

The Furniture History Society

# Newsletter 209

February 2018

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# A Patent Worth Protecting: Jupe's Improved Expanding Dining Table

One day in early 1835, upholster Robert Jupe (c. 1791–1841) handed machinist Joseph Read a cardboard circle cut into four quadrants, and asked him to devise a mechanism to expand these quadrants outwards to form a larger circle.<sup>1</sup> He was testing whether his idea was viable: to create a table that expanded radially from a common centre and could then be fitted with leaves to create larger surfaces. Models were made in the workshop, and at least two mechanisms to achieve this end were developed.<sup>2</sup> In March, Jupe filed a patent application for an 'improved expanding dining table', making careful note that the invention consisted in the construction of a table that expanded from a common centre, rather than any particular means used to achieve that goal. The improved design applied not only to round, but also to oval and rectangular shapes, each cut into wedges that could be expanded radially from a common centre, extending both the width and breadth of the table. The original written specification for patent no. 6788, sealed on 11 March and enrolled on 11 September 1835, can be found at the National Archives, Kew,<sup>3</sup> where it is accompanied by two large sheets of designs (Fig. 1), which were later translated to an engraving for publication.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 1 Robert Jupe, Patent 6788, National Archives, Kew: C54/11260, no. 12. Detail of scroll showing one of two inserted drawings, ink and watercolour on parchment. Photo: Kathleen Morris

Since early 1832, Jupe had been in partnership with John Johnstone<sup>5</sup> as Johnstone, Jupe & Co., operating from 67 New Bond Street. The firm immediately began advertising the tables, requesting

that the 'nobility and gentry' visit their showrooms to witness how the round table could be expanded 'immediately, and without the slightest difficulty' to various sizes 'even in the hands of the most inexperienced servant'.<sup>6</sup> It differed from the telescoping table patented by Richard Gillow in 1800 (patent no. 2396), which extended laterally, and it was seen as an improvement over previous expanding round tables, which had been achieved by means such as clipping extensions to the outer rim of the core table.

Evidently, from the beginning the new design met with success,<sup>7</sup> and it would go on to become one of the firm's most enduringly popular products. Jupe and Johnstone therefore were quick to take action when Samuel Luke Pratt (1805–78) began advertising what they saw to be a pirated version of the table in 1836,<sup>8</sup> leading to the patent dispute case known as 'Jupe v. Pratt'.

Pratt, who with his father (Samuel Pratt, d. 1849) had been in business for some years in the furniture, equipment and antiques trade,<sup>9</sup> was well acquainted with the importance of patents. Between 1815 and 1836, the Pratts patented at least six of their own inventions, and in the 1840s took over control of a carving machine patent assigned to William Irving.<sup>10</sup> Pratt was markedly entrepreneurial; beyond his activity in inventing patented improvements for household and travelling accoutrements, his role in reviving interest in medieval armour as well as his role in the subsequent trade in these objects (whether real or faked) is well known.<sup>11</sup> By some

simple but significant differences in the means of achieving an expanded round table, he seems to have hoped to capture some portion of this promising market. His table top also was cut into wedges, but rather than being drawn out radially along slides as the table top was pulled or rotated, as was Jupe's, his mechanism drew the wedges to their eventual positions by means of two motions — horizontal and then vertical. The end result was the same: an expanding round table that grew in circumference from a common centre, with the resulting gaps fitted with leaves.

Jupe filed suit against Pratt for patent infringement. Among the pleas filed by Pratt's attorney were that Jupe's patent was not original, and that his client's product was quite different. A trial took place on 6 December 1836. The distinguished lawyer and politician Sir Frederick Pollock (1783–1870) represented Jupe as plaintiff. The case was argued before a special jury with Judge James Scarlett, 1st Baron Abinger (1769–1844) presiding. Pratt was represented by a Mr M. D. Hill.<sup>12</sup> Sir Frederick presented copies of the two sheets of patented drawings as evidence and used models to explain Jupe's invention. The drawings, exactly duplicating the original drawings filed with the patent, also survive in the National Archive collections (Fig. 2).<sup>13</sup>

Pratt's attorney called no witnesses, confident in his argument that his client's invention was wholly unrelated to the patented designs of Jupe. On the other hand, Sir Frederick called at least fourteen witnesses, including engineers, furniture

