc.

Finished sizes.

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| No. E.1 9" Turned Drop (Half Section) | No. E.12 4½" × 2" Turned Centre Diamond | No. E.24 7" × 2½" Moulded and Bevelled Diamond | No. E.31 Plain Bevelled Diamonds 4½" × 2½" & 4" × 1½" |
| No. E.2 9" Octagonal Drop (Half Section) | No. E.14 7" × 2½" Turned Centre Diamond | No. E.25 7" × 4" and 9" × 3½" Moulded and Bevelled Diamonds | No. E.32 9" Turned Drop (Half Section) |
| No. E.3 9" Turned Drop (Half Section) | No. E.15 3½" × 3½" Octagonal Panel, Centre | No. E.26 3" Fancy Turned Button | No. E.33 6" Turned Drop (Half Section) |
| No. E.4 9" Twist Drop (Half Section) | No. E.16 3½" × 3½" Panel Centre | No. E.27 4" × 1½" Bevelled Oblong | No. E.34 Turned Drops 6" & 9" (Half Section). |
| No. E.5 6" Turned Drop (Half Section) | No. E.17 3½" × 2½" Moulded and Bevelled Oblong | No. E.28 Carved Ornaments, 1½" and 2" | Plain Buttons 1", 1½", 1½", 2" and 3" |
| No. E.6 8" Turned Drop (Half Section) | No. E.18 3" Fancy Panel Ornament | No. E.29 Carved Rosettes, 1½" and 2" | Turned Ovals (Half Section) 1½", 3" and 3½" |
| No. E.8 2" Turned Button | No. E.21 4" Panel Ornament | No. E.30 3½" × 1½" Moulded and Bevelled Diamond | Bevelled Squares 1½" 1½" and 2½" |
| No. E.10 2" Turned Button | No. E.23 4½" × 2" Moulded and Bevelled Diamond | | |

E. J. SANDALL,

LIVERPOOL.

A choice of 'Jacobean' motifs by E. J. Sandall, Liverpool, probably 1930s

sent with the catalogue records that the founding date of the firm was 1895. They produced mouldings and parts in mahogany and oak, which one might expect, but also used hazel for mouldings — not commonly thought of as a furniture wood. They offered a range of embossed as well as carved mouldings. These decorative elements must have spread far and wide in complete anonymity and Sandall's would have been one among many such manufacturers.

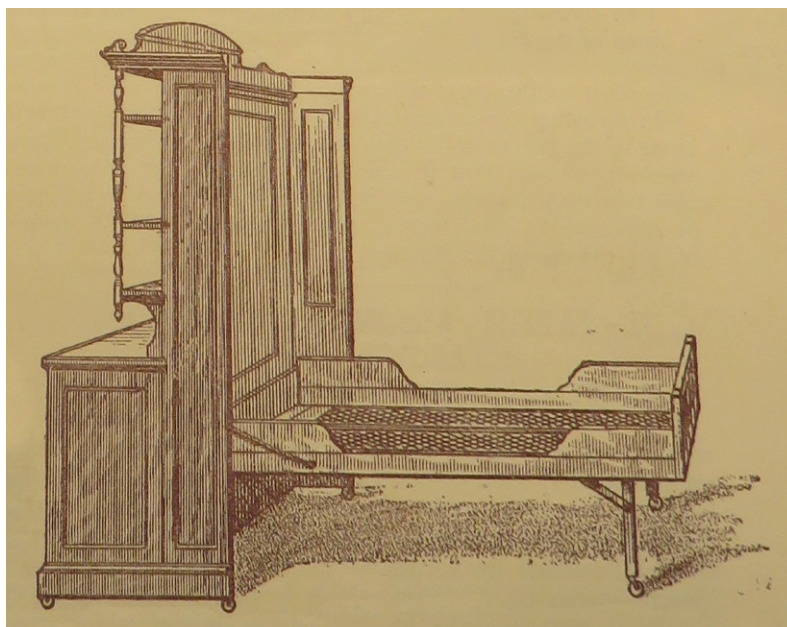
The catalogue is a reminder of the varied resources for the study of the twentieth-century interior held by MoDA (www.moda.mdx.ac.uk). They are best

known for the archive of the Silver Studio, but their wide-ranging material is worth exploring through their online catalogue.

SARAH MEDLAM

Unusual Furniture: Those Inventive Victorians!

Spotted in *The Furniture Gazette*, 1 April 1888, pp. 129–30, a 'combined sideboard folding bed' and 'combined bookcase and folding bed'. Despite both being on castors, they seem a rather cumbersome affair, and one would hope relatively stable. According to the article, 'All that is necessary in order to make the sleeping



Combined sideboard
folding bed when in
use as a bedstead

accommodation in question available,
is to move the sideboard away from the
wall towards the centre of the room [...] [it] is so well balanced that it can be easily
pulled down with one hand, when the foot

rest will fall into its place and behold we
have a snug and comfortable bed, with
spring mattress and bedding all in proper
position'.

SHARON GOODMAN

Tribute

Della Howard (25 December 1924– 13 November 2020)

Della Howard, who died a few weeks before her ninety-sixth birthday on Christmas Day, was a beacon of art, beauty, love, hope and Roman Catholicism. A member of the FHS for many years, she unfailingly attended both the Annual Symposium and AGM, as well as many events and visits. She bought a computer at the start of lockdown especially so that she could watch the FHS lectures on Zoom — and did not miss a single one. Her passion for furniture was evident in her home, where a newly acquired piece straight from the pages of *Country Life*, Christie's or Sotheby's might suddenly appear. In recent years, this was a dazzling William and Mary bureau bookcase.

Fedellma Teresa Mary Brennan (always known as Della) was born on Christmas Day 1924, one of six children of a doctor from Patrickswell in County Limerick. Her Catholic family was strongly Anglophile, her three brothers serving proudly in the British army. Arriving in London in the 1940s, she is believed to have worked as a doctor's receptionist, sympathetic to post-war problems. In 1951, she married Denis Howard, director of the family chemical manufacturing firm which invented aspirin. He was an art dealer and collector, whose brother would become the famous

military historian Sir Michael Howard OM. With her beloved Denis, who died in 1994, Della travelled all over Europe, finding rare and beautiful items for private collectors. She especially loved the Maastricht Art Fair. Known for her good taste, she advised her local Knightsbridge friends on what to acquire at Christie's.

Exuberant but modest in her extrovert Irish nature and charm, Della Howard declared that she liked to go out every evening, well into her nineties. This was often to one of the private views, lectures or parties given by the many organizations to which she belonged. As well as the FHS, she was a generous donor to the Georgian Group, the Irish Georgian Society, the



Venice in Peril Fund, the Chelsea Physic Garden, the Patrons' groups of both the Wallace Collection and the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Chopin Society and many others. She especially loved to help young scholars, and to the FHS she gave a sum of £10,000 to enable young members to attend lectures and visits at no expense to themselves. She also tried to make introductions for them to experts who might help them onto the competitive ladder for careers in the art world.

