

The Furniture History Society

# Newsletter 232

November 2023



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# Vernis Martin - a restoration project



Fig. 1: The cabinet  
before restoration.  
Nan Xu.

The purchase at auction of a Louis XIV-inspired *bahut* or side cabinet for a client (Fig. 1) resulted in an interesting conservation project.<sup>1</sup> The *satiné* veneer and distinctive high-quality gilt-bronze mounts were in good original condition and had not been restored since the cabinet was made in c.1890. The painted panel in the central door was covered with its original thick resin that had crazed badly, disfiguring the mythological scene of Venus receiving the Arms of Aeneas from Vulcan. The cabinet is unsigned, but the breakfront design, dimensions and gilt-bronze mounts are similar to an example with the 'ZN' identification marks for Emanuel Zwiener

of Paris under the mounts.<sup>2</sup> It is probable that if the mounts on this cabinet were ever removed for cleaning, the same initials would be repeated from the original master model. Although the two makers have no known association, Zwiener's contemporary Henry Dasson made a series of larger cabinets of a similar form, one also recorded with a version of the same a mythological scene.<sup>3</sup>

The painted door panel on the Zwiener cabinet had a thick application of varnish, suitable for cabinetmaking finishes for veneers but not for a painted panel. An easel painting would never normally have such a thick varnish. The result of such a



Fig. 2: The door before treatment, mounted on an easel. Simon Gillespie Studios.

heavy application is that there would have been an extended drying time, causing drying cracks to appear where the surface and the paint have separated, leaving a large and open network of cracks which reveal the bright gold leaf below (Fig. 2). The erratic shrinkage of the varnish was probably caused by differential adhesion to the sublayer leading to large tensile stresses. The disfigurement of the craquelure was understandably considered to be unacceptable, and, on behalf of the buyer, Yannick Chastang initially assessed the surface, correctly suspecting that the varnish and the underlying paint were of the same media. He advised that great care should be taken, and that cleaning should be by a specialist painting conservator. The late-nineteenth-century technique of varnishing differs from the original *verniss* Martin

technique of the second quarter of the eighteenth century in that later varnish has the same characteristics as the painted surface and must be very carefully removed so as not to damage or remove the underlying surface. The complete door and panel were taken to the Simon Gillespie Studios in New Bond Street and Simon, who originally trained as a cabinet maker, found it such an interesting object both from an art historian's point of view and from a conservator's perspective that he undertook the cleaning himself, understanding that such conservation was technically quite different from the works of art normally treated by his team.

The *verniss gras* varnishing technique on furniture panels has become a household term and has gained its own identity, known since at least the mid-nineteenth century as 'Vernis Martin'. However, the application of *verniss* that the four Martin brothers applied to a hard surface, from small items to panels of carriages, was not unique to their workshop. Other contemporaries applying similar techniques including Vincent, Laboureaux, Lafosse or Jean-Felix Watin amongst others, names rarely heard today. By 1889 Havard included a paragraph headed 'Vernis Martin' and the technique has become a generic name.<sup>4</sup> The two elder Martin brothers, Guillaume and Simon-Étienne were awarded letters patent in 1730 to manufacture varnish at the *manufacture Royale des Verniss Martin*, the patent renewed in 1744 and extended in 1753, one of their workshops still in use in 1785. The brothers developed a reputation for the durability of their specific 1737 recipe for *laque gras*. The aim was to imitate and compete with lacquer ware imported





Fig. 3: During treatment after an initial coat of varnish. Simon Gillespie Studios.

from Asia; the European technique had the advantage of being less costly and less brittle than traditional lacquering. Precise recipes by numerous makers were recorded in 1845.<sup>5</sup> Over time, different techniques were developed and the term *laque gras* does not cover a single formula but more generally involves the heating of oil and copal and adding Venetian turpentine. Gold or bronze powder was mixed in with the varnish to give a warm golden finish to pieces.

The heavy, bronze-mounted door of the Zwiener-attributed cabinet frames the counter-veneered wood panel of approximately seventy-seven centimetres high by sixty-seven wide. Prior to cleaning, the painting was dismantled from the door frame, the surface dirt was removed, and a thin organic varnish was applied (Fig. 3). This allowed a better visibility of the

composition by ‘wetting the surface’ with the new varnish. Some very simple retouching was carried out to reduce the impact of the bright gold appearing through the open network of cracks.

The comparatively thin door-panel is laminated for strength, the grain of each layer running in different directions for extra stability. This creates a strong, flat surface, the heavy frame ensuring a stable functioning door, and the panel has not warped or split. Surprisingly, the front veneer of the panel is slightly off-centre, revealed by a join that would have been invisible when the panel was originally prepared for gilding and subsequent painting. The reverse of the panel is mirror-veneered in *satiné*, with a small half round beading, probably also of *satiné* held by several small screws (Fig. 4). A missing arched section of the beading was quickly



Fig. 4: The reverse of the panel. Simon Gillespie Studios.

replaced in the same timber by H. J. Hatfield & Sons at their Sidney Road workshops.

The original surface of the panel had been prepared for the artwork by applying gold leaf in two layers laid in long thin horizontal pieces in an overlapping brick formation, creating a solid, reflective gold surface. Where the overlapping gilding is thicker and more resistant to the added paint, there are further drying cracks. The painting was created directly on top of the gilding: firstly with a drawing, which was then filled in and coloured using relatively transparent paint, probably an organic resin. The transparency of the paint ensured that the underlying gold leaf contributed to the colouration and overall aesthetic, a technique not normally used on traditional easel paintings. The artwork was then finished by applying thick protective layers of varnish of the same medium as the paint. This application of thick varnish resulted in an extended drying time. The large and open network of cracks that this has caused was possibly exacerbated by the environment in which the piece of furniture was kept. In treating and cleaning an easel painting it would normally be possible to separate a soft, organic varnish from an oil-based paint layer. However, because this paint layer and varnish appear to be the same material, it was considered impossible to remove the varnish without disturbing the paint. This necessitated a diligent cleaning process so as not to disturb the underlying paint finish. The overall result of the time-consuming cleaning process has eliminated the worst of the varnish cracks, making a dramatic visual improvement (cover image).

During conservation a badly damaged, barely legible signature was found lower



Fig. 5: An identical, or possibly the same cabinet when new, in the Sinclair Galleries at 55 Shaftesbury Avenue. The small writing desk on the right is similar to two other nineteenth-century models bequeathed by John Jones to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1882 (1048-1882 & 1048:1-1882). Litchfield: *History of Furniture in Two Centuries of Soho*, p.193.

centre, the artist as yet unidentified. Some *vernis* Martin painted panels mounted in furniture in the late nineteenth century are signed, but few of the artists names are recorded. It would appear that artists were commissioned on an ad hoc basis and did not work in-house. As a comparison, a smaller painted panel of the same genre supplied to François Linke for mounting in furniture cost between forty-five and fifty French francs, the artist earning considerably more per hour than an in-house cabinet maker or *bronzier*.

An engraving of a room at the Sinclair Galleries in London in the 1890s shows an almost identical cabinet (Fig. 5).<sup>5</sup> In 1895 Frederick Litchfield purchased much of

George Sinclair's stock, most of which had been owned by Sinclair's patron the late George Cavendish Bentinck. Judging from close similarities including the striation of the diagonally applied veneers either side of the *vernis* Martin door, it is possible that the conserved cabinet is the same cabinet imported new from Paris by Sinclair or Bentinck and subsequently handled by Litchfield. That there has been no previous attempt to remove the heavy varnish suggests that the cabinet has not passed through the trade in recent years, raising the possibility that it has been in the same

hands for the last 130 years.

SIMON GILLESPIE AND CHRISTOPHER PAYNE

- 1 Bonham's, 5/4/2017, lot 27.
- 2 Payne, C., *Paris Furniture – the luxury market of the 19th century* (Paris, 2018), p.563.
- 3 Mestdagh, C., *L'Ameublement d'Art Français, 1850-1900* (Paris, 2010), fig. 282, p. 240. Mestdagh does not record if this example is signed.
- 4 Havard, H., *Dictionnaire de l'ameublement et de la décoration* (Paris 1889), column 1544.
- 5 Tripier-Deveaux, A-M., *Traité théorique et pratique sur l'art de faire les vernis* (Paris 1845), p. 363.
- 6 J. H. Cardwell et al., *Two Centuries of Soho. Its Institutions, Firms, and Amusements* (London 1898), pp.192-3, extracted from Frederick Litchfield *History of Furniture*.

## FHS Events Calendar

Here you can find **all currently scheduled** forthcoming FHS and BIFMO Events; please refer to subsequent pages for more information. Additional events may still be added and advertised by email and on the website.

### 2023

NOVEMBER	BIFMO course: Designing and Making (see p. 16)
16 NOVEMBER	Visit to Christopher Howe's Warehouse
25 NOVEMBER	AGM & Talks

### 2024

17 JANUARY	Visit to the Faringdon Collection, London
4 FEBRUARY	Online lecture with Dr Barbara Lasic
22 FEBRUARY	Visit to Farley's Prop Hire
23 MARCH	Annual Symposium
19-21 APRIL	Overseas Study Trip to Brussels
17-19 MAY	UK Study Trip to Derbyshire
18 JUNE	Visit to Buscot Park (details forthcoming)
8 JULY	Visit to Spencer House (details forthcoming)

# FHS Events

## FHS Annual General Meeting and Works in Progress Talks

THE EAST INDIA CLUB, 16 ST JAMES'S SQUARE,  
LONDON SW1Y 4LH

SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2023

11.00 AM - 1.00 PM

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30 June 2023 will be held at the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00am (coffee from 10.30am)

Talks will follow the business of the day:

Louis Platman (Curator at the Museum of the Home) who will talk about Real Rooms, a massive redevelopment project that will see the construction on many new period rooms and immersive displays at the museum. Louis will also update members on the Cotton Collection of English Regional Chairs, and the recently acquired associated Cotton Archive.

Dr Tessa Kilgariff (English Heritage, Curator of Collections and Interiors, South London) will speak on the *Marble Hill Revived* project. Marble Hill is a villa situated on the banks of the river Thames in Twickenham, London. Built in the 1720s, it was home to the courtier Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk. In Spring 2022, English Heritage re-opened Marble Hill following an extensive National Lottery Heritage funded project. This talk will explore the project by detailing the restoration of the house and gardens, and sharing discoveries made in the course of research in the villa's interiors, collections and occupants,



Marble Hill

furniture conservation and history.

Dr Amy Frost (Senior Curator at Bath Preservation Trust) will reveal the work currently underway at Beckford's Tower in Bath to conserve the building and refit the museum, including how William Beckford's collection and furniture will be presented and interpreted when the museum reopens in March 2024.

Callan Davies (Assistant Manager, Research and Engagement) and Lucy Odlin (Collections Conservation Manager, Palace of Westminster) will outline the history of the design and use of the Speaker's State Coach.

**Admission to the AGM is free for members but all members wishing to attend should notify the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance. Tickets for a sandwich lunch with a glass of wine at the price of £22 per head should be booked with the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance.** We plan to record the talks for those who cannot attend in person.