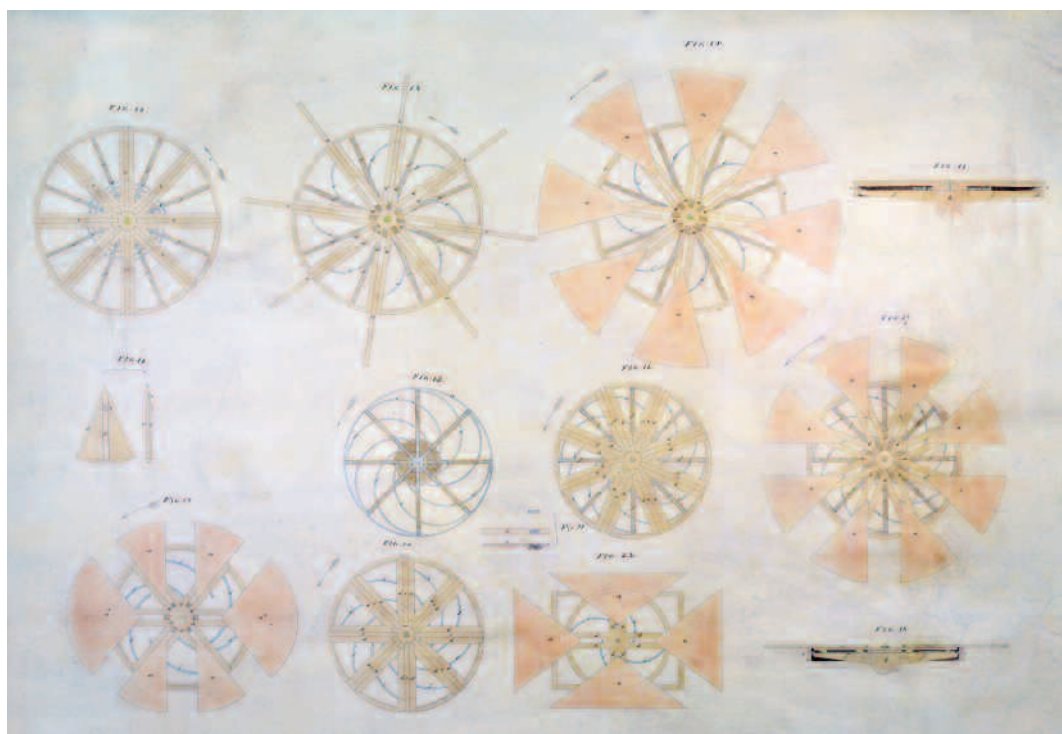


Fig. 2 Robert Jupe (British, c. 1791–1841), Designs for patented table, submitted as evidence in *Jupe v. Pratt*, 1835, ink and watercolour on parchment, 26 × 34¼ in. (66 × 87 cm), National Archives, Kew: MFC 1/42. Photo: Janice Li

workers, cabinet-makers and upholsterers (among them civil engineer William Carpmael, cabinet-maker Thomas Banting and draughtsman Henry Whittaker), all of whom testified that they considered Pratt's table to be a copy of Jupe's. The jury decided in favour of Jupe, but the matter did not end there. A few weeks later, a lengthy letter disputing the case's decision was submitted to the *London Journal of Arts and Sciences*.<sup>14</sup> Hill filed for a non-suit and a new trial; in April 1837, the court dismissed the non-suit but decided that a new trial would be granted if Pratt paid for the entirety of the costs of the previous trial.<sup>15</sup> The judge admonished Hill that he should carefully consider whether he had sufficient argument to

win a new trial. No retrial was pursued, and thus the matter ended positively for Johnstone, Jupe & Co.

While neither defendant nor plaintiff testified in the trial, John Johnstone was present at least during the hearing regarding the retrial, as we learn from a letter he wrote to *The Times* to correct an important error in reporting on the outcome of the decision.<sup>16</sup> He states that he was writing on behalf of Jupe, who was currently out of town. It appears, however, that he controlled the interest in the patent, since, when he and Jupe parted ways in January 1839, he quickly advertised that, despite this dissolution of partnership, his firm continued to be 'sole Patentees and Manufacturers' of the circular expanding



dining table, as well as Jupe's patented extending dessert plateau (which was designed to complement the table).<sup>17</sup> Jupe moved to 47 Welbeck Street and died in 1841.

In 1851, the firm of Johnstone, Jeanes & Co. exhibited an example of the expanding table in the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace (Fig. 3), and they exhibited a 'patent circular expanding dining table' at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1878. Although by this time the original patent would have been long expired, the continued use of the term 'patent' evoked the ingenuity and history of the design.<sup>18</sup> The firm continued to produce and sell the table, and variants of it, to the end of the century. Known tables of this type are marked in a variety of ways, including examples with stamps and/or brass bosses inscribed 'Jupe's Patent', 'Johnstone, Jupe & Co.', 'Patent Johnstone', 'Johnstone & Jeanes Patentees' and 'Johnstone, Norman & Co. Patentees', as well as examples with neither stamps nor bosses (Figs 4, 5).

In December 1891, Johnstone, Norman & Co. sold a set of 'patent circular Dining tables' for use at Windsor Castle,<sup>19</sup> possibly of a new patented design. In the United States, the firm patented a version of the table that expanded both radially and laterally<sup>20</sup> in advance of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, at which they were prominent among British firms. At the 1893 fair, the firm's displays included a 'patent circular expanding dining table' as well as a 'patent circular expanding and extending dining table'.<sup>21</sup> In 1894, due at least in part to the enormous financial gamble the firm made on the 1893 exposition, Johnstone, Norman & Co. were in financial failure.<sup>22</sup> They were taken over by Morant & Co. in mid-1894, but the firm name continued to be used until around 1911.