Hers was no shallow knowledge, encompassing the ability to understand the various threads in an individual collection. She had always been interested in Horace Walpole, including reading his novels, and was especially thrilled by the restoration of Strawberry Hill and the exhibitions of his collections both there and in the V&A. Similarly, after a trip which included a visit to William Beckford's home at Monkwearmouth in Portugal, Beckford became a minor obsession. In 2019, aged ninety-four, she especially travelled to Wiltshire to view the restoration of the remains of Fonthill Abbey and the private new home constructed there. She was also a great reader, saying in lockdown that she was never lonely while she had her books.

Della Howard's greatest enthusiasm was for the Roman Catholic Church, in

particular her neighbour, the Brompton Oratory, to which she was an exceptionally generous and discreet donor. She paid for the restoration of the Little Oratory Chapel while, ever aware of the problems of the poor, she gave large donations through Catholic funds. For the main Oratory church she commissioned a frescoed background to a sculpted Calvary. The artist was Alan Dodd, the painter of her own parcel-gilt Gothic dining room with its five Irish castles.

Always clad in glamorous full-length Indian tunics, neatly fastened with heavy costume necklaces and brooches, and with her high blonde hair permanently coiffed, Della Howard's was a distinctive silhouette. Well known as a Knightsbridge hostess, guests enjoyed her lunch and dinner parties, as well as drinks in her little 'oratory' garden on a veranda. February lunches to see the snowdrops at Chelsea Physic Garden were supplemented by summer dinner parties in the restaurant there, with carefully selected guests at a round table over which she could preside, manoeuvring the conversation in the Continental manner. She was full of life and perpetual fun: an example of how to live fully to the last possible moment.

ROSEMARY BAIRD ANDREAE

FHS Events

Online Events

Online events are arranged at shorter notice than our normal visits, and we cannot advertise them in the *Newsletter* in the same way owing to publication lead-in times. We will email links to free lectures and society events to all members about a week before they take place. If you would like to make a diary note of forthcoming online events, please keep checking the FHS website where there is an up-to-date list.

We plan to continue to arrange FHS online lectures on a wide range of national and international topics, generally on Sunday evenings at 7.00 pm GMT, alternating with lectures arranged by Adriana Turpin on behalf of BIFMO (British and Irish Furniture Makers Online) which will concentrate on British and Irish topics.

We also plan to arrange some seminar-format online events on mid-week evenings: the first one will be on Wednesday 24 March 2021 with the John Bedford archive at the University of Leeds hosted by Dr Mark Westgarth, and the second, on Wednesday 14 April 2021 on Conservation, hosted by Dr Tessa Murdoch and Yannick Chastang, so please look out for joining instructions for these.

Going forward there may be some online events for which a small fee will be charged to cover our costs. Arrangements for joining these will be given on the website and sent to all members by email.

If you have any enquiries, or suggestions for future speakers or topics, please email events@furniturehistorysociety.org, or telephone 07775 907390.

Report on the Online Lecture Programme

AUTUMN SEASON: 6 SEPTEMBER TO 6 DECEMBER 2020

Our second free online lecture series, developed in response to the continuing postponement of all physical events during the pandemic, enabled us to meet our key aim of promoting research and knowledge about furniture history. We are most grateful to the speakers for their contributions to this exciting innovation for the Society. As part of the series, Adriana Turpin, on behalf of BIFMO (British and Irish Furniture Makers Online), continued to arrange lectures on alternate weeks.

6 September 2020: Curating SOLD! Dealers, Museums, and the Art Market, by Dr Mark Westgarth, Associate Professor in Art History & Museum Studies, University of Leeds.

13 September 2020: BIFMO lecture: Ernest Gimson's Furniture Business, by Annette Carruthers, Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews.



Curating SOLD! Dealers, Museums, and the Art Market, by Dr Mark Westgarth.
Image courtesy of The Bowes Museum. © The Bowes Museum 2019

20 September 2020: Valuing Old, Making New and Selling Both: The Beurdeleys in Paris (1818–95), by Camille Mestdagh, independent scholar and lecturer.

27 September 2020: BIFMO lecture: St Martin's Lane: Art, Design, and the Cultural Geography of the Eighteenth-Century London Art World, by Dr Stacey Sloboda, Faculty member of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA.

18 October 2020: Imported British Furniture for the South, by Tom Savage, Director of External Affairs, Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library.

22 October 2020: Annual Lecture with Bertrand de Royere: 'Pelagio Palagi,

decorator of the royal palaces of Turin and Piedmont'.

1 November 2020: 'A rich stone table inlaid': The Paston Collection and the Re-Discovery of the *pietre dure* Table-top, by Dr Francesca Vanke, Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art, Norwich Museums.

8 November 2020: BIFMO lecture: Reattributing the Chippendale Daybeds at Stanway House: The Case for Scottish Makers Alexander Peter and William Mathie, by Dr Sebastian Pryke, independent scholar and owner of the shop 'At the Sign of the Pelican', Cupar, Scotland.

22 November 2020: Transforming a Town Hall into a Royal Palace: Empire Furniture in Amsterdam, by



P.P. Horrix, Bed, The Hague, 1818.
Mahogany, gilt-bronze, size unknown.
Royal Palace Amsterdam, 4-172

Wilhelmina Castelijns Van Beek, Keeper
of the Royal Furniture, The Netherlands.

6 December 2020: In association with
the French Porcelain Society, In Honour
of the life and Achievements of the Late
Gillian Brendon Wilson (1941–2019), by
Anna Somers Cocks.

Recordings of these lectures will be
available through a new Members page
on the FHS website. The username and
password can be requested by contacting
Events Secretary Beatrice Goddard
(events@furniturehistorysociety.org).

Thank you

David Wurtzel, who has been a committed
and active member of the FHS Events
Committee for twenty years, has stepped
down after becoming Chair of the Events
Committee for the Decorative Arts
Society. We would like to thank David for
all his excellent work for the Society.

For the FHS, he, assisted by Robert
Wilson, organized several successful
Overseas Study Trips, notably in the US.
His background in law ensured very
detailed planning and he also made sure
that there was a great deal of variety. In
1994, he led a trip to New York and the
Hudson River Valley, and in 2002, to Los
Angeles, where visits included the Getty
Museum with curator Gillian Wilson,
Warner Bros. Studio, Union Station, the
Gamble and Greene houses in Pasadena
and Hearst Castle. Further US visits
followed: San Francisco in 2006 and New
York in 2012. David described the visit to
the 'Extravagant Inventions: The Princely
Furniture of the Roentgens' exhibition at
the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the
November 2020 issue of this *Newsletter*.
David also organized a visit to Krakow
in 2005 as well as day visits to the Royal
Courts of Justice and Middle Temple,
including one planned for Autumn 2020
that we plan to rearrange as soon as it
becomes possible.