Large giltwood starburst mirror, made by Howe

## Visit to Christopher Howe's Warehouse

16 BLOOMFIELD TERRACE, LONDON SW1W 8PG  
THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2023

10.30 AM – 12.00 PM

FHS Member Christopher Howe has sourced antiques from around the globe for their unique provenance, exceptional quality and character for over 30 years. His understanding and appreciation for the design and craftsmanship of these antiques has led to a huge inventory of fine old pieces and has informed a diverse and acclaimed collection in his bespoke range of designs of furniture and lighting 'Made by Howe'. Inspired by and developed alongside the antique business these pieces are hand crafted in Britain by highly skilled and experienced craftsmen.

During our visit to his new 7,000 sq. ft warehouse Christopher will explain the history of this old stable yard, the origins and history of his business (which includes two shops in Belgravia) and guide members on a tour of this new space which he shares with the company 'Woven is'. Since 1965, Woven's founder Abraham Moradzadeh has been lovingly collecting antique rugs from all over the world. Launched in 2016 by son Sam Moradzadeh, 'Studio Woven' designs handwoven rugs that intertwine ideas and cultures, inspired and informed by the antique and vintage masterpieces.

COST: £20

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:  
FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2023

## Visit to the Faringdon Collection

28 BROMPTON SQUARE, LONDON SW3 2AD

WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024

5.00 PM – 7.00 PM

Tucked away in a quiet, leafy square off Knightsbridge, 28 Brompton Square is an early-nineteenth century townhouse bought by Gavin, 2nd Lord Faringdon in 1953 as his London home. Formerly a school, and later divided into flats, he restored it as a private house. In contrast to the Palladian formality of the family seat at Buscot Park, Oxfordshire, the London house was a blank canvas on which he was able to bring his strong decorative sense to bear, and he filled it with artworks and furnishings that reflected his eclectic taste and love of the unusual. Lord Faringdon had a particular passion for Regency and Biedermeier



furniture, of which there are several important examples, including a Germany mahogany secretaire of c. 1825. Other highlights include the witty trompe l'oeil murals in the dining room, commissioned from Roy Hobdell by Lord Faringdon and featuring his friends in the guise of classical statues, and Lord Faringdon's collection of pictures by contemporary artists. The paintings, sculpture and furniture are displayed over three floors, and the principal reception rooms are sumptuously decorated by Alidad.

Our visit will be led by Dr Amy Lim, Curator of the Faringdon Collection. Please note that due to the historic nature and compact size of the property, the upper floors can only be accessed by several flights of stairs.



The Faringdon Collection at 28 Brompton Square

COST: £35, to include a glass of wine

LIMIT: 15

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 2023

## Online lecture

SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2024

6.00 PM GMT, (13:00 EST)

**‘A collection I have had the pleasure of forming entirely’: Joseph Duveen and the formation and donation of the Tuck Collection to the Petit Palais**

**Dr Barbara Lasic, Senior Lecturer, Sotheby's Institute of Art**

Assembled in the early decades of the 20th century by Paris-based American collectors and philanthropists Edward Tuck and Julia Stell, the Tuck collection contained a vast array of rich eighteenth-century French furniture and tapestries, as well as Sèvres, Meissen and oriental porcelain. Acquired in its entirety through Joseph Duveen, the collection was donated to the Petit Palais where it was officially inaugurated on 5 November 1930.

Drawing on a rich body of previously unexamined archival sources in the Duveen Brothers Records, this talk will examine Tuck's taste in furniture, Duveen's role in the procurement of pieces and his promotion of the collection, and the dealer's agency on the subsequent use of *boiseries* for its display at the Petit Palais.

**Dr Barbara Lasic**

Barbara is a Senior Lecturer in Art and Design History at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. She is also a regular Consultant Lecturer at the Victoria and Albert Museum



The Tuck Collection, Petit Palais, c. 1935

and the Wallace Collection. Prior to her academic career, Barbara worked at the Victoria & Albert Museum as part of the curatorial team involved in the redevelopment of the Europe: 1600-1800 galleries, and she held curatorial positions at the Wellcome Trust and the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

A Zoom link will be sent to all members in advance of the lecture.

## Visit to Farley Prop Hire

1-21 BRUNEL ROAD, LONDON W3 7XR

THURSDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2024

10.30 AM – 12.00 PM

Be it Tudor bench, Art Nouveau screen or Regency chair, spotted in a film interior, chances are that it has come from a prop hire company.

Chances also are that it has come from Farley, Britain's leading specialist prop hire company for film, TV productions, and events. Farley's own a large collection of original antique furniture, accessories and authentic props. The company's

collection started in 1962 and now includes over 50,000 stock items, spanning many centuries of design.

The company is separated into four departments each with their own specialism. Farley is the parent company and is also the largest division. It is made up of furniture, lighting and objets d'art collected since its inception.

The majority of the collection is composed of original antiques but Farley's also now have some reproduction and contemporary pieces as well as custom made designs by in house workshops which fill the gaps.

Farley's props have featured in countless films and television shows over the years, from Hollywood blockbusters to cult classics.

This visit is led by Kate Dyson, Events Committee member with a tour by Mark Farley.

COST: £20

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 2023



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Chair designed by Philip Webb, V&A (Circ.642:1-3-1962); Munstead Wood, by Edwin Lutyens; Blackwell, by Baillie Scott.

## The 48th Annual Symposium

*New light on Arts & Crafts furniture and interiors*

ART WORKERS' GUILD, 6 QUEEN SQUARE,  
LONDON WC1N 3AT

SATURDAY 23 MARCH 2024

10.30 AM – 5.00 PM

The 2024 annual symposium will be on the theme of Arts and Crafts furniture and interiors and aims to present current research shedding new light on designers, makers and patrons. It will include furniture made for, or used in, specific Arts and Crafts interiors, domestic or institutional, both in Britain and elsewhere. It will explore how such interiors were originally furnished, and the ways in which they are presented today.

A detailed programme for the day will be available on the FHS Website later in the year and published in the next Newsletter.

Tickets for the Symposium will be available on Eventbrite in early 2024.

## Overseas Study weekend to Brussels

FRIDAY 19 APRIL TO SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2024

This 2-night, 3-day visit, organised by Maude Willaerts (Events Committee member and Assistant Curator in the Performance, Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department at the V&A), will focus on Brussels and its world-renowned Art Nouveau architecture, interiors and furniture. In the recent years, much attention has been given to Belgian Art Nouveau heritage: Brussels became the Art Nouveau Capital of 2023, private houses (re)opened to the public and iconic interiors were restored and redisplayed. The trip will provide access to private collections and buildings and include exclusive curator-led tours of museums and houses.

Visits will include a tour of the newly opened, and meticulously preserved, Solvay House by Victor Horta. The architect conceived every detail of the building – listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Monument – and its opulent



Hotel Solvay  
Verriere



interiors, including its lavish furniture, carpets, and light fittings. We will then visit the Art and History Museum which Art Nouveau collections contain the interiors of the 1912 Wolfers Frères jewellery shop by Victor Horta. Its original furniture, recently restored, is beautifully laid out in a gallery of similar dimensions to the ones of the iconic shop, and the cases present some of the best examples of Art Nouveau jewellery and chryselephantine sculpture, including the *Sphinx Mystérieux*.

The Hanon House will be our next stop. The only Art Nouveau building created by the architect Jules Brunfaut, it presents an interesting example of architecture unifying the French and Belgian interpretations of the style. The house opened to the public, with its newly restored façade, in June 2023 and dedicates its first exhibition to the works of furniture designers and architects Henry van de Velde, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy and Paul Hankar. A guided visit will highlight

important objects from the private Belgian Art Nouveau collection of Jonathan Mangelinckx.

The above itinerary will be supplemented by additional visits selected from the abundance of iconic Art Nouveau venues and collections accessible in the European Capital. This immersive study trip will also include dinners and refreshments in historic Art Nouveau restaurants and cafes.

**To express interest, please contact  
the Events Secretary at  
[events@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:events@furniturehistorysociety.org)**

## Spring Study trip to Derbyshire

FRIDAY 17 TO SUNDAY 19 MAY 2024

Our spring study weekend will visit of some of the great Derbyshire country houses as well as some lesser-known historic properties. The itinerary is subject to confirmation, but we plan to visit Renishaw Hall, home of the Sitwell family for 400 years, and Haddon Hall, owned by



Long Gallery  
Haddon Hall

Lord and Lady Manners. Unmodernised since the seventeenth century, Haddon retains much of its fifteenth and sixteenth-century fabric, including frescoes and panelling and the Medieval banqueting hall with its original dais table.

No visit to Derbyshire would be complete without visiting the two great houses of the Dukes of Devonshire, Hardwick Hall and Chatsworth. At Hardwick, we will see the 'Sea-Dog Table', one of the best examples of Elizabethan furniture in the care of the National Trust, and the newly conserved Gideon tapestries, purchased by Bess of Hardwick in 1592/3. Chatsworth boasts one of the most magnificent state apartments of any English country house, furnished by the first Duke of Devonshire in the late-seventeenth century with elaborate woodcarving, mural painting, marquetry cabinets, silverware and Delftware pyramids. We will also visit Buxton Pump Room and Assembly Rooms, recently restored and considered to be the best of

architect John Carr's great rooms.

Sunday will be dedicated to the extensive collections of Kedleston Hall, an eighteenth-century mansion with Robert Adam interiors and many original furnishings, including furniture designed by Robert Adam and John Linnell, and a rococo state bed by James Gravenor. By contrast, Kedleston's 'Eastern Museum' contains furniture and objects acquired in South Asia and the Middle East by George Nathaniel Curzon, Viceroy of India.

The study weekend is organised and led by Amy Lim, curator at Buscot Park and Events Committee member. We will be staying at the New Bath Hotel & Spa, Matlock, a Georgian spa hotel with an outdoor swimming pool fed by naturally warmed spring water.

**To express interest, please contact the Events Secretary at [events@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:events@furniturehistorysociety.org).**

## Bookings

For places on visits please apply by email or letter to the Events Secretary, Beatrice Goddard providing separate cheques for each event or indicating that you wish to pay by card or online. The email address is [events@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:events@furniturehistorysociety.org), or telephone 0777 5907390. For online payments you will be provided with a link to a payment page and an event reference. Where possible, joining instructions will be dispatched by e-mail, so please remember to provide your e-mail address if you have one.

Applications should only be made by members who intend to take part in the whole programme. No one can apply for more than one place unless they hold a joint membership, and each applicant should be identified by name. If you wish to be placed on the waiting list, please provide a telephone number. Please note the closing dates for applications printed in the Newsletter. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available. Members are reminded that places are not allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, but that all applications are equally considered following the closing date.

## Cancellations

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £20 or less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a

£10 deduction for administrative costs. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours; terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

## Online Events

We are continuing to arrange occasional online events, but we might not be able to advertise them in the Newsletter owing to publication lead-in times, in which case we will let members know by email. We send links to members about a week in advance. They will also be advertised on the FHS website, on Instagram and Facebook (@furniturehistorysociety). Most online events are free to members. Non-members can join for a small fee. BIFMO study courses will charge a fee for both members and non-members.