Even after the firm's demise, the original concept of Jupe's expanding table has shown remarkable longevity. To this day, furniture companies market new radially expanding tables using Jupe's name as a touchstone; many of these also

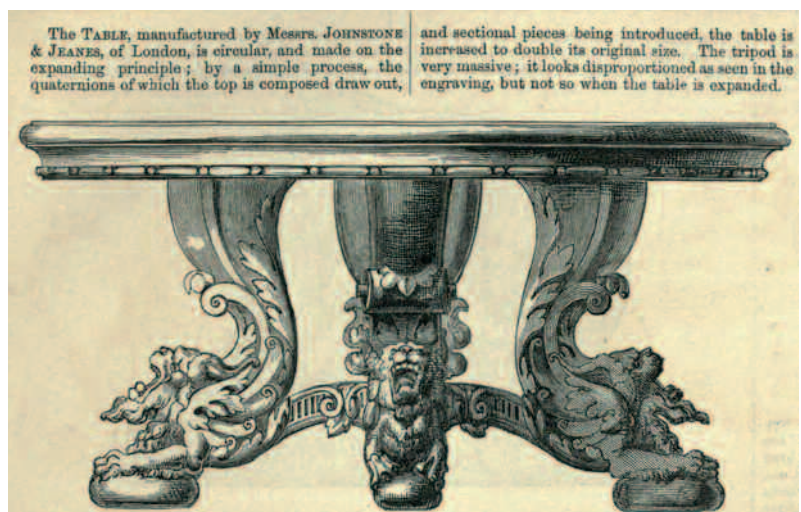


Fig. 3 Illustration of table displayed by Johnstone, Jeanes & Co., *Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue: The Industry of All Nations* (London, 1851), p. 273



Fig. 4 Johnstone, Jupe & Co., London, '*Jupe's Patent*' Extending Dining Table, c. 1839. Mahogany, 70½ in. diameter (without leaves) × 29½ in. high (179 × 75 cm). Apter-Fredericks Ltd, London



Fig. 5 Johnstone, Jupe & Co., London, '*Jupe's Patent*' Extending Dining Table (view from above showing mechanism), c. 1839. Apter-Fredericks Ltd, London

mimic the materials and designs of early Jupe tables. Original examples of this table continue to be sought after and admired as stalwart representatives of the ingenuity, craftsmanship and durability of the products of the nineteenth-century furniture trade in London.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express her thanks to Clive Edwards, Sally Goodsir from the Royal Collection Trust and Guy and Harry Apter of Apter-Fredericks for their advice and assistance on this article.

KATHLEEN M. MORRIS

- 1 *The Repertory of Patent Inventions*, n.s., VIII, July–December 1837 (London, 1838), 163.
- 2 These are described in the patent specification, which was published in *The Repertory of Patent Inventions*, n.s., VII, January–June 1837 (London, 1837), 88–95 (where the patent is mistakenly reported as enrolled 11 September 1836, rather than 1835).
- 3 National Archives, Kew: C54/11260, no. 12.
- 4 *Repertory of Patent Inventions*, January–June 1837, facing p. 88. The patent was also filed in Scotland in November 1835, see W. Newton, *London Journal of Arts and Sciences and Repertory of Patent Inventions*, VIII (1836), 63.
- 5 Upholder John Johnstone was in business as early as 1807. His business was carried on by his son, also named John Johnstone (c. 1816–93?). For a chronology of changing partnerships of Johnstone's firm, which ended as Johnstone, Norman & Co., see Kathleen M. Morris, 'Johnstone, Norman & Co. Chronology', in *Orchestrating Elegance: Alma-Tadema and the Marquand Music Room*, ed. by Kathleen M. Morris and Alexis Goodin (MA, 2017), pp. 180–81.
- 6 Advertisement in *The Times*, London, 22 December 1835, p. 8.
- 7 In late 1836 the estimated number of tables sold to date was expressed as 'not scores, but hundreds'; *The Repertory of Patent Inventions*, July–December 1837, p. 114.
- 8 For example, one ad begins 'Messrs. Pratt beg to introduce their newly-invented circular extending tables ...', *Morning Post*, London, 23 May 1836, p. 1.
- 9 On the Pratts, see Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert, eds, *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660–1840* (Leeds, 1986), p. 712, and Nanette Thrush, 'Samuel Luke Pratt, 1805–1878', *Victorian Review*, 37.1 (Spring 2011), 13–16.
- 10 Clive Edwards, 'The Mechanism of Carving', in *History of Technology*, 20 (1998), 79–81.
- 11 K. N. Watts, 'Samuel Pratt and Armour Faking', in *Why Fakes Matter*, ed. by Mark Jones (London, 1992), pp. 100–07.
- 12 The case transcript is published *The Repertory of Patent Inventions*, July–December 1837, pp. 112–22, 155–90, 246–53, and William Carpmael, *Law Reports of Patent Cases*, II (London, 1851), 242–314.
- 13 National Archives, Kew, MFC 1/42.
- 14 Written by engineer Charles Toplis and dated 17 December 1836, the letter was published in *London Journal of Arts and Sciences and Repertory of Patent Inventions*, IX (1837), 237–46.
- 15 Transcript in *The Repertory of Patent Inventions*, July–December 1837, pp. 295–314; reported in 'Court of Exchequer, Friday April 28. Jupe v. Pratt', *The Times*, London, 29 April 1837, p. 7.
- 16 John Johnstone, 'Jupe v. Pratt', *The Times*, London, 2 May 1837, p. 5.
- 17 The partnership between John Johnstone, Charles Hindley and Robert Jupe is reported as dissolved as of 31 January 1839, *London Gazette*, 1 (1839), 248. The continued claim to the patents was published in an ad for Johnstone & Co. appearing in the front matter of an instalment of Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, London, 1 April 1839.
- 18 No evidence that the firm sought an extension of the patent has been found.
- 19 'A set of Wainscot oak patent circular Dining tables 5' 6" diameter, expanding to form two tables of 6' 4" diameter [...] and 7' 6" diameter — also extending to 25 ft in length when in the 7' 6" width [...] As per estimate £116 – –.' Firm invoice in Lord Chamberlain's Bill Book, National Archives, Kew, LC 11/286. Several other extending tables by the firm are also in the Royal Collections, e.g. inventory numbers 29898 and 29943.
- 20 US Patent no. 490,936 for an 'Extension-Table' was filed on 13 January 1892, and formerly patented in England (no. 20,778) on 28 November 1891, according to *Official Gazette of the US Patent Office*, 62.1, 3 January 1893, 690. The reference to the English patent number appears to be wrong, and a corresponding English patent has not been traced.
- 21 *Furniture Gazette*, 30.725, 15 November 1893, 441, which also reports that one of the expanding tables won an award at the fair.
- 22 On the failure of the firm, see Morris, 'A History of Johnstone, Norman & Co.', in *Orchestrating Elegance*, pp. 77–81.