Members who have benefited from
David's company on society visits will
remember his impromptu talks whilst
travelling that elucidated the historical and
political context. The DAS are fortunate
to have such a passionate ambassador for
culture at their helm.

Call for advice on a digital strategy for the FHS

Can you help?

The FHS is looking for a volunteer with digital communications skills to advise us on a short-term basis.

Digital communications have become essential to all of us during the Covid crisis and will continue to grow in importance in the future. We would like to review our digital strategy and grow our online

profile, building on the success already achieved through online events, Instagram and the FHS website.

If you have experience and skills in the comms field, and would be interested to help us improve our online offer, please contact Beatrice, our Events Secretary, at events@furniturehistorysociety.org.

Many thanks,

KATE HAY AND DAVID OAKLEY

Co-chairs, Events Committee

Discoveries and Research Developments

Call for Short Articles on Discoveries and Research Developments

Have you discovered something you would like to share with the Society? While face-to-face events are suspended during the Covid-19 crisis, we would like to make use of the *Newsletter* space to publish short articles on discoveries made on Society visits, or other discoveries and developments relevant to furniture history. Please send suggestions to research@furniturehistorysociety.org.

New Information About the Life and Work of Gerrit Jensen (1667–1715)

Gerrit Jensen is already well known as the leading cabinet-maker working in late Stuart England. Born in Holland around 1634–35, he was established in his trade in London by 1667 when he was made free of the Joiners' Company by redemption. Jensen was a Catholic and remained so all his life, a fact that assumed some importance in his early career. Although his patrons included the senior nobility by at least 1672, it was not until 1686 that he was appointed as Cabinet-maker in Ordinary to the Crown, a position he held until a few months before his death.¹

Nevertheless, Jensen undertook several commissions for the Great Wardrobe prior to his official appointment, beginning in 1680 when he was paid £80 10s for a cabinet, table, stands, mirrors and strongbox intended as diplomatic gifts to the Emperor of Morocco. In 1679, he was also described in a petition to the House of Lords as Cabinet-maker in Ordinary to Queen Catherine of Braganza, Portuguese consort to Charles II.

Information that has recently come to light, however, shows that Jensen was working for Queen Catherine by at least 1674, some five years earlier than previously known. In a study of Catholic members of Catherine's household, Eilish Gregory listed Jensen among a group of servants threatened with expulsion from the Queen's service.² In 1673, Parliament had passed the Test Act, requiring holders of civil and military office to swear a declaration denying transubstantiation, part of a series of attacks designed to purge Catholics from public office. The following year, the Privy Council decreed that inferior servants of the Queen's household who were Catholics should be convicted as recusants and deprived of office, and this applied to Jensen. The minutes of the Privy Council record that 'Gerrard Johnson y^e Queens Cabinet Maker' petitioned for a discharge from prosecution, arguing that the indictment

'threatens y^e Petitioners ruine, and will disable him from attending his Majesty's service'.³ The *nolle prosequis* (immunity from prosecution) was duly granted. It was certainly Queen Catherine who was Jensen's first royal patron, and ironically it may be Jensen's Catholic faith, shared with the Queen, that facilitated his introduction to royal service. Significantly, it was the Catholic James II who first appointed him as Cabinet-maker in Ordinary to the Crown. Although Jensen did not abandon his faith, in 1689 he saw fit to swear the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to the new Protestant monarchs, William III and Mary II. He continued to hold his royal appointment under Queen Anne, supplying the last Stuart monarchs with a great many tables, stands, *bureaux*, mirrors and more.

Further new information about Jensen's work has also been discovered among the correspondence of Aaron Kinton and James Whildon, the London and Derbyshire receivers of William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire, held in the Devonshire Collections at Chatsworth.⁴ Jensen's work at Chatsworth is already well known, where he supplied furniture, window and mirror glass and installed a lacquer closet. The letters, one of which is from Jensen himself, reveal that he was also employed on the renovations at Devonshire House, the Duke's principal London residence and one of the most important aristocratic town houses. In 1696, Devonshire had purchased Berkeley House in Piccadilly, renaming it and embarking on a major refurbishment. Many of the same team



Anon., Devonshire House, Piccadilly (formerly Berkeley House), c. 1735, watercolour on paper. © The Trustees of the British Museum

of artists and craftsmen worked both at Chatsworth and Devonshire House, including architect William Talman, mural painter Louis Laguerre, joiner Henry Lobb and upholsterer Francis Lapiere.

Although Jensen had already supplied window glass and mirrors to Chatsworth, the cost-conscious Duke hoped that his builder, Launce, might be able to source the glass for Devonshire House more cheaply. Jensen ultimately won the contract on the grounds of price and quality, reassuring the Duke that 'my noble Lord need not feare but his Designe of the Glass will answer his Graces desire and make noe Doubt but his Grace will be sattisfied of his price [...] for its Cheaper by far and better than Launces was'. The clincher was size: the output of Launce's unknown manufacturer was unreliable, whereas Jensen could guarantee to supply large panels of mirror glass of up to 42 inches in length. Crucially, this meant that the bars between the panels of glass would be far enough apart to allow an uninterrupted reflection of the viewer, ensuring that 'it will be higher than his Graces periwig or any Ladyes high [head] Dress'.⁵ In a decade when gentlemen's wigs and ladies' hairstyles reached towering heights, this was an important selling-point.

Relatively few pieces of furniture survive that can be definitely attributed to Jensen, despite his position at the forefront of English cabinet-making. This new information about Jensen's early royal patronage highlights the significance of his Catholicism and his place in the

circle of artisans around Queen Catherine of Braganza in the 1670s. The range of work he undertook for aristocratic patrons such as Devonshire underscores the importance of Jensen's glass-making business alongside his cabinet-making. Several previously unstudied bills from Jensen have also recently been discovered among the archives of Elizabeth Seymour, Duchess of Somerset (1667–1722), and will be discussed at further length in the next issue of *Furniture History* (2021). The British and Irish Furniture Makers Online entry for Jensen has been updated to reflect these new discoveries, and it is hoped that further information will continue to come to light.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Adam Bowett. Citations by permission of The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth.

AMY LIM

DPhil Candidate

University of Oxford/Tate

- 1 'Jensen, Gerrit (1667–1715)', *British and Irish Furniture Makers Online*, <https://bifmo.history.ac.uk/entry/jensen-gerrit-1680-1715>.
- 2 Eilish Gregory, 'Catherine of Braganza's Relationship with her Catholic Household', in *Forgotten Queens in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by V. Schutte and E. Paraque (London, 2018), pp. 129–48.
- 3 The National Archives, London PC 2/64, vol. 11, fol. 298.
- 4 The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth Whildon Group C. Philip Riden is currently preparing an edition of the correspondence for publication by the Derbyshire Record Society.
- 5 The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth W/C/227 & W/C/226.