Recordings of many of our past lectures are freely available to members via accessing My Account on the FHS website using the following link:

**<https://www.furniturehistorysociety.org/membership/account/login/>**

Please use your email address and password set up in My Account to access. If you have forgotten or not set up a password, please use the link below.

**<https://www.furniturehistorysociety.org/accountforgot-your-password/>**



## Reprints of Furniture History

Several members have recently inquired about the availability of Volume I of *Furniture History*. The Society is, therefore, considering re-printing this first issue, which is likely to cost about £45 per volume. If you would like to register interest in acquiring a re-print, please contact Jill Bace, Publications Secretary at [publications@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:publications@furniturehistorysociety.org).

## Membership subscriptions

There are still a significant number of members who have yet to renew their 2023-24 membership. If you have received a renewal notice with this Newsletter then, according to our records your subscription remains unpaid.

There are two ways of renewing your subscription:

1. Use your email address and password set up in my Account to renew. If you have forgotten or not set up a password, please use the link below.

**[www.furniturehistorysociety.org/  
Account/login](http://www.furniturehistorysociety.org/Account/login)**

Click the link: 'Forgot my password'. Enter your email address. Click 'Send' and you will receive a link to set up a password which will enable you to renew by either direct debit, if you have a UK bank account, or by debit card. This is the Society's preferred method.

2. Use the enclosed renewal form and either scan and email or post to the Membership Officer.

Also, a significant number of members who pay their subscription by direct debit have yet to set up a password to access their account. This is required to access online lectures and make changes to personal details. To set up 'My Account' please use the link given above.

Keith Nicholls  
Membership Officer FHS,  
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# BIFMO UPDATE

## British and Irish Furniture Makers Online

BIFMO ([bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org](http://bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org)) publishes biographies and blogs about British and Irish furniture makers and associated craftspeople, c.1600-1914. Launched in 2016, the project is solely managed by the FHS. It is our globally-free research tool with a wealth of entries and is an authoritative one-stop site for all researchers in the fields of furniture history, interiors, country house furnishings, and associated trades. To spread the word about this important resource, please acknowledge your use of BIFMO resources in any published material.

### November BIFMO course: *Designing and Making*

Join us on Wednesday evenings for this year's winter course offered by BIFMO. The five sessions will take place online on Wednesdays in November from 5.00–7.30 pm GMT. As usual, the recordings of the talks will be made available to all those who register on the course. This year we cover the development of British furniture between c.1600 and 1950 through a series of talks considering how designers conceived of furniture and how makers translated their ideas in practice. The different case studies will thus give a good overview of changes in style over the

years and insights into the practices of the furniture trade. The talks will be offered by furniture experts, including Megan Aldrich, Kerry Bristol, John Cross, Pat Kirkham, Annabel Westman and Matthew Winterbottom.

The first session on 1 November begins with a survey of furniture design in the early seventeenth century and ends with a discussion of Daniel Marot's contribution to furniture design at the end of the century. The next two sessions cover the key figures of the eighteenth century, considering the roles of William Kent and Robert Adam as architects and furniture designers and the rise of furniture makers as designers, focusing on Thomas Chippendale and John Linnell. The fourth session looks at the continuing role of architects with the example of Augustus Welby Pugin at the Houses of Parliament and the designs of nineteenth-century manufacturers and makers. The final session takes us to the twentieth century, with three case studies of Robert Lorimer, Christopher Dresser and Charles Eames and the making of their furniture designs.

Bookings for the course will open on 6 October and can be made through the FHS website.

## Hugo Burge (1972-2023)

Members of the FHS will recall Hugo Burge's charming and passionate presentation at last year's AGM, when he talked about Marchmont House as a 'home to makers and creators, celebrating creativity across the arts, crafts, business and social enterprise'.

Burge's early career was as a very successful internet entrepreneur and investor. But for the Society it is his work at Marchmont House, acquired in 2007 by Hugo and his father Oliver, for which he will be best remembered. After renovating the house and settling there himself, Hugo Burge founded Marchmont Ventures in 2018. He turned the Marchmont Estate into a retreat for artists, converting outbuildings into studios and workshops. In 2019 he founded the charity Marchmont Makers Foundation to fund writers' and artists' residencies, as well as to support local schools and charities.

The 'outstanding restoration project' at Marchmont House was praised in two articles by Roger White for *Country Life* (16 August and 23 August 2017). White identified the architect, previously thought to be William Adam, as the virtually unknown Thos. Gibson, perhaps working to design ideas provided by James Gibbs.

For Hugo's own interests, it was the interventions in 1914 of the Scottish architect Sir Robert Lorimer that were particularly salient. The upper floor, where visiting groups were able to stay, was filled with furniture by leading designers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Philip Webb, Sidney Barnsley, Ernest Gimson, C.F.A. Voysey, Peter Waals, Gordon Russell and, of course, Sir Robert Lorimer. The *piano nobile*, more to Oliver Burge's taste, is smartly furnished with eighteenth-century furniture and mainly English paintings.

I first met Hugo in 2014 and over the years that followed enjoyed many convivial visits to Marchmont House. Hugo's passion for the Arts and Crafts Movement, as well as for contemporary sculpture and crafts, was infectious. He will be fondly remembered for his modesty and warmth. In a life tragically cut short, Hugo did so much for the benefit of others. He will not be forgotten.

MARTIN P. LEVY



## Roentgen Museum Neuwied, *Möbel à la Roentgen – Inspirationen aus der Neuwieder Manufaktur, until 12 November 2023.*

The Roentgen Museum in Neuwied, Germany, is currently showing an exhibition of around eighty pieces uniquely focusing on individual artisan craftsmen directly linked to the internationally famous furniture manufacture on the Rhine and the workshops set up or joined by them after David Roentgen's retirement in 1791. The exhibition includes pieces by Johann Gottfried Frost, Heinrich Gambs, David Hacker, Johann Christian Härder, Johannes Höfflin, Johannes Klinckerfluss, Johannes Kroll, Johann Wilhelm Konrath, Johann Michael Rummer. Amongst the new discoveries are the previously unknown masters Andreas and Hermann Leithhäuser, who hid an annotated note with their signatures in a roll-top desk in January 1791. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive multi-authored catalogue brimming with new information and to be reviewed in the next newsletter.

## *Georgian Illuminations,* exhibition at Sir John Soane's Museum (4 Oct 2023 – 7 Jan 2024)

In October, the Soane will mount an exhibition of works on paper focusing on the spectacular illuminations which

were popular in the Georgian period. The exhibition will concentrate on specific, well-publicised lightshows of the period and the impressive and the elaborate temporary architectural structures created for them, often designed by leading architects and artists, including Soane. Royal entertainments, pleasure gardens, national celebrations, and illuminations by Soane will all feature, demonstrating that these ephemeral cultural practices were drivers of architectural and technological innovation. Newly discovered vast linen transparencies, which were back lit in Georgian windows as patriotic decoration during the Napoleonic Wars, will be placed on lightboxes and displayed for the first time in the Foyle Space. The exhibition is co-curated by Dr Melanie Doderer-Winkler and Dr Louise Stewart, Head of Exhibitions at the Soane.

## *The Scottish Interior, A Conference to be held at National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh, Friday 1 December 2023.*

There will be a one-day conference aiming to interrogate the Scottishness (or lack of it) in Scottish interiors from the 16th century to the present, and to provide a forum to discuss the past, present and future of this sometimes-overlooked field of study. Full details forthcoming at [www.nms.ac.uk/exhibitions-events/](http://www.nms.ac.uk/exhibitions-events/).

# Discoveries and Research

Have you discovered or researched something you would like to share with the Society? We welcome short articles on discoveries made on Society visits, or other discoveries and developments relevant to furniture history. Please send suggestions to the Editor, details on the back of this Newsletter. Articles should be about 500-800 words; a lead article 1,000-1,500; the Editor will send you our author guidelines.

## A stellar acquisition for the John Evan Bedford Library of Furniture History, University of Leeds

Shirburn Castle in Oxfordshire, purchased in 1716 by Thomas Parker, 1st Earl of Macclesfield (1667–1733), was until recently the home of a pre-eminent library. Parker was not only a great lawyer, but also a bibliophile interested in science and mathematics. His library was developed by his son and successor, George, 2nd Earl (1696–1764), an astronomer, who persuaded Parliament to adopt the Gregorian calendar and was President of the Royal Society; his son, Thomas, 3rd Earl (1749–1795) was also a Fellow. Although well catalogued in about 1860 by Edward Edwards (1812–1886), who described it in *Libraries and Founders of Libraries* (1864), the library was well-nigh inaccessible for most of the twentieth century. The Welsh manuscripts, sold in 1899, were the bedrock of the National Library of Wales, founded in 1907. The

library was otherwise intact and dormant. A decision in 1922 to turn the estate into a company and family dissension after the death of George, 8th Earl (1914–1992) led to the library's dispersal by Sotheby's in twelve great sales held from 2004 to 2008.

Tragic as this dissolution was, some treasures were retained. In 1999, before the sales, Cambridge University Library purchased the major archive of Newton's early correspondence. In 2004 the unknown and spectacular fourteenth-century Macclesfield Psalter was export-stopped and is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and in 2009 the British Library bought the delectable and equally unknown Macclesfield Alphabet Book of around 1500 (both published in facsimile, in 2008 and 2010).

The Macclesfield library's strength was science, but there was much besides, notably bibles, theology, philosophy and economics, classics and languages, voyages and atlases, and the applied arts. Architectural books included Vitruvius, Palladio, Scamozzi, Serlio and Furttenbach, and a copy of his *Elements of Architecture* (1624), given by Sir Henry Wotton to Wren's father. There were treatises on perspective, for instance Pacioli, Sirigatti, Lautensack and Pozzo, and on the orders, among them Vignola, Blum and Vredeman de Vries. The last-named was well represented, with original Antwerp editions of his architectural perspectives (1562) dedicated to Cardinal Granvelle and of his variations on architecture and the orders (1578 and 1581)



Fig. 1: The du Cerceau Album

being complemented by posthumous Amsterdam editions of *Perspectiva* (1633) and *Architectura* (1647). Ornament is not conspicuous, although designs for the decoration of carriages by Alexis Loir, *Nouveaux desseins d'ornemens* (Paris, c. 1680) were paired with clock-cases by Daniel Marot, *Nouveau Livre de Boites de Pendulles* (The Hague, c.1705). But the great trophy in this category was an unrecorded album of furniture designs by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau (Fig.1).

The du Cerceau Album was acquired by the London bookseller Robin Halwas, whose excellent catalogue entry attracted my attention when writing on furniture at Hardwick; he allowed me to reproduce three plates in David Adshead and David

Taylor (eds), *Hardwick Hall* (London, 2016). Later I visited John Bedford's remarkable and ever-growing collection of furniture pattern books in Guernsey and before his death in early 2019 I recommended him to secure the Album. Alas, by then he was too ill to respond (I recently learned that Robin Halwas had also contacted him). In April 2019 I wrote to Mark Westgarth, key player in shepherding the Bedford Library into Leeds University's Brotherton Library, suggesting that acquisition of the Album might be a fitting tribute to John. When the Furniture History Society visited Leeds in March (see *Newsletter* 231 August 2023) I revived this proposal, following up with an email. Then, in early June, I received the informal news that the Brotherton was, *mirabile dictu*, to acquire the Album (this is now official) to supplement the John Evan Bedford Library of Furniture History. It will be a star presence in the exhibition of John's collection planned for the Treasures



Fig. 2: Detail of the binding of the du Cerceau Album, showing the moresque central tool



of the Brotherton Gallery, opening in January 2024.