## Obituary

TREVE ROSOMAN FSA (1948–2017)



The death of Treve Rosoman on 4 October, after four months of a cruel and invasive cancer, was shocking. It deprived us of a valued friend and colleague. His enthusiasm and knowledge were boundless, and his interests spanned many periods and many aspects of furnishing. He was a cheerful presence at many of our events and he was always ready to share his knowledge.

Treve was born in South Wales and educated in Dorset. At the age of seventeen he came to London and began his first career as an antique dealer, soon moving back into higher education and following his real commitment to scholarship and the curator's life. Like

many of his (and my) generation, he spent a period as a volunteer in the Information Section of the (then) Furniture and Woodwork Department at the V&A, where he was inspired and encouraged by Peter Thornton and his team, who were, just at that moment, developing some of their most innovative ideas about interiors and furnishings.

In that period of relatively rich curatorial opportunity, Treve moved on to work for the GLC Historic Buildings Division and later for English Heritage, where he remained until his retirement in 2013. Here his intellectual curiosity and his practical understanding of objects and their function served him well, not least in his work on the Architectural Studies Collection, which included everything from sliding shutters and lead hopper heads to cloak pins and boot scrapers. Since 2013 the collection has been housed at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire, including its pre-eminent collection of wallpapers, the subject of Treve's publication in 1992, *London Wallpapers, their Manufacture and Use, 1690–1840* (republished in 2009). He was a founder member of the Wallpaper History Society and he was noted for his energetic and sometimes dangerous efforts to snatch wallpapers from the jaws of the demolition merchants. At that time Treve also benefited, as he was the first to admit, from the encouragement of two other notable FHS members, Geoffrey Beard and Helena



Hayward. His attendance at the Attingham Summer School in 1987 was an important moment in his life, opening the way to regular contacts with North America.

In the mid-1980s, Treve also became a founder member of the Regional Furniture Society. He served on its Council and, latterly, as Editor of its *Newsletter*. This gave him the opportunity to follow his interests in military and campaign furniture and in the domestic arrangements of simpler houses, but his interest in high style did not diminish. He made a particular study of the eighteenth-century furniture at Chiswick, publishing in the *Burlington* on this topic in 1985. In the 1990s, he turned to a radically different period with his highly praised oversight of the conservation of Eltham Palace. This opened in 1999, with elegant reproductions of the Art Deco pieces that had been lost to the house, and involved a trip to Killybegs to commission a hand-knotted Donegal carpet. In 2009, Treve was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Retirement did not diminish his pursuit of knowledge and he continued to be an active member of the Furniture History Society. Until his last summer, he was a regular attendee at meeting of the Events Committee. Over the years, he had organized several highly enjoyable visits and we also valued him for his willingness to take his share in the mundane tasks that ensure visits and events go smoothly. The large attendance at his funeral at Kew was testament to the loss felt not only by his family but also by a wide circle of friends.

SARAH MEDLAM

## Grants Awarded for the British and Irish Furniture Makers Online

We are thrilled to announce that the BIFMO project has received £130,000 in funding through the exceptional generosity of the Monument Trust, the Foyle Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Charitable Trust and a fourth trust which wishes to remain anonymous. We have also received several individual donations for which we are enormously grateful, raising the total to nearly £140,000.

With funding now in place, the project is set to launch the second phase. This will include updating information taken from the *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* (now available on the BIFMO website), and will also see new research undertaken which will gradually extend the chronology of information to run from 1600 to 1900. Over the next year the Institute of Historical Research digital department will be developing new ways



Conversation piece, a cabinet-maker's office. Oil painting, England, c. 1770. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Image No.

2006BF4151-01

to view and understand the history of furniture-making. The plans include mapping furniture tradesmen and women in several British and Irish cities, investigating manufacturing and retailing networks and linking biographies to images of documented pieces. Plans are also in place to create 3D images to demonstrate how objects are constructed. These new technological enhancements will thus provide resources for events and outreach programmes. By engaging with colleagues in different sectors, such as museums, historic houses and educational organizations, we can encourage different types of audiences to explore the history of furniture and design and to learn about the lives and careers of tens of thousands of British and Irish furniture-makers.