Book Reviews

For the next *Newsletter* 222, May 2021, Dr Wolf Burchard, Associate Curator in the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Department of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, will be the Book Reviews Editor, taking over from our President, Simon Swynfen Jervis (who himself succeeded Dr Reinier Baarsen in *Newsletter* 191, August 2013). Suggestions for reviews should be sent to Dr Burchard at The Metropolitan Museum, 1000 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10028, USA (email: Wolf.Burchard@metmuseum.org; tel. + 1 212 650 2208).

LIAT NAEH and DANA BROSTOWSKY GILBOA (eds), *The Ancient Throne, The Mediterranean, Near East and Beyond, from the 3rd Millennium BCE to the 14th Century CE*, *Oriental and European Archaeology* 14 (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2020). 215 pp., 29 col., 71 b. & w. illus. ISBN 978-3-7001-8556-7. €120

In 1998 this *Newsletter* reviewed *The Furniture of Western Asia, Ancient and Traditional* (Mainz, 1966), edited by Georgina Herrmann and comprising twenty-two articles derived from a conference held at the London Institute of Archaeology in 1993. The present volume, comprising an introduction and ten articles derived from a workshop held in Vienna in 2016, may be considered a smaller specialized sequel, with a tighter thematic



Mordecai seated on a Salomonic throne, detail of a wall painting from the synagogue at Dura Europos (Syria), c. 245 AD

scope, concentrated on thrones rather than furniture in general. Its articles range from the concrete (Elizabeth Simpson, the only author inherited from *Western Asia*, effectively demolishes a theory that an ivory statuette found at Delphi might have formed part of a throne, celebrated by Herodotus, which was dedicated to Apollo by King Midas of Phrygia) to the ethereal (Allegra Iafrate explores literary references to the throne of Solomon, tracing its mechanical attributes from early rabbinic accounts of uncertain date to Byzantium — shades of Yeats's 'Miracle, bird or golden handiwork' — to later rabbinic sources and finally to an account by the Persian scholar al-Tha'labi (d. AD 1035) in which the whirling throne has moving vultures, peacocks and lions among its attributes).

The very full bibliographies (one article lists 124 references, another 114) constitute a conspectus of scholarship devoted to vast temporal and geographic expanses, over more than four millennia from Mycenae to Mongolia. Emphatic persuasive definitions, 'Ritual performance is an embodied communicative event that materializes ideology and defines political reality', forceful theoretical language, 'agentive mechanisms', and splendidly orotund formulations, the Greek of Linear B as a 'palatial superdialectal *Hochsprache*', make a piquant contrast to the frequently slender, fragmentary and scattered evidence, which necessarily involves much hypothetical speculation, more or less tentative ('may', 'may even', 'not inconceivable', 'quite possible' and so on).

There are few surviving objects. The eighth-century BC ivory covered chair, 'T', from Salamis in Cyprus was recognizable as such when excavated in 1966 (its original state illustrated in Herrmann, pl. 22). Here Christina Ruth Johnson subjects it to a detailed analysis which leads her to suggest that it was intended to express kingship. Niccolò Manassero examines the group of forty ivory furniture fragments, probably late second century BC, discovered in about 1950 in the 'treasury' at Nisa in Turkmenistan, along with no fewer than fifty ivory rhytons, the whole deposit being recorded *in situ* in a Soviet-era drawing. The reconstruction of the furniture items proves problematic, but a putative royal funerary banquet ritual, of Hellenistic inspiration, may be the key.

Representations of thrones, sometimes schematic and often enigmatic, are another form of evidence. Claudia E. Suter

reviews Mesopotamian throne variations, while Caroline J. Tully and Sam Crooks examine Minoan ritual platforms and the 'throne' at Knossos itself, the shape of whose back is interpreted at a stylized mountain. A review by Yael Yung of depictions of thrones and associated seats on Attic black-figure vases confirms the established identification of a high-backed seat as a throne; once, on an amphora in the Louvre, such a seat is even labelled *thronos* (θρόνος). But multiple seats may muddy the waters. Visual evidence from manuscripts assists Sheila Blair in her analysis of conventions of enthronement practised by the Mongol dynasties founded by Genghis Khan, with emphasis on the changed status of women, as rulers and khanates became more settled.

Two articles are predominantly documentary: Vassilis Petrakis uses Linear B Mycenaean inventories in an attempt to tease out the significance of *thórnoi* or *thrónoi*, followed by an analysis of the later *thronos* (θρόνος) in Homeric Greek, leading to a suggestion that the term implied an important chair, but not necessarily the seat of a ruler; and Aaron Koller provides evidence from Akkadian, Old Aramaic and Hebrew documents to suggest that, while the throne was a symbol of kingship throughout Mesopotamia, the Hittite world and Egypt, it was in the Levant accompanied by the staff, rather than the crown.

Historians of furniture who focus on recent centuries are accustomed to a much greater wealth of evidence, be it in the form of surviving objects, documents or illustrations, than that available to those working on the furniture of antiquity.

The Ancient Throne will evidently be of primary interest to these latter. But modern historians may also find much to learn from it, both through the variety of approaches represented and from its concentration on symbolic and cultural significances, and from the ingenuity, requiring disciplined speculation, with which the limited or circumstantial evidence is mined.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

PETER RATH AND JOSEF HOLEY (translated and edited by PETER RATH), *Furniture in the Air: The Crystal Chandelier in Europe* (Weitra: Verlag Bibliothek der Provinz, 2020). 396 pp., c. 800 col. and b. & w. illus. ISBN 978-3-99028-891-7. €65

Any member of the Furniture History Society entering the Victoria and Albert Museum from the Cromwell Road must surely, occasionally, gaze in wonder at the miracle of twisting coloured glass in the central lobby — Chihuly's extraordinary chandelier of 2001. For them, and I hope for many more, this book will both delight and inform.

Peter Rath, senior partner of the Viennese glass and chandelier company Lobmeyr, has based this conspectus of the history of European chandelier design and manufacture from the early medieval period to the present on his own extensive knowledge and experience, but also on the massive archive of photos, maps, prints, text and sketches assembled by Josef Holey (1899–1986), housed with the Lobmeyr records. Holey, born and trained in glass manufacture in Goblentz (now Czech Republic),

resettled his workforce and production at Trappenkamp near Hamburg during Germany's reconstruction after the Second World War. From 1968 he concentrated on his archive of European chandelier history, focusing on Austria and Germany but also including chandeliers of Austrian or German origin across the world, from Hapsburg possessions in the Iberian Peninsula, Italy and South America, to British Imperial India and to more modern commissions for royal palaces and mosques in the Middle East, government offices in Russia, hotels, concert halls and theatres across the USA and Australia. Holey projected a full published inventory of the chandeliers he discovered, extant, destroyed or unaccounted for, but his death saw his task incomplete. It has now been finished by Peter Rath, who has published this book in 1,200 German copies, and 800 in English.