When I first met John Bedford, in about 1980, his collection was focused on English pattern books. These remain its centre of gravity, but by the time of my visit to Guernsey many foreign books were accumulating, and the recent catalogue produced in Leeds records this extended scope. It is worth mentioning Jean Le Pautre, *Oeuvres d'Architecture* (Paris, 1751), published by Charles Antoine Jombert and comprising 125 suites originally issued in the 1650s and 1660s, and its successor Jombert's *Repertoire des Artistes* (Paris, 1765) with over five hundred plates by seventeenth century designers including Jean Berain, Jean Cotelle, Nicolas Loire, Jean Marot and Antoine Pierretz, but also stretching back to Jacques Androuet du Cerceau. The library also possesses Crispin de Passe, *Oficina Arcularia* (Amsterdam, 1642), Friedrich Unteutsch, *Neues Zieratenbuch* (Nuremberg, c.1645), Johann Indau, *Neue Romanische Ziehrathen* (Augsburg, c.1690) and a suite, *Divers Ornemens de Feuillage* (Paris, 1670–90) by Paul Androuet du Cerceau.

The new Album's handsome French binding, lettered *Diver[s] Dess[eins]* on its spine, is decorated with a gilt central tool with moresques reminiscent of designs by Bernard Salomon (Fig. 2). Its earlier provenance is unknown, but it may be relevant that the 1st Earl of Macclesfield made purchases from the great library of Nicolas Joseph Foucault, Marquis de Magny (1643–1721). The sixty-six leaves comprise seventy-three prints, all by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, the final twelve leaves with eighteen prints from



Fig. 3: Print 44 in the du Cerceau Album, Seat, only known impression, (315 x 210 mm, trimmed)

three sets of cartouches. All the rest are furniture designs or prints long associated therewith. The Halwas analysis suggests that the paper is of the 1560s, and that large coherent groups of cabinets, tables and beds, and some miscellaneous items, forty-four images in all, were printed in pairs on large sheets, bound as two leaves, while the remaining leaves are singletons, and may witness earlier or separate printings. All suggests that the Album was assembled and bound before du Cerceau's death in 1586 and is thus crucial evidence for the sequence and dating of his furniture designs. Moreover, one print, showing a chair (Fig. 3), is otherwise



Fig. 4: Print 42 in the du Cerceau Album, Bed, only located impression, (210 x 287 mm, trimmed within platemark)

unknown and, although recorded elsewhere, another with a bed (Fig. 4) seems to be the only located impression.

The du Cerceau Album, preserved intact, is now the earliest imprint associated with the John Evan Bedford Library of Furniture History, fitting closely with John's interest in the influence of continental designers in England and bringing with it a grand provenance, the Macclesfield Library. The acquisition was made using University funds, a recognition of the importance now attached to John's collection and evidence of a commitment to continue to enhance it. Thanks to the swift and effective action of two colleagues at the Brotherton Special Collections, Curator Rhiannon Lawrence-Francis and Rare Book Specialist Rachel Eckersley, the Album is now secure in perpetuity.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

## Book Reviews

Suggestions for reviews should be sent to Wolf Burchard at the Metropolitan Museum, 1000 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10028, U.S.A. (email: [wolf.burchard@metmuseum.org](mailto:wolf.burchard@metmuseum.org); telephone +1 212 650 2208).

CLIVE EDWARDS, *Collinson & Lock: Art Furnishers, Interior Decorators and Designers, 1870-1900* (London: Philip Wilson (Matador, 2022), 290 pp., ISBN 9781803131047. £45.

Studies of individual firms in the various branches of the furnishing trade of the



nineteenth century can sometimes feel somewhat sketchy (often owing to the widespread destruction or scattering of old commercial records that occurred during and immediately after World War II) and also lacking in any sense of the wider context in which particular designers, craftsmen and partnerships of makers and businessmen first set up, flourished or met their demise. Others, based upon meticulous or, one might say, perhaps obsessive attention to detail may seem to verge on the monomaniac. This recent volume by Clive Edwards, Professor of Design History at Loughborough carefully treads a path between these two evils. Telling the history of Collinson & Lock, one of the most successful London-based furniture businesses of the Victorian era, it is a study of the workings and productions of a firm conspicuously at the forefront of the trade during the last three decades of the nineteenth century and is clearly based on a great deal of research including extensive examination of the contemporary literature. Edwards's exploration of the art journals and trade publications of the day, as well as other sources provides richly detailed documentation of the firm's reputation in general terms and is informative about what people thought of not just their finest exhibition pieces but also their more run-of-the-mill productions. The book never loses sight of the bigger picture and at each point in a narrative that necessarily follows the commercial and reputational fortunes of the firm, admirably sketches comparative details of rival businesses and the careers of architects and designers who were associated with Collinson & Lock and contributed to their success.

Starting with an introductory chapter charting the growth of the 'Art Furniture' movement that had its origin in the ideals promulgated by the design reformers of the 1840s, most notably A.W.N. Pugin, Edwards proceeds by way of a sequence of almost dictionary-like sections to build a most useful picture of the furnishing trade in the years of the Aesthetic Movement. Devoting these mostly short sections to general topics such as 'Antique Dealers and Decorators', 'Female-run Businesses', individual firms such the intriguing but short-lived Art Furnishers' Alliance or the influential William Watt, and to key designers such as Daniel Cottier and E.W. Godwin, the author provides an invaluable overview of the world into which Collinson and Lock launched themselves in 1870.

The main meat of Edwards book consists of a careful and well-documented account of the initial emergence of the partners from their shared origins as employees in the prestigious company of Jackson & Graham and their subsequent rapid rise to prominence in the trade. A particular strength of the book lies in the close attention which is paid to Collinson & Lock's participation in the major commercial shows of the era, which since the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862 had played such a key role in the development of design and manufactures for the home. Analysis of the pieces submitted by the firm to shows such as the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, illuminated by quotations from contemporary press opinion, fills out our picture both of the firm's progress and more widely of the taste of the time.

Almost consistently lauded for the quality of their craftsmanship – and in particular for the strength of specialities such as their use of intricate inlay work using fine woods and ivory – Collinson & Lock continued to move ever-upmarket, but gradually away from the cutting-edge of design innovation and into a safer, more comfortable, but nevertheless highly-respected, world of ‘good taste’. In this they can be seen to have presaged a trajectory which we can also recognise in the history of Morris & Co and later Liberty, enterprises which have traditionally attracted more attention from design historians. With its wealth of documentation, as well as excellent illustrations from catalogues and other contemporary sources and photographs of pieces in museums or that have passed through the hands of specialist dealers such as Paul Reeves and Blairman’s, Edwards’s book makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the workings of the late Victorian furniture trade as well as celebrating the achievement of two of that trade’s outstanding protagonists.

STEPHEN CALLOWAY

REINIER BAARSEN, *Process: Design Drawings from the Rijksmuseum, 1500-1900*, (Rotterdam 2022). 402 pp. ISBN 978-9462087354, £59.

This richly illustrated catalogue and the exhibition it accompanied (Design Museum, Den Bosch; Fondation Custodia, Paris) are the result of an extraordinary collecting effort on the part of the Rijksmuseum, and more particularly, its

former furniture curator Reinier Baarsen. Made possible by the newly instated Decorative Art Fund, over the past decade, Baarsen has sought (and continues) to acquire drawings that relate to the process of designing, making, and selling objects in the realm of the decorative arts, referred to in the catalogue as ‘object drawings’. This includes furniture, both secular and religious, but also encompasses various kinds of tableware, objects for display and decoration, jewellery and embroidery designs, and luxurious means of transportation such as carriages and sleighs. Excluded are drawings of ‘pure ornament’ and architectural designs. This decision highlights that the collection was primarily assembled to speak to the decorative arts collection of the Museum. It thereby omits, however, an essential part of the design process, which is greatly nourished by the vocabulary of ornamental form and architectural rule. Drawings of this kind are frequently found in the repertoire of prolific designers such as Giovanni Battista Foggini or Giles Marie Oppenord, to name but two. Thankfully, here, the Rijksmuseum’s collection of





historic ornament prints and illustrated books offers fruitful dialogue with its new holdings of 'object drawings'.

It may seem curious that the Rijksmuseum has only now begun collecting drawings in this area. When it reopened to the public in the 1880s, with its own drawing school, the museum adopted an educative mission not unlike London's South Kensington Museum and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Yet, in terms of its acquisition policy, this mission was not pursued with similar vigour. Perhaps this is because of its role as a national museum, dedicated to collecting the art and history of the Netherlands, while historic Dutch design drawings are relatively rare survivals. Yet, as a country that has always looked beyond its borders for opportunity and inspiration, this should not have deterred the institution from acquiring a collection of drawings representing other national schools. In lieu of museum interest, the Amsterdam dealer and collector Lodewijk Houthakker (1926–2008) privately assembled an important collection in this area from the 1960s onwards. The 1989 two-volume collection catalogue *Design into Art. Drawings for Architecture and Ornament*, compiled by Peter Fuhring, was among the first publications to investigate design drawings in a comprehensive manner and poignantly emphasized that the sum of its parts, the art historical significance of the collection, greatly outweighed the market value of the individual drawings. It is all the more sad, therefore, that the collection was dispersed through sales in the early 1990s. Houthakker's endeavour, nevertheless,

made a lasting impression on a generation of art historians, Baarsen included. By assembling this new collection of 'object drawings' for the Rijksmuseum, he has succeeded in recapturing part of the spirit of Houthakker's model, and has recast it to provide students, scholars and collectors of the decorative arts with a welcome opportunity to learn about their wide-ranging use and scope.

To emphasize this goal, Baarsen has chosen a subdivision into categories of function rather than the more traditional groupings by subject matter. This works particularly well in the introductory chapter, as it enables the author to highlight a number of fascinating subsets of drawings. Most revelatory is perhaps the extensively documented use of drawing in the practice of furniture makers. This narrative focuses largely on the German-speaking lands and the prominent place of the so-called *Meisterriss* in the matriculation of cabinetmakers. More than any other category, these drawings often provide extensive technical information regarding the construction or internal makeup of the proposed designs. They therefore also represent the closest correlation between drawing and making; a relationship that, ironically, is not always obvious when it comes to design drawings.