With the database now a reality, the Furniture History Society has created a hugely important tool for research and knowledge. It is a major step in the Society's history and exciting one.

For further information about BIFMO, go to the FHS website / BIFMO where there is a more detailed report on developments.

ADRIANA TURPIN

## Chippendale Exhibition – Booklet

Included with this mailing is a copy of the booklet *Thomas Chippendale 1718–1779 A Celebration of British Craftsmanship and Design*, which is being published by the Chippendale Society to accompany the

exhibition at Leeds City Museum from 9 February to 9 June 2018 as a part of the events being organized by the Chippendale 300 committee. The Furniture History Society is a part of this grouping and has made a grant of £2,500 towards the costs of the celebration of the birth of this remarkable craftsman.

Accompanying the mailing is a flyer from the publishers of the exhibition catalogue (Antique Collectors Club) offering FHS members the opportunity to purchase copies at a special pre-publication price of £55 (including postage & packing).

## Events Secretary

We are delighted to welcome Beatrice Goddard as the Events Secretary. Anne-Marie Bannister, who has done a sterling job in this role, will be supporting her over the next few weeks to ensure a seamless transition. The email address and mobile number for Events remains the same.

## Membership

Members are reminded to inform Keith Nicholls, Finance and Membership Officer, of any changes in personal details, including postal and email addresses. Notice should be given on a timely basis in order to prevent the Society incurring additional time and costs redirecting returned publication mail, and members not receiving the latest email updates.

# Future Society Events

## Bookings

For places on visits, please apply to the Events Secretary, Beatrice Goddard, tel. 07775 907390, with a separate cheque for each event, using the enclosed booking form. Where possible, joining instructions will be dispatched by email, **so please remember to provide your email address if you have one. There is no need to send an SAE if you provide a clearly written email address.**

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

Please note the Events email address: [events@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:events@furniturehistorysociety.org)

## Cancellations

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £10.00 or

less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a £10.00 deduction for administrative costs. Please note that in the rare instances where members cannot pay until the day of a visit, they will still be charged the full amount for the day if cancelling less than seven days before the visit, or if they fail to attend. This is necessary as the Society has usually paid in advance for a certain number of members to participate in, for example, a tour/lunch. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours, and terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

## The 42nd Annual Symposium

*'That celebrated artist, Mr. Chippendale, of St. Martin's Lane': new discoveries and re-evaluations in his tercentenary year*

SATURDAY 14 APRIL 2018  
LEEDS CITY ART GALLERY

Three hundred years after the birth of Thomas Chippendale, his reputation remains as strong as it was when the above comment was made in *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* on 28 November 1767. Our Annual Symposium, to be held

in Leeds to coincide with the exhibition at the City Museum, <i>Thomas Chippendale, a Celebration of Craftsmanship and Design, 1718–2018</i> , will offer new discoveries and new interpretations of some of his major commissions, a look at the furniture that his designs inspired in North America and a review of the influence that his work exerted on subsequent generations of furniture designers and interior decorators. The day will close with an opportunity for a private view of the exhibition. Lisa White will chair the day.		12.15–12.45	<i>The Paxton and Wedderburn Commissions.</i> Professor David Jones, independent scholar
		12.45–13.00	Q&A and summing up
		13.00–14.15	Lunch at the Leeds City Museum, two minutes' walk from the Art Gallery
		14.15–14.45	<i>Chippendale and London House.</i> Dr Kerry Bristol, Leeds University
10.00–10.25	Registration and coffee/tea	14.45–15.15	<i>'French Chairs' and Other Fashions: Chippendale's Debts to Paris.</i> Sarah Medlam, Curator Emeritus, Victoria and Albert Museum
10.25–10.30	Welcome by Christopher Rowell, FHS Chairman		
10.30–10.45	<i>Honouring a Local Hero: The Chippendale Society.</i> James Lomax, co-curator of the exhibition	15.15–15.45	<i>Chippendale's Influence in America: A New England Case Study.</i> Brock Jobe, Professor of American Decorative Arts Emeritus, Winterthur Museum
10.45–11.15	<i>Furniture for the Circular Dressing Room at Harewood House.</i> Dr Adam Bowett, co-curator of the exhibition	15.45–16.15	<i>The Shakespeare of English Furniture: Examining the Rich Mythology Surrounding Thomas Chippendale.</i> Dr Megan Aldrich, independent scholar
11.15–11.45	<i>Decorating Harewood: Experiencing the Chippendale Firm's Largest Commission.</i> Professor Ann Sumner, University of Leeds, and Harewood House Trust	16.15–16.30	Q&A and summing up
11.45–12.15	<i>A Chippendale Discovery at Harewood: The Mystery of the White Drawing Room.</i> Thomas Lange, Conservator, Ronald Phillips Ltd, London	16.30–16.45	Tea/Coffee
		17.00–19.00	The exhibition will remain open for participants in the Symposium



Tickets for the Symposium and for lunch (optional) are now on sale via the FHS website ([www.furniturehistorysociety.org/events](http://www.furniturehistorysociety.org/events)) or can be booked via the Events Secretary. Members are encouraged to book any accommodation in Leeds in good time.