Clear divisions cover the early history of chandeliers in Europe, when in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries rock crystal mined in the Alps was used in Italy, France and Germany to create objects of sumptuous luxury for royal courts, and the development of glass which allowed increasingly elaborate structures through the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Distinction is drawn between the construction of French and French-inspired chandeliers using ormolu or brass frames, and those of Austrian and German manufacture using steel.

Later chapters cover the design and manufacture of chandeliers for electricity, with insights into revolutionary new materials and modern design, up to the present, demonstrating the continuing

desire to create dramatic 'Furniture in the Air'. Rath also delivers his own homily on the over-use of light in today's interiors, obliterating delicate effects of light and shade, and argues for carefully considered contrast in the lit interior. Much useful guidance is given on the conservation cleaning, repair, transport and storage of these delicate objects.

Finally, Rath presents a lavish gallery of photographs, sketches and other material from the vast Holeý archive, and lists places where chandeliers are to be found: museums, historic palaces and houses, and churches, including those exhibited at the great world fairs between 1851 and 2020. Illustrations are prolific, both for details of components and assembly as well as finished items, many in colour. Other publications may provide more information about historic lighting in England and the USA, but this is a comprehensive and admirable mine of information on what Rath rightly calls 'sculptures made to gloriously fill the otherwise empty airspace and to be the most valuable object in the room, full of symbolic power'.

LISA WHITE

EDWARD TOWN and ANGELA MCSHANE (with preliminary essays from KEITH WRIGHTSON, GLENN ADAMSON, JUSTIN M. BROWN, GAVI LEVY HASKELL, EDWARD S. COOKE and NATHAN FILS), *Marking Time: Objects, People and Their Lives, 1500–1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020). 518 pp., 300 col. illus. ISBN 9780300254105. £50

Marking Time celebrates the collection of the late John H. Bryan II at Crab Tree

Farm, Lake Bluff, visited by FHS members in 2015. A timeline of some two hundred domestic objects record life in the British Isles from 1500 to 1800. They illustrate childhood and youth, courtship and marriage, hearth and household, fashion and friendship, Crown and Church, power and dominion, measurement and law. Most are English; a handful are from Scotland and Wales. Furnishing textiles, crewel work bed-hangings and an embroidered cabinet lined with salmon pink silk, both dated 1660, embody women's domestic skills. Occasionally the needlewoman is recorded: the four-fold screen embroidered with rustic scenes signed by Elizabeth Wentworth was worked between 1738 and 1742.

The dealers Victor Chinnery, Tobias Jellinek and Alistair Sampson worked closely with John Bryan to source dated oak furniture, illustrating the human passage from cradle to grave: a rocking cradle dated 1673 records the first-born, but extensive wear indicates its service of more than one generation. The 1698 model cradle in North Devon slipware, personalized with the child's initials, was cheaper than a silver spoon, such as might be stored in the 1663 spoon rack from Raby Castle. Other containers include the 1673 tricorn hat box and a 1693 cabinet or perch for drinking glasses, its three doors pierced with the rose of England, the harp of Ireland and the Scottish thistle, each surmounted by a royal crown. The 1651 candle box decorated with chip carving and the initials PHS in a heart was a marriage gift. Dated chests include the 1609 ship's chest and the 1779 coffer of the City of Westminster Society of Bridge



Oak cabinet or perch for storing drinking glasses inscribed 'Maids I advise you have a Care/ Glasses & Lasses are Brittle ware/1693' (p. 272)

Porters. The 1692 parcel gilt and bronze casket which belonged to Josiah Key, blacksmith to the office of works, 1700 to 1711, is similar to that bequeathed by Key to the overseer of the parish of Priors Marston, Warwickshire, where he was buried.

An armchair with the painted coat of arms of Sir Richard Wilbraham (1579–1643) dated 1621, probably records his ascendancy to the baronetcy. This and other seating furniture in the collection was published by Adam Bowett in 2015 as *100 British Chairs*.

A Norfolk Wassail set, 1685, comes from Boton near South Erpingham. Hearthside tools include a pair of bellows from the City of London's Aldersgate Ward, dated 1701 but repaired eighty years later, to keep the ward jurymen warm during the long winter meetings.

A painted bible box still houses its original 1639 King James's family bible bound volume with the Book of Common Prayer (1636) and Book of Psalms (1641). An angle barometer in a walnut frame, from the Moller Collection, 1993, incorporates 'A Perpetual Regulation of Time' with a regnal table from William I to George II.

Jenny Saunt's Afterword captures John Bryan's exceptional generosity in welcoming scholars to his collection and lending to international exhibitions. He was the principal lender of American Arts and Crafts to the V&A's 2005 exhibition. Intended to serve as catalogue for an exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art that was cancelled due to the pandemic, *Marking Time* provides a handsome record for an international audience.

TESSA MURDOCH

Reports on FHS Events

Members will have noticed that the *Newsletter* includes many more photographs than before. The Editor would be grateful if members could send as separate files **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.

In these Covid days, until we can travel freely again, we are revisiting past study events, starting with the 2009 memorable five-day visit to Denmark, with additional comments from the previous weekend tour in 1984.

FHS visits to Denmark in 1984 and 2009

Revisiting Two Denmark Study Tours

In a packed five days, our tour took in three royal palaces, fourteen country castles and manor houses, the last private mansion in Copenhagen and the unique Rosenborg Museum. We ate time-saving box lunches on the coach, took a journey by ferry, stayed in two different country castle hotels and enjoyed a splendid and much-remembered luncheon at historic Aastrup Manor, hosted by Chamberlain Baron Henrik Wedell-Weddellsborg and Baroness Gitte Wedell-Weddellsborg. It was thanks to our wonderfully generous

hosts, their knowledge and planning skills, that the FHS was able to enjoy such a wide-ranging and busy programme.

The Wedell-Weddellsborgs were kind enough to open many private doors to houses that are never open to the public. We could not have had a more interesting and unforgettable study tour. Our much-appreciated leader was Dr Mogens Bencard, former curator of the Royal Danish Collections. Dr Bencard had also led the FHS's 1984 tour.

We learned how the Danish designers were influenced by a melting pot of craftsmen from France, Italy and England working in Copenhagen and Altona (part of Denmark until the 1860s and now a Hamburg suburb). Danish architects, inspired by the Grand Tour and classical architecture, added their own translations of the international architecture vocabulary, furniture and interior design, thus producing their own distinctive designs. The most highly regarded cabinet-maker is Matthias Ortmann (1692–1757), born in Sweden, and described by Mindy Papp as the 'Chippendale of Denmark'. Finely grained Italian walnut was more popular than mahogany and used to great effect on case furniture. Seen today, centuries have produced a warm honey colour, giving the furniture a light appearance. No historic Danish house is complete without a piece of Ortmann furniture.