The chosen format is not without risk, however. To those unfamiliar with this particular genre of drawings, it may suggest parameters where there are none. In reality, few of the categories, if any, are mutually exclusive. Moreover, barring the aforementioned cabinetmakers, the lack of formalized training across the various

disciplines of the decorative arts, together with the uneven survival rate of workshop drawings make it extremely difficult to formulate categories of function and meaning, especially over a longer period of time. Without knowledge of the context in which a drawing was made, it is sometimes impossible to say what the artist's intention was, or what function it might subsequently have served. Baarsen's statement that 'drawings were an adjunct to objects throughout their existence' (p. 29) therefore deserves some nuance. It is important to consider the status of drawings as an autonomous medium for the generation and representation of ideas. Letting go of the notion that there needs to be a one-to-one relationship between a drawing and an object creates space to appreciate *the process of design* as an art-form in its own right. Baarsen's chapter on the Valadier dynasty offers the broadest sense of the heterogeneous application of drawing within a workshop and serves as a great introduction to the genre as a whole.

Overall, this catalogue offers a wonderful first look at this growing study collection that comprises about 1300 drawings dating from the Renaissance to the early twentieth century. Baarsen writes with a penchant for flourish that inspires enthusiasm for the drawings he has collected. Together with the recently published exhibition catalogue *Les Dessin Sans Réserve. Collections du Musée des Arts Décoratifs* (2021) the book provides a model for the development of similar publications and/or exhibition projects in London, New York and Vienna and elsewhere. The heightened visibility of this genre of drawings will stimulate new

research, clarify attributions, and increase the general appreciation for these rare and tangible documents of the artmaking process.

FEMKE SPEELBERG

THOMAS M. DANN, *Georg Ludwig Friedrich Laves (1788-1864). Raumkunst und Mobiliar, [interior decoration and furniture]* (Lemgo: Rohn 2022). 303 pp. ISBN. 9783946319320 / 3946319327. €49.00

The architect, civil engineer, and urban planner Georg Friedrich Ludwig Laves (1788–1864) was a leading figure at the royal court of Hanover and instrumental in shaping the small town into one of Germany's leading centres of neoclassical decoration and furnishing. The publication of Thomas Dann's catalogue raisonné of the œuvre of this important man, largely forgotten outside Hanover, coincided with the first exhibition devoted to Laves, held at the Museum August Kestner. A two-day symposium organised by Mobile – Gesellschaft der Freunde von Möbel- und Raumkunst e.V. and the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte in Paris examined Laves's work as it relates to his contemporaries Karl Friedrich Schinkel in Berlin, Gottfried Semper in Dresden, and Johann Carl Bromeis in Kassel; beyond the mutual influences of these architects on one another, the study day explored the effect of Germany's neoclassicism beyond its country's border, namely on the South- and Midwest United States.

After attending the Academy of Art in Kassel, Laves completed his education by studying natural sciences at the University of Göttingen, then one of Germany's



most distinguished universities, founded in 1732 by George II, King of England and Elector of Hanover. In 1812, Laves became 'Inspecteur des Bâtiments de la Couronne' at Kassel, under the reign of Jérôme Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon and ruler over the short-lived Kingdom of Westphalia; and in 1816, he was appointed architect to the court of Hanover, then still connected to the English Crown. Laves remained in post until his death in 1864. Amongst his clients were the King, numerous members of the Hanoverian nobility as well as wealthy citizens. He erected and redesigned town palaces and country houses, built monuments and tombstones, and oversaw the making of ephemeral decorations for public ceremonies. Alas, the majority of his architectural work was lost in the bombing of Hanover in the Second World War.

In order to understand Laves's practice, Dann analyses the creative process of the architect's drawings. Throughout his life, Laves assiduously copied works from other design collections. He would use these as a starting point for new designs,

which he then enriched with his own ideas. Then followed the making of fine pencil or ink drawings, which were completed by his studio assistants to be presented to his client. Changes were added according to the client's needs and wishes, and the final sheets signed by Laves himself. The neoclassical buildings of Kassel and Berlin (primarily by the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel), as well as the latest publications featuring English and French fashion for architecture and interiors, were his principal sources of inspiration. Amongst those were Charles Percier and Pierre-Francois-Léonard Fontaine's *Recueil des décorations intérieures* (1801–07) and Pierre Antoine Lebourg de la Mésangère's *Journal des Dames et des modes* (1802–1835).

Analysing the drawing of a sofa (cat. no. 82) Dann explains how Laves developed his designs. The architect copied the main features from the *Journal des Dames et des modes* and simplified the outlines to produce a less expensive piece of furniture; costs were further brought down, using cheaper woods and substituting gilt-bronze elements with brass or stucco. Given that Laves and his contemporaries used many of the same models, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what the architect's own personal contributions were to a design; it is therefore commendable that Thomas Dann helps us retrace his design process.

The complete digitisation of Laves's surviving furniture designs at the city archives of Hanover, made large parts of his output easily available to Dann for his research. His book gives a chronological overview of Laves's buildings in the city of

Hanover and the countryside, focusing on interior decorations and furnishings. Many of those were hitherto unidentified. An itemised catalogue with entries at the end of the book, comprises designs for rooms, furniture as well as all produced pieces verifiably made after Laves's design. Dann introduced categories that seek to distinguish between the degrees to which Laves was involved in the designing of an object: there are designs made without a doubt by Laves's own hand, and some previously merely attributed to the architect; and there are pieces which are probably (wahrscheinlich) by him and such which are possibly (möglichlicherweise) by him.

Altogether, Dann remains very cautious with his attribution. His volume represents the base for further research in the field of

European interior and furniture design in the age of neoclassicism. One aspect the author does not explore, is the connection with George IV's patronage of many key figures of Regency design and architecture on which abundant scholarship has been published over the last decades. Laves made four extended trips to London of up to six months (in 1816, 1826, 1830 and 1834) hoping to convince his royal patrons to completely rebuild his town palace in Hanover. Laves would have had access to some of the most cutting-edge interiors of the period, which Dann only touches on peripherally. This lacuna aside, Dann's volume is an admirable tome and a welcomed read for any scholar or enthusiast of furniture history.

HENRIETTE GRAF

## Reports on FHS Events

### Study Trip to Paris

8 & 9 FEBRUARY 2023

### *Louis XV, Passions d'un Roi.* Exhibition at the chateau de Versailles

Our guide and co-curator of this exhibition was Yves Carlier, *conservateur en chef* at the Musée National des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon. He explained that the *raison d'être* for this ground-breaking exhibition was a celebration of the tercentenary of the return of the Court of Louis XV (1710–1774) to Versailles, encompassing over 400

pieces, some of which have never been exhibited in Paris or seen in public. The focus of this exhibition was on Louis XV the man, rather than the monarch, and seeks to illuminate his character, diverse passions and interests.

The exceptional masterpiece of this exhibition is the gilt-bronze astronomical clock from the *cabinet de la Pendule* in the King's Apartment. It reflects the King's interest in Science, and was designed by the engineer Claude-Siméon Passemant and made by the king's clockmaker Louis Dauthiau. The gilt-bronze case is the work of the celebrated *bronziers* Jacques and Philippe Caffiéri. It was briefly at the



Clock at  
the Versailles  
exhibition



château de Choisy in 1753, before being installed in its present position the next year. The duc de Luynes described it as 'a miracle of Science'.

A rarely seen highlight of the exhibition is the impressive gilt-bronze chandelier (one of a pair) made in Paris c.1750–55, attributed to one or both Caffiérís. They are a tour de force of the art of the bronzier, and although the three towers indicate that they originally belonged to Madame de Pompadour, it is uncertain whether they were originally in her Paris house (the Elysée Palace) or the château de Crécy.

Various chef d'œuvres illustrating Louis XV's evolution in taste are shown including the iconic commode by Antoine-Robert Gaudreau with extravagant gilt-bronze mounts by Jacques Caffiéri, delivered for the King's new bedchamber at Versailles in 1739. Two other pieces of furniture worth noting were two black and

gilt commodes: one in Japanese lacquer by Bernard Vanrisamburgh delivered for the bedchamber of the dauphine at Versailles in 1745 and the other in French 'lacquer' or vernis martin attributed to Jean Desforges, c.1750. Yves Carlier stated regarding the latter, 'It is one of the very finest pieces of French lacquer imitating Japanese lacquer'.

MAXINE FOX

## Château de Versailles – Les Petits Appartements

Our visits to the royal family's private rooms were admirably guided by Yves Carlier and Bertrand Rondot, *conservateurs en chef* at the Château de Versailles, who have been involved with much of the recent conservation work. Yves began by reminding us that 2023 is the 400th anniversary of the building of Louis XIII's original hunting lodge, but that the private apartments as we see them now have been transformed continually since the 1730s, making them a fascinating insight into personal tastes and aesthetic choices.

The *Petit Appartement du Roi* was, like all royal spaces, governed by architectural protocol and Yves took us through the rooms in the order intended, starting with the *cabinet des chiens*, the original *antichambre* to the private apartment. Some of the boiseries date from the remodelling of Louis XIV's former *salle de billard*.

*La salle à manger des retours de chasse*, remodelled in the 1750s, was where Louis XV entertained hunting companions once or twice a week, and the lovers of gilt bronze amongst us delighted in the hunting horn gilt-bronze wall lights with pendant hooves. Lemaire's 1774 barometer, the



Bureau du Roi

carved wooden basket of flowers by Aubert Parent and a remodelled Roentgen tabletop are also of note. In the king's bedroom we saw the Riesener/Grohe clock and barometer which replace the Louis XV ones by Joubert that once stood in the room (the pedestals of which are now in Buckingham Palace), and the Beneman mahogany commode made for Louis XVI at Compiègne. Once again it was the *boiserie* that impressed most in the tiny *cabinet de garde-robe*, with its charming gilded carved trophies of good government – the Arts, Sciences, Agriculture etc. – executed by the brothers Rousseau in 1788, surely one of the most sensational rooms in the whole Palace.

The furniture in the king's study, or *cabinet d'angle*, is the richest and most magnificent, as one would expect. The celebrated *bureau du Roi*, conceived by J-F Oeben in 1760 and delivered by Riesener

nine years later, with elaborate marquetry trophies and gilt-bronze mounts, is back in its original setting, having recently been conserved and cleaned by the skilful team at the *Centre de Recherche et de Resaturation des Musees de France*. Also in the room is the 1738 Gaudreau medal cabinet designed by the Slodtz brothers, and the huge Thomire 'candelabrum of American Independence' of 1785, representing France (gilt-bronze cockerels) vanquishing the British (chained leopards), mounted with Sèvres biscuit plaques in the manner of Wedgwood. Before leaving the king's apartments, we admired yet more superlative *boiserie* carving in Louis XV's bathroom, later the *très arrière cabinet* of Louis XVI. Created in 1771 by the Rousseau brothers, the medallions in two-colour gold (gilding added in 1784 for Louis XVI) represent the pleasures of the water, from naked nymphs bathing to infants fishing.

We then visited Madame du Barry's apartment, right at the top of the Palace above Louis XV's apartment, which has been newly restored and is the most evocative and beguiling of all the private apartments as it has barely been touched. The original glue painting was found in the first room and has been used to colour match the rest of the room. Originally the floors were not waxed but 'unified' with a layer of unusual '*jaune*' paint.