## Spring Study Trip — Dumfries House, Ayrshire and Paxton House, Berwickshire

FRIDAY 8 JUNE–SATURDAY 9 JUNE 2018

Continuing the Chippendale theme, the Society is arranging back-to-back study days at two Scottish houses that reflect contrasting aspects of the work of Thomas Chippendale. Dumfries House contains



The White Drawing Room at Dumfries House



Paxton House

the only collection of Chippendale furniture that reflects the full rococo style depicted in the engraved plates of the *Director* (the furniture supplied between 1759 and 1766), while Paxton was furnished in the neo-classical taste between 1774 and 1791. Full details will be available on the website.

Priority will be given to members who apply for both study days. It will be possible for members to drive to both houses, although, if there is need, minibus transport will be arranged between the two venues, and a number of rooms at the Macdonald Cadrona hotel in Peebles has been booked for the night of Friday 8 June for those who require accommodation. Please register your interest with the Events Secretary. An application form, including final costs, will then be sent to you in due course. Travel and accommodation will be charged separately from the fee for the study days.

## Autumn Study Trip — Northern Ireland

A study trip to Northern Ireland is planned for early autumn, led by Kate Dyson. Please keep an eye on the website for further announcements, which will also be published in the May *Newsletter*.

# Occasional and Overseas Visits

## Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, London W14 0QX

THURSDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2018

2.00 PM FOR 2.15 PM START–4.15 PM

This visit to see 'Ingenious' furniture was advertised in the November 2017 edition of the *Newsletter*. At the time of going to press a few places are still available. Please contact the Events Secretary if you are interested.

COST: £30

LIMIT: 20 MEMBERS

## Baroque Oxford: Visit to the Upper Libraries at Queen's College and Christ Church, and Trinity College Chapel

MONDAY 12 MARCH

10.45 AM–4.15 PM

This visit to some of the most beautiful baroque interiors in Oxford will be led by Matthew Winterbottom and Sarah Medlam. The tour will start at Queen's College, where we will be shown around the Upper Library by the College Librarian. Founded in 1341, the College was almost entirely rebuilt in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The extraordinarily beautiful



Queen's College, Oxford

Library was built between 1692 and 1694 and sensitively restored in 2013–14. The woodwork and carvings are the work of Thomas Minn and Son and the beautiful plaster ceiling is by James Hands with additions by Thomas Roberts in 1756. Our visit will be followed by lunch in the baroque Great Hall at Queen's and a brief visit to the Chapel.

We will then make our way to Christ Church for a tour of the remarkable Upper Library with the College Librarian. Founded by Henry VIII in 1546, Christ Church is one of the largest and most magnificent of the Oxford Colleges. The splendid new Library was designed with the intention of attracting aristocratic students to the College by equalling the great classical library buildings of Trinity College, Cambridge and Trinity College Dublin. Building work started in 1717 but was only completed in 1772. The interior and fittings mostly date from the 1750s, with beautiful plasterwork by Thomas

Roberts of Oxford. The Library retains most of its original furnishings, including stools made by Thomas Chippendale, library steps and wrought-iron charcoal braziers. We will then continue to Trinity College to visit the newly restored Chapel. Built between 1691 and 1694, and with cedar panelling and virtuoso carvings by Grinling Gibbons, the Chapel is a dynamic integration of architecture, sculpture and painting. It was hailed by contemporaries as the most magnificent chapel in the University and has just benefited from a year-long renovation programme.

COST INCLUDING COFFEE / BISCUITS  
AND LUNCH AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE: £50

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:  
MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2018

## Study Trip to Amsterdam

FRIDAY 6 JULY–SATURDAY 7 JULY 2018

The prompt for this study trip is the forthcoming exhibition, 'KWAB. Dutch Design in the Age of Rembrandt', to be held from 29 June until 16 September 2018 at the Rijksmuseum — see page 18. The exhibition will focus on the *kwabstijl*, or auricular, style, which constitutes the most original and revolutionary Dutch contribution to the history of decorative arts. Our expert guide will be Dr Reinier Baarsen, Senior Curator of Furniture, and ever-generous FHS member.

Our visit to the exhibition will be enhanced by a visit to the Nieuwe Kerk to see the brass choir screen designed by Johannes Lutma, and to the Print Room of the Rijksmuseum to see recently acquired design drawings.

Steve Coene, Keeper of the Royal Furniture, and also a fellow FHS member, will lead a private visit to the Koninklijk Paleis, Amsterdam, the *Paleis op de Dam*, originally built as a town hall for the capital of the new United Netherlands, but transformed in 1808 into a Palace for King Louis Napoleon, in full Empire style, and still used as the reception palace of the Dutch Royal House.

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:  
20 APRIL 2018

Please contact the Events Secretary to express your interest.

## FHS Grants

Grants are available for FHS UK and Overseas Visits, including One-day Visits.

The FHS Grants Committee now meet quarterly to consider all applications from members, to support their participation in **FHS foreign and UK study trips where the cost of a trip exceeds £45**. Please contact Jill Bace, email: [grants@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:grants@furniturehistorysociety.org) for further information and grant application forms.

# Other Notices

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

## Chippendale 300

Please note that the end date for the Leeds exhibition has changed from Sunday 10 June to Saturday 9 June. This is because the city will be once again hosting the World Triathlon — as part of this, the City Museum has been asked to close to the public on Sunday 10 June while it becomes part of the athlete village.