We saw work by the four prominent architects working in Denmark during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, responsible for major buildings, their interiors and furnishings. Nicolai Eigtved (Danish, 1701–54) in the 1730s and 1740s introduced Rococo styles from France. He was the first Danish-born head of the Royal Danish Academy of Art and a leader in its establishment. Nicolas-Henri Jardin (French, 1720–31), spent seventeen years in Denmark and was a pioneer of neo-classicism. Besides working as Court Architect, he was also employed by prominent families to redesign their homes. Casper Frederik Harsdorff (1735–90), another leading Danish architect of the neo-classical period, was Royal Building Master to the court of King Christian VII. We saw examples of his work in the royal palaces, including furniture. Harsdorff was director of the Royal Danish Academy of Art (1774–80) and is often called ‘The Father of Danish Classicism’. Joseph Christian Lillie (1760–1827) studied under Harsdorff at the Royal Danish Academy of Art. He ran his family’s furniture-making workshop in Copenhagen and in 1790 took over from Georg Roentgen of Neuwed at The Royal Furniture Storehouse, working as inspector and designer. The Storehouse was set up to improve design and sell Danish furniture.

These four worked at the Royal Palace of Fredensborg, which was our first stop. It is the private spring and autumn residence of the Royal Family. We were extremely fortunate to be granted a visit. Fredensborg was originally a baroque building, dating from 1719. It was commissioned as a

hunting lodge and small pleasure palace by Frederik IV in 1720 and designed by John Cornelius Krieger. Nicolai Eigtved (Rococo) expanded the palace in 1753. Nicolas-Henri Jardin redesigned the grounds in the 1760s. In the 1770s, C. F. Harsdorff (neo-classical) added a second storey and updated the interiors. Furniture rescued from Christiansborg is to be found in many of the rooms. Major recent restoration work has been closely monitored by HM Queen Margaretha. John Kidde-Hansen, Palace Steward, led us around the *piano nobile*, the principal rooms and the private apartments. We saw elegant pier glasses above marble-topped consoles supported by trios of gathered *volutes* designed by Harsdorff. There were neo-classical giltwood armchairs from a set of thirty, designed by Jardin in 1766 for Christiansborg. Harsdorff revamped the King’s drawing room in 1777. For many, as noted in the 1984 tour led by Peter Thornton,

The high spot was the black and gold lacquer suite made in China but in the European style and imported to Denmark in 1735–1738 and comprising 12 single chairs with the original gilt-stamped drop-in red leather seats, and cabriole front legs; two tray-top tables and three bureaux cabinets, one with a wasp-waisted centre section, startling geometry and explained as a Chinese maker’s misunderstanding of the European perspective drawing of a writing flap.

In the red drawing room, we admired four newly restored giltwood armchairs in the French manner by J. C. Lillie, made in 1790, rescued and sent to the Amalienborg Palace. From there they were lent to Danish embassies where their provenance was forgotten. They were put up for



Exotic Chinese export black and gold lacquered bureau cabinet 1735–38, from a suite bearing the monograms of King Christian VI and his Queen, at the Royal Palace of Fredensborg

auction in London shortly before our 2009 visit. Luckily, they were recognized, withdrawn from the auction and returned to Denmark.

Onwards, we were knowledgeably led by the Weddell Wedellsborgs and Mogens Bencard to Frederiksdal, a *maison*

de plaisance, inspired by the designs of the French architect, Blondel, and built by Nikolai Eigtved in 1744–45 for Count John Schulin, the King's Privy Councillor. Like most Danish historic houses, the same family still owns the house. We were warmly welcomed by Countess Vibeke Schulin, who has since handed the house on to her late husband's great-nephew. The FHS 1984 report records: 'In the white sun-filled rooms on the *piano nobile* we found a great Savonnerie carpet from the Louvre and given to the Danish King by Louis XIV in 1682', identified in 2009 by Charles Garnett as Savonnerie rug 77 from the Louvre Grand Galerie. Danish walnut commodes, lacquer pieces from Holland, 1740, and North Germany caused learned discussions, as did the set of four sophisticated Danish gilded Rococo consoles below tall pier glasses between windows overlooking the garden. In the dressing room, with its delicate green Chinese wallpaper, probably imported by the Danish East India company, c. 1769, was a black and gold desk owned originally by the prime minister of the era. Countess Schulin displayed on it a part-Augsburg (1710), part-Copenhagen silver toilet service (1743). Upstairs was a must-see — a large white and gold display cabinet for shells, made in 1762 by Lorenz Spengler, a skilled amateur carpenter and Keeper of the Royal Kunstkammer.

Day two started at Amalienborg Palace, where we were escorted by Colonel Jens Greve, Palace Steward. The Palace, set around a spacious square, comprises four romantic and beautiful structures, designed by Nicolai Eigtved between 1750

and 1773, and built for four noblemen. After the disastrous 1794 Christiansborg Palace fire, Amalienborg was sold to the Danish King. We started in Denmark's finest Rococo interior, the Christian VII Palace, HM Queen Margarethe's Copenhagen private residence. Her Majesty had then just completed overseeing a major restoration, involving the design for the Great Hall of new wall lamps and lanterns by Torben Hardenberg, the Danish goldsmith, who described his project. Treasures included the famous Beauvais tapestries, '*la teinture*' by Boucher, a diplomatic gift from Louis XV to Count Moltke for whom the Palace was originally built. The Christian VIII Palace is the Crown Prince of Denmark's private residence. The *piano nobile* with its original furnishings was designed by Abildgaard and newly restored using seventy-five original watercolours.

It was onwards to Funen Island and Aastrup, a 1588 country manor house belonging to a foundation and administered by the Wedell-Wedellsborg family. We enjoyed an elegant and delicious lunch hosted by Gitte and Henrik, whose generosity throughout the whole trip was outstanding. Aastrup boasts one of Europe's most important leather rooms (1680), containing an attractive small Ortmann walnut *bombé* commode made for the house originally and recently re-acquired.

Denmark's longest lime avenue (7 km) is at Ledreborg Castle, a perfect baroque ensemble by J. C. Kreiger, who enlarged an earlier house for Count J. L. Holstein in 1743. Laurits de Thurah took over the embellishment in 1748.



Rococo *bombé* commode by Matthias Ortmann, walnut, with his distinctive carved and gilded lower rail. Private collection

Ledreborg is owned by the same family, its present chatelaine being Silvia Munro, Master of the Royal Hunt, who lives there with her husband, John Munro of Foulis and their children. With its pictures still hung in their original positions, original furnishings, some obtained in 1746 from John Collette, a London merchant, and recently restored formal French eighteenth-century-style gardens, Ledreborg remains in remarkable eighteenth-century condition.

We stayed at Broholm (1326), a moated manor house, with a Renaissance staircase

constructed by Baron Otto Skeel in 1641 and now a family foundation plus excellent hotel. The owner, Kammerdame Anne Lutken, accompanied by her Broholmer dog, welcomed us, showing the unique flint museum, totally designed and built in person by her ancestor, Chamberlain Niels Frederik Bernhard Sehested in the 1860s. It contains 72,000 Stone Age artefacts and a moose skeleton c. 10,000 BC. Since then, Broholm has been handed to her son, Anders Sehested, and is undergoing a government-funded 20 million DKK restoration of the tower and museum.