Mme Adelaide's bookcases were put in du Barry's library, with its small alcove for relaxation now filled with a spectacular neoclassical *canapé en corbeille* by Delanois. About 80% of the original gilding of the room has been recovered, and the white walls refurbished – not exactly white but

*blanc du roi* – a very pale blue. The panelling in the *antichambre* is another mixture of dates, with some from the 1730s (re-used from the *Galerie de la Chasse* when it was dismantled by LXV to make way for new rooms – nothing was wasted) and some later. In the dining room the panelling is a mixture of Rousseau brothers from 1765/66 and, in the window alcoves, 1730s Verbeekt. Mme du Barry's early neoclassical taste was evidenced by Delanois chairs gilded by Guichard, delivered for her *salon de compagnie* in 1769, which were very modern for the time and among the earliest if not the earliest examples of 'Louis XVI style' at Versailles. She also had English furniture – mahogany gueridons and tea tables mounted with silver; she was at the forefront of Anglomania.

Du Barry's love of porcelain-mounted furniture is evidenced by a Carlin jewel cabinet with Sèvres plaques; hers is now in the Met but the one on display here only differs in the ground colour of the plaques, with *bleu céleste* ground rather than du Barry's green.

Finally, we were shown the newly restored apartments of the Dauphin and Dauphine, rooms used by a succession of Dauphins, complete with restored and new panelling. In the bedroom is a large commode cabinet made for the Dauphin by Beneman in 1787 – mahogany veneered with very simple gilt-bronze mounts, literally only the drawer pulls, so that the child wouldn't hurt himself. His simple metal bed is in the room, with white painted armchairs by Boulard that were made for Marie-Antoinette's pregnancy in 1785. Bertrand explained how in the *Grand*



Madame du Barry's apartment

*Cabinet* the panelling has literally been recreated over the last three years, using a team of *boiserie* gilders. Two *bureau plats* by BVRB II, both dating from 1745, a Saunier console table of 1787 and white painted and gilded *fauteuils*, *bergères* and *voyeuses* by Sené, also from 1787, now furnish the room. A vast terrestrial globe five feet high by Montel in *papier maché* on dolphin supports, made for the Dauphin in 1788 and taken to the Tuileries for his education, was a touching reminder of the daily life of these apartments' former occupants. The curatorial and conservation teams at Versailles have worked tirelessly to bring the rooms back to life and their attention to detail and scholarly research is to be applauded. Our warm thanks to our excellent guides.

HELEN JACOBSEN

The first day concluded with a drinks reception kindly hosted by Dr. Christopher de Quénétain at Cercle de L'Union Interalliée on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

## Al Thani Collection at the Hôtel de la Marine, Paris

The Al Thani Collection is named after its collector, Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani, a member of Qatar's royal family and first cousin of the Emir. The collection is rich in 6,000 works, spanning 5,000 years of history. In 2018, the Al Thani Collection Foundation signed an agreement with the Centre des Monuments Nationaux that allows for 400 sqm of exhibition space at the Hôtel de la Marine for the next 20 years.

Designed and built between 1757 and 1774 by the architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel facing what is now the Place de la Concorde, the Hôtel de la Marine was from 1774 to 1797 the Garde-Meuble de la Couronne, the repository of royal furniture, works of art and jewels. From 1777 until the Revolution, it was open to the public once a week. From 1799 to 2015, it served as the headquarters of the French Navy. After the Navy's departure it was decided to keep the entire building as a public monument under the direction of the Centre des Monuments Nationaux who managed its impressive restoration process from 2017 to 2020.

The Al Thani Foundation contributed to the restoration of the monument and to the acquisition of a commode by Jean-Henri Riesener (Marie Antoinette's favourite cabinetmaker). In 2019, this

masterpiece of marquetry, originally commissioned for the apartments of the King's Intendant in charge of the Garde-meuble de la Couronne under Louis XV, reappeared on the market at a Christie's sale in New York. Sheikh Hamad bought it, enabling it to return to its original home.

A wing on the first floor of the newly renovated historic Hôtel de la Marine, where the French crown's tapestries were once displayed, houses the Al Thani collection. Our visit, which included the temporary exhibition: *Ca' d'Oro: Masterpieces of the Renaissance in Venice*, was guided Hélène de Givry, curator who was very knowledgeable and wonderfully kind to us.

ANCA BOICU

## Hotel de la Marine

The private apartment interiors were created by two successive *Intendants Généraux*, Pierre Elizabeth de Fontanieu, in post between 1767 and 1784 and his successor Marc-Antoine Thierry de Ville-d'Avray. Neither were content with the marquis de Marigny's belief that 'it was enough to be content with the building's exterior richness' and created a sensational suite of rooms, furnished with commissions from Riesener, J.B.C. Sené and G. Beneman. On his arrival in 1786-7, Thierry de Ville d'Avray partially redecorated the suite of rooms, bringing in Dugourc to replace Fontanieu's laboratories among other changes.

Up to 80% of the original decorative scheme has been recovered, which



has been the guiding principle for this restoration involving painstaking analysis and research.

The visitor arrives at the apartments via the Intendant's stairs, through a sober vestibule to Thierry de Ville-d'Avray's anteroom and study linked by an inlaid parquet floor by Mathieu Robert. The main study contains two interesting desks, the bureau plat from the Château de Choisy, and a roll-top desk by Riesener similar to the one in Louis XV's study at Versailles.

The apartments were technologically advanced including an ingenious device in the dining room. Ville-d'Avray took his predecessor's commode by Gaudreaux, commissioned Riesener to supply a further two doors and then installed a system by which warm food could be delivered directly from the kitchen, reducing the number of staff required.

There were further commissions for Fontanieu's protégé Riesener with a commode for his bedroom and in 1771 two superb pieces now in the Cabinet Doré, the Table des Muses and a secretaire, with panels of floral marquetry and wonderful flowing mounts.

The visit finished with the reception rooms overlooking the Place de la Concorde which were designed by Xavier Lefèvre in 1843-44. The very grand white and gold scheme is designed to celebrate the French navy and all things marine.

ALICE DUGDALE

## Chancellerie d'Orléans

Our visit to the Chancellerie d'Orléans began with a thorough overview delivered



Hotel de la Marine

by Bertrand du Vignaud, explaining the origins of the *hôtel particulier*, its turbulent subsequent history and the genesis of his campaign to have it restored. The building known as the Chancellerie d'Orléans was first commissioned by the Duc d'Orléans in 1709-10 and would later pass to the d'Argenson family. The most significant period of renovation took place between 1763 and 1773, led by Charles de Wailly. In the nineteenth century the *hôtel* was turned into offices and workshops and was bought by the Banque de France in 1914. The bank's grand plans were to demolish the *hôtel* in order to create a new street, promising to conserve and re-assemble the interior afterwards. Following the demolition in 1923, though, this promise was not held, and the fabric of the interior remained in storage for decades.



Chancellerie D'Orleans with Bertrand du Vignaud and friends

Bertrand then described to us how the idea for the project was inspired by a passing reference to the Chancellerie d'Orléans that he read in the 1970s and outlined the curatorial process and his fundraising. The interiors of the Chancellerie d'Orléans have now been recreated in the Hôtel de Rohan.

In the first room we saw the only original 1708 ceiling by Antoine Coyppel to survive the renovations in the 1760s and 70s by Charles de Wailly. We were also informed that the restoration project had included a lowering of all floors to a few steps below ground level, in order to recreate the dimensions of the original rooms. Many pieces within this room were original to the Chancellerie d'Orléans, including the chairs designed by Charles de Wailly and made by Mathieu Bauve – these four chairs (from an original suite of eight) were found at auction. Other pieces, such

as the rock crystal chandelier and the console table, were from the eighteenth century though not originally commissioned for this *hôtel*.

The next room, the Dining Room, had several important points to note during its historical evolution. One is that none other than Jean-Honoré Fragonard was commissioned to paint the ceiling in 1767 but left the project two years later – we don't know why his patrons were not happy with his work, but it was substituted by the ceiling depicting Jupiter by Lagrenée that is now in place.

The following room, the bedroom of Madame de Voyer, was sumptuously gilded but would have been even more opulent in the eighteenth century: the room is centred by a period *lit à la polonoise* by Tillard.

This room was followed by a passageway which is not in the floorplan of the original Chancellerie d'Orléans – the room was

used to display materials related to the house including portraits, documents and important drawings of the *hôtel* by William Chambers. The final room was the Antichamber, which would have been the first to greet visitors to the Chancellerie d'Orléans. The star piece of this room was arguably the 'chimera' console table, an important component of the décor which was identified in storage of a separate collection and verified against a drawing made by William Chambers. Much of the fabric of this room is original, including the capitals and overdoors, and the plainer style creates a much more Roman, masculine approach to neoclassicism in contrast to the earlier rooms.

CAMERON DI LEO

Our grateful thanks to John Whitehead for leading this Study Trip and to David Oakey for his help.

## Visit to Pitzhanger Manor

THURSDAY 20 APRIL 2023

We were welcomed to Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery by director Clare Gough who eloquently took us through Sir John Soane's country home in East Ealing. Last time the FHS visited was in February 1989. It was a splendid afternoon, just as Soane would have made sure of when inviting his guests to his home, less than an hour away from London by carriage. We were taken through the re-developed Georgian House that Soane had worked on as an apprentice and purchased later for his own use. Little furniture survives but the architectural fabric is maintained in beautiful condition after an extensive three-year conservation project.

Soane received a scholarship from the Royal Academy enabling him to go on a Grand Tour like other architects of his time, during which he travelled extensively throughout Italy absorbing the Greco-Roman motifs which he used in his building designs. The house was to be approached from the corner with the 'Arch of Constantine' serving as the main gateway. The figures on the columns are made from Coade stone, a material developed by a successful businesswoman who used ground glass as the secret ingredient to develop a product that does not weather. We learned that as Soane was a meticulous archivist, so the original



Interior entrance at Pitzhanger Manor



plans of the house were preserved, and analysis was able to take place.

The Manor was conceived as a domestic house, the main entrance hall serving as the show-stopping 'presentation card' to impress his visitors and friends with the aim of obtaining further commissions. The entrance had been whitewashed and the internal windows boarded up by the late nineteenth century when it was sold to the council to become a library and public park. A paint specialist was employed to uncover the original colours. We learned that Soane specialised in painted faux marble using various colours to add to the theatricality. The house and twenty-eight-hectare grounds were used for entertainment, but there were no guest bedrooms as overnight visitors were not generally welcomed. Only William Turner, Soane's close friend and someone he took fishing in the lake, would have been allocated a room.

The breakfast room is decorated with his trademark ceiling, which he used in variations throughout this house and others. In this room that he aimed to inspire a future dynasty of architects by using the Greek decorative style. In the Library, Soane rotated a display of contemporary art including prints of the frescoes excavated at Villa Negroni.

The small red drawing room is hung with prints after Hogarth including *The Rake's Progress*, a premonition of what would happen to his son George, who failed to continue the family architectural dynasty. We continued to the second floor, which via the grand staircase, with Minerva standing with a bull's head as the *pièce de résistance* awaiting us at the

top. The natural flow of the building then led us to the George Dance room, which Soane had worked on as an apprentice. This room is decorated with stunning and intricate Chinese wallpaper with the idea of bringing the park outside into the interior space. The tour ended in the elegant eating room downstairs with its sash windows and printed menus, giving us an insight into what was eaten for dinner and who would have been a guest. We were finally invited to view the exhibition of *Anthony Caro: The Inspiration of Architecture* in the adjacent contemporary exhibition space.