## Research in Progress Meeting: New thinking about sixteenth-century furniture

SACKLER CENTRE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON  
SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2018

Open to members and non-members alike, the *Regional Furniture Society's* annual Research in Progress meeting this year will address furniture in the sixteenth century, a field complicated by the importation of furniture, the influx of immigrant craftsmen and the recycling of fragments. The five papers presented will cover a

variety of furniture types and influences, based on close study of surviving pieces.

The deadline for applications is 5 February 2018. More details and a booking form are available at [www.regionalfurnituresociety.org/events/research-in-progress/](http://www.regionalfurnituresociety.org/events/research-in-progress/).

## Paxton House

Paxton House is delighted to announce that it has been awarded recognized status by Museums Galleries Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government, for their nationally significant collection of furniture by Thomas Chippendale the Elder and Younger, and by William Trotter (and its associated archives). The Trotter collection is the largest publicly accessible collection of this master's Scottish cabinet-maker's work in the world, and the Chippendale collection is amongst the eight largest documented collections of the firm's furniture in the UK and worldwide.

The comprehensive collection was commissioned for Paxton House between 1774 and 1815, and contains many rare and unique items. For more information on the collection, visiting Paxton, and the forthcoming Chippendale exhibition (5 June–28 August 2018), please see: [www.paxtonhouse.co.uk](http://www.paxtonhouse.co.uk) and [www.Chippendale300.co.uk/events](http://www.Chippendale300.co.uk/events). There are a number of study days on Chippendale at Paxton House, including



that being run by the FHS on 9 June; see the Chippendale 300 website for details and tickets.

## Lecture: The 19th Annual Frederick Parker Lectures

FURNITURE MAKERS' HALL, 12 AUSTIN FRIARS, LONDON EC2N 2HE  
THURSDAY 15 MARCH 2018  
6.00 PM

### *Wright & Elwick and the Wakefield Cabinet Trade.*

ANDREW COX-WHITTAKER

Richard Wright and Edward Elwick established themselves as cabinet-makers and upholsterers in Wakefield in 1747. In various partnerships, over more than fifty years, they supplied many of the grandest houses in the north of England. They have been called Yorkshire's answer to Gillows of Lancaster but, in spite of their making some very distinctive furniture, few people have heard of them. What do we really know about them and how did such a provincial firm find itself catering for the needs of so many important and wealthy clients? Andrew Cox-Whittaker is a second-generation antiques dealer. He has worked with Wilkinson's auctioneers for nearly twenty years and with T. L. Phelps Fine Furniture Restoration for the last thirteen. He is on the executive committee of the Chippendale Society and has a keen interest in regional furniture studies. His research into Wakefield furniture has been supported with a Regional Furniture Society bursary.

## *The Furniture-Making Dream and My Three Decades of Reality.*

RICHARD WILLIAMS

Richard will talk about his experiences of being lulled by the romantic ideals of fine craftsmanship, and how he then faced the challenges of achieving commercial success. Richard opened his workshop in 1990 and it has grown steadily since into one of the great success stories of British bespoke furniture-making. In 2010, his team moved into a beautiful barn conversion at Beaconsfield and currently numbers eleven, including four craftsmen, two trainees and an apprentice. Richard still handles all aspects of creative design himself. He is a liveryman of the Furniture Makers' Company and chairs the Bespoke Guild Mark Committee. He has lectured in many colleges around the UK and in the US. The lectures will be followed by a dinner for those wishing to stay.

To apply to attend the lectures and dinner, please contact Sally Kent on 020 7562 8526 or email [events@furnituremakers.org.uk](mailto:events@furnituremakers.org.uk)

## Exhibition: Charles Rennie Mackintosh

SATURDAY 31 MARCH–TUESDAY 14 AUGUST 2018

The year 2018 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Glasgow architect, designer and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928). Glasgow Museums will be celebrating this significant anniversary year with a wide programme across its portfolio, at the centre of which will be an

internationally significant temporary exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. This exhibition will showcase objects related to Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style mainly from Glasgow Museums' Recognized Collections — many of which have not been on display for several years — supplemented by some loans from private and institutional collections. The exhibition will span the lifetime of Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

See [www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/kelvingrove/exhibitions/Pages/Frank-Quitely-The-Art-of-Comics.aspx](http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/kelvingrove/exhibitions/Pages/Frank-Quitely-The-Art-of-Comics.aspx) for more details.

## Exhibition: KWAB. Dutch Design in the Age of Rembrandt

FRIDAY 29 JUNE–SUNDAY 16  
SEPTEMBER 2018

Dutch art of the seventeenth century is perceived as being realistic, providing even today's audience with a clear idea of what Holland looked like at the time, but the first half of the century also witnessed a strange, fantastic, eerie movement in the decorative arts. Frightening shapes, like parts of skeletons, monsters, masks and fluid, lobe-like forms, were used in silver, furniture, gilt leather hangings, and brass church furnishings. They invaded buildings and interiors with their unsettling presence. Works of art of this style were highly prized by collectors and artists alike, and their influence was felt in England, Germany and France. Concentrating on the greatest masterpieces by the best-known artists, the exhibition



Small linen press, anonymous, possibly Amsterdam, c. 1655–75, walnut and oak, 177.5 cm high; 119 cm wide; 57 cm deep  
© Rijksmuseum, Inv. no. BK-1985-10

provides a unique overview of this strangely modern phenomenon.