Juelsberg, in the same family since its 1740 construction, is now, like many Danish historic houses, a private foundation, formed in order to preserve the building and named contents. Erik Juel, Master of the Royal Hunt, greeted us. We admired the unchanged *enfilade* of main rooms with original marquetry commodes, Denmark's other Savonnerie rug from the Grand Galerie at the Louvre and a magnificent clothes cupboard, painted blue with chinoiserie decoration, c. 1770.

Jacob Moltke-Huitfeldt Rozenkrantz, the nineteenth generation of his family at Glorup Manor from 1390, welcomed us to his private home, remodelled in 1700 by Philip de Lange and containing remarkably original contents, including furniture by Ortmann.

The 1984 FHS report remarked: 'Egeskov reminded us of the knight's castle perceived in the folds of some great tapestry'. This 1554 moated Renaissance castle, considered to be one of Denmark's pearls, belongs to Count



Display cabinet in Broholm's Flint Museum, by Chamberlain Niels Frederik Bernhard Sehested in the 1860s. This was the first private museum in Denmark

Michael Ahlefeldt-Laurvig-Bille and Countess Caroline Ahlefeldt, who greeted us. Treasures noted included a pair of giltwood console tables beneath matching pier-glasses, stamped Bannier.

Chamberlain Count Mogens Krag-Juel-Vind-Frijs, Master of the Royal Foxhounds, and Countess Jytte welcomed us with delicious wine and a festive Easter

table to Halsted Kloster, a Benedictine monastery until 1536, when it became the King's property. The Count's family purchased the property in 1720. The beautifully arranged contents including an immaculate walnut *bombé* slope-front Danish Rococo bureau bookcase by Ortmann, reflected the collecting tastes from nine generations.

C. F. Harsdorff remodelled Jomfruens Egede on classical lines in the eighteenth century. Its owner, Niels Peter Schack-Eyber, then ran the house as a comfortable hotel, where we stayed. It has since reverted to private family use.

A brief visit to Lystrup (1579), one of Denmark's smallest Renaissance manor houses, owned by Count Joachim Moltke, had a primary purpose — to discuss an imposing Chinese bureau cabinet, possibly of huang huali wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Was it 1740 or later? There was no consensus after a long discussion. Leif Jorgen Madsen, director of Vemmetofte Kloster, a former royal palace, later a foundation for the benefit of noble spinsters, together with Mogens Bencard, showed us the late seventeenth-century royal apartments and a magnificent baroque chapel. The fifteenth-century house was enlarged by J. C. Ernst for Prince Carl of Denmark, whose mother Queen Charlotte Amalie acquired it in 1694.

Gavnø was once an eleventh-century pirate stronghold, then a fifteenth-century priory, a sixteenth-century manor house and finally, in 1737, it was remodelled in the Rococo-style by Count Otto Thott, whose descendant Count Otto Reedtz-Thott, the current owner, welcomed

us. The house contains Denmark's largest private art collection. Fortunately for us, it was spring-cleaning time. We were able to inspect the important furniture collection at close quarters. A pair of giltwood *torchères* in the manner of Daniel Marot caused much speculation. Danish, suggested Mogens Bencard; English or Italian, suggested others. The consensus was Dutch!

Count Ulrich Holstein-Holsteinborg, Master of the Royal Hunt, is the twelfth generation of his family to live at Holsteinborg, remodelled in 1700 but dating to the fourteenth century. A furniture historian, he showed us original eighteenth-century drawings by G. E. Rosenberg for several pieces of furniture in his important collection, including pieces by Ortmann and a 1680 tray table with Delft plaques. Hans Christian Andersen visited often; his apartment there remains unchanged.

Baron Christian Wedell-Neergaard, Master of the Royal Foxhounds, welcomed us with a call on his antique Danish hunting horn to eighteenth-century Svenstrup, a former royal hunting lodge. Delicious wine awaited within while we admired original furniture, objects, paintings and the fine library containing books from the sixteenth century onwards.

Our last morning began at the Wedells' palace, Copenhagen's last private town palace. The door was opened by the butler, dressed in the family's eighteenth-century yellow livery which is worn twelve times a year for formal parties. Count Wedell welcomed us with his three-year-old son, who shook hands perfectly with

all thirty of us. We admired the family's private rooms containing fine furniture, objects, rare mid-eighteenth-century silk panels and a much-discussed gilt-bronze mounted commode thought to be from Riga.

Our final and most important visit was to Rosenborg Slot (1606–24), described in 2009 by Helena Hayward as 'comparable to visiting the Tower of London, the V&A and Ham House in one swoop'. Our guides were Niels-Knud Liebgott, director, and Jorgen Hein, curator of the Royal Danish furniture collections, much of which is contained in this ancient castle. From a 1580 Augsburg cabinet, seventeenth-century Boulle and a 1757 masterpiece, a rosewood Rococo bureau by Lehmann, on the

ground floor, to the long hall upstairs with the world's leading collection of silver furniture and the recently restored narwhal tusk throne made for Christian V in 1670 and derived from the description of Solomon's palace, the castle is a treasure trove to be revisited.

Our visit concluded with an excellent private lunch in the Rosenborg café, where we bid goodbye to Henrik and Gitte Wedell-Wedellsborg and to Mogens Bencard, with many promises of future Danish visits, and huge thanks for unsurpassed hospitality and a truly educational time.

In 2016, for Annabel Westman, I returned to help organize a nine-day tour for the Attingham Study Programme, again brilliantly orchestrated by my



Silver console and a pair of *guéridons*, 1708–10, tabletop made by Johann Heinrich Manlich, table foot and *guéridons* by Johann I Bartermann, Augsburg at Rosenborg, part of the world's largest collection of silver furniture

friends Henrik and Gitte Wedell-Wedellsborg. This time we visited twenty-four palaces, castles and manor houses. This emphasized that Denmark has yet more treasures for the FHS to study.

KATE DYSON

Report on the 44th Annual Symposium: George IV — 1820 to 2020: Fresh Perspectives on the King's Furniture

SATURDAY 3 AND SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 2020

This year's Symposium, organized by David Oakey, was originally scheduled to take place on 28 March at the Wallace Collection in the usual manner. A matter of days beforehand, the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic forced its postponement, and it was rescheduled to 3 October. Initially it was hoped that it would go ahead as a physical event, but as the new date approached it became clear that this would not be possible. Rather than postpone again, the decision was made to hold the event online for the first time. Although such a format presented some drawbacks, for example, the lack of personal interaction and discussion, it was recognized that there would be several advantages, perhaps the most notable being improved accessibility for members outside of the London area. To take full advantage of the international potential, the Symposium was split into two sessions, held in the late afternoon/early evening on each day of the weekend,

making it more convenient for members in North America to attend. In the event, 229 participants from all over the world attended, far more than can usually be accommodated at the Wallace Collection. An additional benefit of the online format was that all the papers were recorded with their visuals; **these will be available for all members to watch on the FHS website in the New Year.**

The event was chaired by former Director of the Royal Collection Trust, Sir Jonathan Marsden. It coincided with the exhibition at the Queen's Gallery, *George IV: Art & Spectacle*, by two speakers at the symposium, Kathryn Jones and Dr Kate Heard.