With many thanks to the director Clare Gough and Beatrice Goddard, Events Secretary for organising such a splendid afternoon.

STEPHANIE SOUROUJON

## Study Trip to Scotland

5 – 7 MAY 2023

### The Burrell Collection

We were greeted by Laura Bauld, Burrell Project Curator and Ed Johnson, Curator of Medieval and Renaissance art for our tour of the magnificent Burrell collection. The first gallery that we were shown contained two large oak tables. The first table had the appearance of a sixteenth or seventeenth century piece; supported at each corner by heraldic style beasts superbly carved and of important size. The table seemed rather low and the stretchers very wide and impractical for diners. At one end there appeared to be small square openings; they may have been for some attachment. Our general





Bury chest at the  
Burrell Collection

opinion was that the table had been created from earlier components; however, it certainly created a great impact.

The walls were adorned with splendid medieval woven tapestries depicting hunting scenes and one showing Hercules founding the Olympic Games woven about 1450. They all benefitted from the flattering new LED lighting system.

There are some wonderful walnut restoration-period armchairs including one unique cane-backed arm chair with traces of original gilded and painted decoration. The arms terminated with carved horses; the legs with bold lion paw feet and there are putti with recently revealed flesh painted detail.

Sir William had this wonderful, almost addiction, for acquiring medieval objects. Some were architectural, including wonderful medieval stained glass, some from France, and the magnificent sixteenth century stone portal from Hornby Castle in North Yorkshire which somehow seems to fit perfectly in the modern setting.

Sir William, although a very rich shipping magnate, always had an eye for a bargain including the Hornby portal which was bought as part of four crate-

loads of architectural stone and wood from the William Randolph Hearst estate between 1952 and 1954. There were more than four items in these crates, which were not intended for Hutton Castle near Berwick-Upon-Tweed but were bought for inclusion into the future museum dedicated to the collection.

We viewed the Wynn oak dresser with a wonderful collection of sixteenth or seventeenth century carved panels. We considered that the curious canopy top might have been incorporated later. We were also shown a wonderful run of linenfold panelling which surprisingly came from Harrington Hall, a house that I know well from my native county of Lincolnshire. This sixteenth century house was anciently the home of the Baring family who were London bankers. The panels were sold to Sir William by the furniture dealer and interior designer Frank Surgey, but Surgey's dealings with the Baring family and the way he acquired these panels is sadly not documented.

The oldest item of furniture on show is the amazing Richard de Bury oak chest; it is considered to date from 1340. The remaining original painted decoration

shows Sir Richard's coat of arms along with the arms of The Queensberry and Nevill families. The other arms on the on Chest are those of the Edward III, there are additional beasts, which may be heraldic, including the blue lion rampant, which maybe symbolic of the heraldic arms of Percy, Barons of Alnwick. Victor Chinnery rated this chest highly and confirmed that it was anciently painted all over (*Oak Furniture; The British Tradition*).

To me our private visit to the furniture store was an exciting part of our visit. This store is not open for public view and so we were delighted to be able to cross the portal. There were many items of interest including a large selection of early oak panel-back chairs. A small polychrome decorated cabinet with hinged doors attracted a fair amount of interest amongst our members; maybe it was part of a portable altar. I was drawn by the top of a late seventeenth century escritoire and sure enough further along the same fixture I found the three-drawer base on bracket feet with wonderful flame veneers, probably of laburnum.

ALAN READ

## Drumlanrig Castle

Members were greeted in the Entrance Hall at Drumlanrig by Crispin Powell, the archivist to Duke Richard and Stuart, the Senior Guide at the Castle. Crispin and Stuart introduced us to the history of the Douglas seat, built by William, 1st Duke of Queensberry, and pointed out the dates on the lintels of the windows of the four towers in the courtyard that recorded the progress of the building in the 1680s. It was explained that Henry, 3rd Duke of

Buccleuch, had inherited the Queensberry Dukedom, the rundown castle with its leaking roofs and most of the estates of his gambling cousin 'Old Q', the 4th Duke, in 1810. His grandmother Lady Jane Douglas, daughter of the 2nd Duke, had married Francis, 2nd Duke of Buccleuch in 1720. In 1767 the aforementioned Duke Henry had married the great Montagu heiress, Lady Elizabeth who inherited the vast Montagu estates and properties upon the death of her father, George Brudenell, 3rd and last Duke of Montagu, in 1790. It was Elizabeth's fortune that enabled her son and grandson to restore Drumlanrig and the estate so ravaged by dissolute 'Old Q', for her husband died in 1812.

The original Queensberry furnishings of the castle were munificently and dramatically enriched following the retreat of the 7th Duke of Buccleuch and 9th Duke of Queensberry from his principal residences of Montagu House, Whitehall and Dalkeith Palace during and after the First World War. It was his son, Walter, 8th and 10th Duke, together with his wife, the redoubtable Mollie, who started to spend more time at Drumlanrig and formed a deep attachment to the place and its surrounding estates that continues happily to this day. This introduction and context were crucial to our understanding of the things we studied at Drumlanrig.

In the entrance Hall we admired the six James II ebonised open armchairs with their elegant, moulded S-scroll 'horse bone' supports and compared them to the six copies made by J. Simpson in the 1830s and stamped to the front-rails but were dismayed to discover a significant new outbreak of woodworm in the original



Drumlanrig Castle bedroom

chairs. We examined the superb ormolu-mounted Kingwood and marquetry longcase clock, that Charlotte Rostek revealed had come from the entrance hall at Dalkeith palace. Sarah Medlam noted that Jean Pierre Latz (maitre before 1737) had adapted this super-charged Rococo style to the taste of his German clients. We concluded that the base had been added by Edward Holmes Baldock (1777–1845) who had the good fortune to be much patronised by those celebrated collectors, Walter Francis, 5th and 7th Duke and Charlotte-Anne his duchess.

In the Parlour we looked at the refined and sophisticated oyster-veneered satinwood bombe *bureau de dame* of Louis XV style attributed to Baldock with the cypher of Charlotte-Anne (1811–1895) with finely executed end-cut marquetry.



Drumlanrig Castle chandelier

Above the bureau we encountered the first of the mirrors attributed to John Thomson of Edinburgh, with exuberantly carved motifs and to the apron the winged Douglas heart surmounted by a ducal coronet. Crispin informed us that the small Joseph Knibb longcase clock had been billed on December 2nd, 1687, at £4-15s for the clock and £6-15s for the case. In 2010 a note was discovered on the back of the clock face inscribed 'This clock was repaired [by] Prisoner of War Ludwig Leitner, 12/11/47'. In the Morning Room a Queen Anne giltwood mirror embellished by John Thomson caught our eyes with an exuberant pendant foliate cresting and we examined closely the pair of William and Mary giltwood stools from Whitehall Palace, noting traces of the original gilding under the nineteenth-century gilding,

from the Great or the Picture Closet at Dalkeith. The even rarer set of four William and Mary redecorated seven-tier corner shelves from the Picture Closet at Dalkeith, listed there in Duchess Anne's 1739 inventory, were greatly admired.

In the Dining Room two German late seventeenth century polychrome and black lacquer cabinets (sadly locked) on giltwood stands attributed to James Moore that had been commissioned by Duchess Anne at Dalkeith were inspected and the set of eight silver sconces c. 1691 with the crowned cypher of Queen Mary II excited attention; Paul Storr had replaced the central mirrors in the early nineteenth century. These can be identified with Garrard's account of April 30, 1829 '4 pairs of silver sconces, 2 light, 842 oz, £412' and were probably from the Royal Plate sold in 1808 by Rundell, Bridge and Rundell.

We ascended the staircase passing beneath the eleven-stone Charles II chandelier enriched with a ducal coronet, among other additions by Garrard, and invoiced on July 22, 1835 'a very fine richly chased old silver chandelier to contain 16 lights £1,750'. It has been discovered recently that John Cooqus, the Dutch silversmith provided this to Catherine of Braganza for her drawing room at Whitehall in 1669, and that it was sold from the Royal Collection in 1832 and snapped up by our friends Walter Francis and Charlotte-Anne three years later.

On the Landing we looked at two William and Mary giltwood stands with deeply pierced and carved friezes now converted as stools on William IV short cabriole legs, that had come from Dalkeith - curious and fascinating confections (!).

Lucy Wood enlightened us about the sumptuous George II suite of seat-furniture that she had studied and noted that related suites are found almost exclusively in Scottish houses, the rich needlework executed in part in super-fine 'petit-point'. The needlework of the set at Holyrood is signed by John Shaw and the cabinet maker is probably Alexander Peters. There is a set at Scone Palace with conforming needlework but earlier and plainer walnut frames. The quality of the mahogany frames of the Drumlanrig set is first class, with richly carved lion-masks and crisp eagle's claw-and-ball feet. An unusual feature that Lucy pointed out, is that the original webbing is placed over the base cloth and the nails are set into red cloth tape.

Much of the rest of the visit was spent in the Drawing Room and we agreed unanimously that few rooms contain such a cornucopia of wonders. We looked at the pair of William IV large ebony and scarlet bouffe breakfront side cabinets acquired by Duke Walter and Duchess Charlotte-Anne in 1830 for £280 from Mr Baldock and another example, probably from the same atelier, with a pietra dura central panel of flowering plants on an exotic lapis lazuli ground, beneath a rare Bohemian green quartz slab, with characteristic red flecks in it.

We examined in detail the magnificent Royal Louis XIV cabinet-on-stand and admired the superb marquetry on one of the amaranth-lined drawers. Nobody disputed that this cabinet and its pair in the Getty Museum are amongst the most magnificent creations of the Gobelins Manufactory. By tradition it was presented by The Sun King to Charles II, who gave it



to his ill-fated son the Duke of Monmouth, husband of Duchess Anne, as a wedding present. The splendid Boulle cabinet at the other end of the room boasts marquetry of the highest order and has the same perhaps slightly implausible provenance. It is one of four known examples, and we concurred after close examination that the configuration of the central drawers had been changed, almost certainly at the time of construction, a stimulating insight. All applauded Sarah Medlam's observation that the first example represents the apotheosis of the cabinet before the commode took over as the most prestigious piece of furniture!

Among other remarkable treats we enjoyed the large pair of Queen Anne gilt and scarlet *verre églomisé* pier glasses (116 inches high) with the arms and coronet of John, 2nd Duke of Argyll, who succeeded his father in 1703, father of Caroline, wife of the Earl of Dalkeith and mother of Henry, our 3rd and 5th Duke. The single mirror in the Ante Room, also with the arms of Duke John picked out in silver, gold and polychrome to the upper panel, is a truly imposing mirror and a suitably eminent piece with which to end our all too brief visit to Drumlanrig.

We retired to the Muniment Room to view a selection of fascinating invoices and accounts that Crispin had got out for our perusal and pleasure, always 'caviar' to members of the FHS! After heartfelt and profound votes of thanks to Crispin and Stuart, both of whom had done so very much to ensure that we had a most memorable visit, we repaired to the gardens to look at the exterior of this marvellous building and to catch our breath.