David Oakey

'Painting it and Putting Handsome Furniture Where Necessary' — George, Prince of Wales's Early Furnishing of Carlton House

The above quote was, according to King George III, how in 1784 his young twenty-two-year-old son, George, Prince of Wales, had described his renovation plans for his new residence, with which he had been presented just one year previously in 1783. This paper showed how and why the tastes and motivations of the Prince meant the refitting of the house would diverge so drastically from this statement, instead constituting one of the most astonishing, complex and expensive building and furnishing projects of the era. Traditionally, this early era at the house has suffered from a perceived lack of evidence, with fewer interior views and sparing documentary survivals. With particular emphasis on the furnishing of

the house, this paper brought together all the evidence that *does* survive, including inventories, bills, correspondence, later interior views and the objects themselves.

Rufus Bird, Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art

Tatham & Co. at Carlton House

The partnership of upholsters, a firm combining the services of a cabinet-maker and upholsterer, known successively as Elward & Marsh, Marsh & Tatham, Tatham, Bailey & Sanders, supplied large quantities of modern furniture and furnishings for George, Prince of Wales. Their work at Carlton House covers the entire period of the Palace's existence. This paper looked at the range of work carried out by the firm for the Prince at Carlton



Tatham, Bailey & Sanders, Pair of Council Chairs, 1812, giltwood, velvet upholstery, 108.6 × 94.0 × 96.5 cm, RCIN 2629. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021

House. Drawing on furniture in the Royal Collection and working from accounts in the National and Royal Archives, with specific reference to the years immediately following the creation of George as Prince Regent in 1811, this paper discussed the modern furnishings and other creations at Carlton House made by this remarkable firm of upholsters.

Dr Kate Heard, Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, Royal Collection Trust

'Finery and Five-Clawed

Dragons': Interpreting George IV's Interiors

George IV is one of the best-documented of all eighteenth-century British collectors. By bringing together a wide range of accounts, inventories, depictions of interiors and the King's surviving collection, we can understand much about this most intriguing patron and the ways in which he used and displayed decorative arts. Focusing on prints and drawings, Kate Heard examined this documentary record and explained how it informed the planning of the exhibition *George IV: Art & Spectacle*.

Dr Diana Davis

'Quite éblouissant': George IV and the Anglo-Gallic Interior

The panoply of styles in George IV's palaces combined *ancien régime* and Empire furniture with new British pieces inspired by French examples. The interiors of Carlton House, constantly



Thomas Parker (active 1808–30), pair of coffers-on-stand, 1813, brass-inlaid tortoiseshell, gilt bronze and ebony, 34.5 × 56.5 × 41.0 cm, RCIN 21624. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021

refashioned, demonstrated the transition from the traditional practice of buying new furniture from Paris to an Anglo-Gallic aesthetic, which melded eighteenth-century French taste with nineteenth-century British preference, consolidated by gilding, vibrant colour and textiles. George IV initiated a court style of a splendour not seen since the reign of Charles I, the glittering ostentation of his palaces aptly described by Lady Elizabeth Feilding as ‘quite *éblouissant*’, and his Anglo-Gallic interiors have stood the test of time, a remarkable testament to a spendthrift but

beady-eyed monarch, passionate about the arts of France.

Kathryn Jones, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts, Royal Collection Trust

‘Of the Utmost Beauty and Newest Fashion’, George IV and Modern Manufacturing

George IV has been described as ‘both a conservative and a modern’. His taste for the modern is often subsumed by his more overt love of the historic, but a strong thread of interest in contemporary manufacturing and design runs through his collections. George IV acted as a catalyst to some of the most innovative designers, architects and manufacturers of the day, encouraging experimentation in materials and new processes of production. This paper examined some of these innovations and the increasing versatility of the dealers who supplied the king.

Dr Alexandra Loske, Art Historian, Curator and Editor

The Interior Decoration and Colouring of Brighton Pavilion

This paper charted and described the colour schemes of the Royal Pavilion in its various stages, culminating in the final one under George IV’s supervision between 1815 and 1823. In 1850, the building entered its municipal phase, having been stripped of most of its fittings, decorative

finishes and furnishings, which were reused by Queen Victoria and Albert in Buckingham Palace. The year 2018 saw the reopening of the Saloon with its restored 1823 scheme and in September 2019 more than 120 objects arrived at the Pavilion from Buckingham Palace. Lent by Her Majesty the Queen for the duration of two years, they present an opportunity to see some of the 1820s schemes in a complete form for the first time in over 170 years. This paper described the development of some of the Pavilion state rooms, and how the arrival of the royal loans allow us to see and experience George IV's visions of colour in interior decoration.

Dr Helen Jacobsen, Curator of Eighteenth- Century Decorative Arts, the Wallace Collection

*Shared Tastes: George IV and the 3rd
Marquess of Hertford*

Francis Seymour-Conway, 3rd Marquess of Hertford (1777–1842), was for some time a friend and art advisor to George IV when Prince of Wales and later Regent. Hertford, or Lord Yarmouth as he was styled before 1822, was both a Tory MP and courtier, and benefited from his mother's close liaison with the Prince of Wales to gain further preferment. However, in addition to the family connection, the two men were drawn together by shared tastes in art, architecture and opulent interiors. The similarities between the art acquired by George IV and what we know of

Hertford's collection, some of which now forms part of the Wallace Collection, are testament to the buying carried out by Hertford on the Prince of Wales's behalf. This paper looked more closely at Hertford's own collection with reference to George's, particularly the furniture and decorative art, and at its acquisition and display.

Dr Michael Hall, Curator of Ceramics, the Capelain Collection

*George IV's Legacy and the English
Rothschilds*

By comparing and contrasting the tastes and collecting of the Prince Regent and the English Rothschilds in the first half of the nineteenth century, this paper showed that there was a remarkable similarity in background, family circumstance and financial situation which, combined with heritable tastes for the rich, the luxurious and the exotic, made their two apparently disparate entities natural allies. The collecting and taste of the Regent is well known. However, the Rothschilds, through the death of the English bank's founder Nathan Mayer Rothschild in 1836, spared the family the first generational epithet of 'newly rich', synonymous with a lack of taste and tasteless excess. It placed his sons and particularly the eldest, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, in the influential wake of the Regent's style, which was the proper subject of this talk.

DAVID OAKEY

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.

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)

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

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COVER PICTURE The Baron de Besenval in his Salon, by Henri Danloux, c. 1791.
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