WILLIAM LORIMER

## Durisdeer Church

On Sunday morning Amy Hiddleston from Drumlanrig kindly gave us access to the family aisle of Durisdeer church, with its splendid baroque memorial to the 2nd duke and his duchess. The small, spare building was completed in 1708, a year before the death of the duchess. This prompted the commission to Van Nost and the memorial was installed in 1711, after the duke's death. The towering baldichino with fluted, spiralling Solomonic columns, is placed centrally over the access to the family vault, somewhat cramping the space for the wall monument with its elegant recumbent figures, resplendent in carved lace and ermine, under an aedicule splendid with drapery, flowered drops and putti.



Durisdeer Church

The church, re-built between 1716 and 1720 by the 3rd duke, is, in contrast, notably plain and domestic in form, with hipped roofs and handsome sash windows. Our thanks go to Ronald Lamb, the Session Clerk, for an excellent introduction, drawing our attention to the survival of the eighteenth-century box pews in untreated pine, with partitions that can be lifted out to create two long compartments with narrow, extendable central tables that allow communion to be taken according to the Presbyterian tradition. Sadly, the future of the church is currently uncertain.

SARAH MEDLAM

## Willow Tea Room

Our study visit concluded with lunch at the Willow Tearooms in Sauchiehall (Willow Meadow) Street, Glasgow; the only surviving tearooms designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for local entrepreneur and patron Catherine

Cranston, and the only commission where Mackintosh had complete design control over both interiors and exterior. Within the former warehouse building, and across three floors, Mackintosh created a range of spaces with different functions and decor, including a gallery, billiards room and three salons, the famous Salon de Luxe the most striking, with its tall, silver chairs in the signature Mackintosh style. The result was a sophisticated suite of interiors, with figurative and abstract designs, furniture, accessories, fittings, colours and materials creating a stunning, single work of art. By 2014, the building had deteriorated until, to prevent its forced sale, it was purchased by The Willow Tea Rooms Trust. Following a £10 million restoration between 2014 and 2018, which included the commission of over four hundred pieces of furniture matching the original Mackintosh designs, the tearooms, now trading as 'Mackintosh At The Willow', have been largely restored to Mackintosh's



The gallery at  
'Mackintosh at  
the Willow'



Group at Drumlanrig Castle

original designs and the function for which they were intended when opened in 1903.

KERRY MONAGHAN SMITH

Our thanks to Charlotte Rostek and Willie Lorimer for leading this FHS trip and to all our hosts and guides.

## Visit to 'Highlights from the collection of Clive and Jane Wainwright', An exhibition at H. Blairman & Sons Ltd, 15 Queen Anne's Gate

WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023

Members of the FHS were privileged to have a special evening viewing of this exhibition at H. Blairman & Sons Ltd,

15, introduced by Martin Levy. The collection included furniture, sculpture, pictures and other nineteenth-century works of art, reflecting the wide range of the Wainwrights' collecting interests. It was Jane Wainwright's hope that at least some of the items would be bought by collectors who had known them both, and by appropriate institutions. Martin had approached exhibition with this in mind.

Martin began by listing the eminent scholars who contributed personal recollections of Clive and Jane to the fully illustrated catalogue: Susan Weber, Founder and Director of the Bard Graduate Center, New York; Simon Swynfen Jervis, President of the Furniture History Society; Charlotte Gere; Antony Griffiths of the British Museum; and Megan Aldrich. These colleagues and former students recall Clive's career as a



curator at the V&A, and as a teacher.

We then heard some fascinating accounts of how the exhibits were acquired by the Wainwrights in the heyday of interest in such pieces. It was a time of exciting discoveries, like that of a Burges painted chest of drawer at Phillips West Two (now at Manchester Art Gallery, 1985.1). Martin discussed attributions and explained efforts being made to place the items in new collections.

A highlight of the exhibition was the ebonised mahogany and ivory side table designed by Sir John Soane for the Gothic Library at Stowe House, which was included in the Stowe catalogue of 1848. In relation to this piece Martin discussed both the ban on the import and export of ivory, and the procedure for obtaining export licences for works bought by overseas buyers, including the potential involvement of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art (RCEWA) for such important works.

We examined one of Martin's favourite pieces, the table designed by George Edmund Street, c.1854 (one of two pieces in the exhibition designed by Street). Various Pugin-designed items included a writing table of 1840–44 that was exhibited in *Architect-Designers: Pugin to Mackintosh* at the Fine Art Society in 1981 (and featured on the cover of the catalogue) as well as a drawing table, probably 1840s, for which Clive Wainwright had commissioned extra feet to raise it up, to compensate for Pugin's short height, from restorer Peter Holmes who was with us on the visit. Among many other interesting pieces conceived by leading architect-

designers active throughout the nineteenth century, we also admired a Philip Webb toilet mirror, c.1862 which had been exhibited in *The Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris: Artists, Designers and Craftsmen* (Japan 2011), and an armchair after a design by Franz Ewerbeck, for which the design was published in 1874.

Kate Hay, in her thanks to Martin Levy, mentioned the careful custodianship the exhibition represented and the hope that there would be a new generation of collectors and curators who, like the Wainwrights, will value these pieces and the stories behind them.

BEATRICE GODDARD



FHS Members Fuensanta (Fuen) Soriano López and Irina Zigar at the Private View of the Wainwright Collection



## Calling All Scholars and Museum Professionals

The Furniture History Society welcomes grant applications for independent travel, research or for participation in the Society's study trips both overseas and in the United Kingdom. Scholars and museum professionals working in the fields of furniture history, furniture making, decorative arts, interior design and conservation who are in need of support for travel and research are encouraged to apply.

The Society makes grants to individuals and organisations from two funds which 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/](http://www.furniturehistorysociety.org/grants/) enquiries. Enquiries should be addressed to the Grants Secretary, Jill Bace, at [grants@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:grants@furniturehistorysociety.org).

## Summer ECD Events

Early Career Development group members attended two very exciting and informative events this summer. In June, a conversation with Council member Jurgen Huber, Senior Furniture Conservator at the Wallace Collection, on 'Sustainability in Furniture Conservation' was held at the Society of Antiquaries. Jurgen outlined the ways sustainability is being addressed, as arts organisations across the globe look to change established practices and search for ways to reduce their carbon footprint. In July ECD members viewed the exhibition of furniture, decorative objects and paintings assembled by the late scholar and curator Clive Wainwright and his wife Jane. Hosted by Martin Levy, one of London's foremost dealers and authorities in nineteenth-century decorative arts, at his gallery H. Blairman & Sons, the enthusiastic visitors were guided through a treasure trove of objects, including a drawing table used by AWN Pugin and an ebony side table designed by Sir John Soane for the Gothic library at Stowe.

## New ECD Events Group

Team spirit is the new motto of the of five enthusiastic ECD members who have taken on the task of creating and managing ECD events. Simon Spier, Alienor Cros, Penelope Hines, Adele Bourbonne, and Isabelle Vaudrey currently hold a variety of positions in the art world, from an auction house to a stately home,

a furniture dealer, and a hospital. With these impressive backgrounds, the group is well-placed to bring an imaginative and exciting programme of in-person as well as online events to ECD members throughout the year. They will build on the solid foundations created by former Co-Chairs Katherine Hardwick and Eliot Sterling, who steered ECD events for several years with great success.

\*\* If you aren't already a member, are under thirty-five or are new to the world of furniture, decorative arts, or historic interiors, please join us! Contact Jill Bace at [grants@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:grants@furniturehistorysociety.org).

## Seventh ECD Research Seminar set for Metropolitan Museum of Art

The FHS is delighted to announce the next ECD Seminar, to be held as a hybrid session at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, on 24 January 2024. Thanks to the generous support of the Oliver Ford Trust, the symposium will bring together speakers from across the UK, Europe and the US to share current research across the fields of furniture history and furniture making, the decorative arts and historic interiors. The FHS is grateful to curators Wolfram Koeppe and Wolf Burchard for hosting the Research Seminar at this distinguished venue once again.

The full programme and booking information will be posted on the Events page of the FHS website.

# Publications

The Society is a leading publisher in the field of Furniture History and a variety of publications are available for purchase to members and non-members.

Publication	UK	EUROPE	Rest of World
<i>Index to the Dictionary of English Furniture Makers</i>	£25.50	£30.50	£44.00
Pat Kirkham, <i>The London Furniture Trade 1700-1870</i>	£25.50	£40.50	£44.00
Francis Bamford, <i>Dictionary of Edinburgh Furniture Makers 1660-1840</i>	£25.50	£30.50	£44.00
Jacob Simon, <i>Thomas Johnson's The Life of the Author</i>	£11.00	£16.00	£25.00
Judith Goodison, <i>Thomas Chippendale the Younger at Stourhead</i>	£10.00	£15.00	£24.00
Simon Swynfen Jervis, <i>John Stafford of Bath and his Interior Decorations</i>	£10.00	£15.00	£24.00
Simon Swynfen Jervis, <i>British and Irish Inventories</i>	£17.50	£23.50	£39.00
Morrison H. Heckscher, "Chippendale's Director: The Designs and Legacy of a Furniture Maker." <i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i> (May 2018)	£10.00	£13.00	£22.00
The Chippendale Society, <i>Thomas Chippendale 1718-1779: A Celebration of British Craftmanship and Design</i>	£10.00	£13.00	£22.00
Jonathan Marsden, <i>Makers, Dealers and Collectors in Honour of Geoffrey de Bellaigue</i>	£26.00	£31.00	£44.00
<b><i>Furniture History</i> (Furniture History Society Journal) -</b> Journals available from 1973 (Volume IX) except 1974 (Volume X), 1977 (Volume XIII), 1985 (Volume XXI) and 1988 (Volume XXIV)	£30.00	£35.00	£48.00
Index Volumes for Furniture History Vols I-X, XI-XV, XVI-XXV and XXVI-XXXV	£10.00	£13.00	£22.00

Payment may be made by online, or by cheque, bank transfer, debit or credit card (American Express, Visa or Mastercard).

Alternatively, you can e-mail your order to our Publications Secretary, Jill Bace, and she will send you an invoice. Contact details on the back page. Orders will be dispatched by the Society upon receipt of payment.

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The views expressed in this *Newsletter* are those of the respective authors. They are accepted as honest and accurate expressions of opinion, but should not necessarily be considered to reflect that of the Society or its employees.

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## Copy Deadline

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next Newsletter is Thursday 30 November 2023. Copy should be sent by email to [Ian.Stephens@royal.uk](mailto:Ian.Stephens@royal.uk).

## FHS Online

[www.furniturehistorysociety.org](http://www.furniturehistorysociety.org)

**British and Irish Furniture Makers Online:** [www.bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org](http://www.bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org)

Instagram: [@furniturehistorysociety](https://www.instagram.com/furniturehistorysociety) | Facebook: The Furniture History Society

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COVER PICTURE: Door frame from a Vernis Martin cabinet, possibly by Emanuel Zwiener of Paris, c.1890, finished and refitted into the door frame. Simon Gillespie Studios.