For more details, [www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/kwab](http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/kwab). This exhibition will be the subject of an FHS study trip — see page 15.

## The Attingham Trust — for the Study of Historic Houses and Collections: Courses

ROYAL COLLECTION STUDIES:  
SUNDAY 2 SEPTEMBER–TUESDAY 11  
SEPTEMBER 2018

Directed by Rebecca Lyons and run on behalf of Royal Collection Trust, this strenuous ten-day course is based near Windsor and will visit royal palaces in and

around London with specialist tutors (many from the Royal Collection Trust), and study the patronage and collecting of the Royal Family. Priority is given to those with professional or specialist knowledge. Deadline for applications: 12 February 2018.

#### THE HORSE AND THE COUNTRY HOUSE:

WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER–FRIDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2018

Directed by Elizabeth Jamieson, this intensive ten-day study programme examines the country house as a setting for outdoor pursuits, such as hunting and racing, and as a focus for horse-drawn travel. Based in East Anglia and Yorkshire, visits will focus on houses with sporting art collections, noteworthy stable blocks, riding houses and carriage collections. Some scholarship support is available. Deadline for applications: 12 February 2018.

For enquiries, please contact Rebecca Parker: [rebecca.parker@attinghamtrust.org](mailto:rebecca.parker@attinghamtrust.org). The Attingham Trust, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ; +44 (0) 20 7253 9057; [www.attinghamtrust.org](http://www.attinghamtrust.org).

For American Friends of Attingham, please contact Mary Ellen Whitford: [admin@americanfriendsofattingham.org](mailto:admin@americanfriendsofattingham.org), 205 Lexington Avenue, Suite 1600, New York, NY 10016, USA; 001 (212) 682 6840.

## Philip Wilson Publishers

Philip Wilson Publishers are generously offering Furniture History Society members a 30% discount on the following Philip Wilson titles:

*Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland* by Emile de Bruijn

*The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale, Junior* by Judith Goodison

*Ceramics: 400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces* by Patricia F. Ferguson

*Silver for Entertaining: The Ickworth Collection* by James Rothwell

*Tapestries from the Burrell Collection* by Elizabeth Cleland and Lorraine Karafel

*Gilded Interiors: Parisian Luxury and the Antique* by Helen Jacobsen

This offer is valid until Wednesday 28 February 2018. To order online go to [www.ibtauris.com](http://www.ibtauris.com) and enter the discount code **FHS17** when prompted.

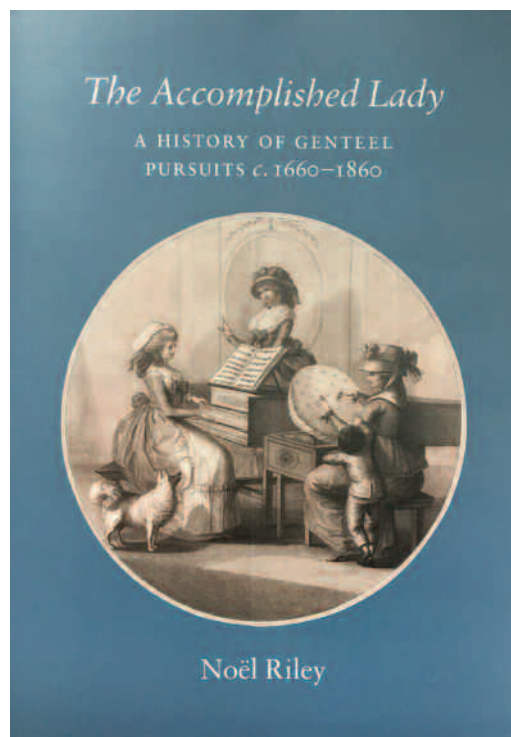
# Book Reviews

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

NOEL RILEY, *The Accomplished Lady. A History of Genteel Pursuits c. 1660–1860* (Leeds: Oblong, 2017). 460 pp., 415 illus, mainly colour. ISBN 978 0 9575992 9 1. £47.50 (incl. p.&p. from D&M Heritage Ltd, Unit 7, Park Valley, Meltham Road, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD4 7BH (01484 534323, info@dandmheritage.co.uk))

Purists among furniture historians may think that this book has little to do with their subject, but they would be wrong. From carpets upwards through upholstery, fire-screens and beds, accomplished ladies contributed to the creation of their interiors with varying degrees of skill, and Noel Riley is careful to point out that their skill could be very high indeed, and should not be disparaged as 'amateur's work'.

This book has been many years in gestation, and the result is a study that brings together a deeply digested knowledge, not only of the techniques involved but also of the social and artistic history of such objects and of such practices. The first two chapters, 'A Woman's Lot' and 'Educating a Lady', reveal the very wide reading that the author has assimilated over years of



collecting, research and teaching. These two chapters pave the way for eighteen more on different pursuits and crafts, ranging from sports and dancing to the craft skills that we may more easily associate with the title. The subject chapters continue to unite discussion of the skills involved with liberal quotation from letters, diaries and periodicals, as well as from texts offering technical instruction or educational advice. The bibliography is indeed well worth an independent read. Of course, the individual chapters show some differing level of author engagement, reflecting



personal interests, and one suspects (with sympathy) that the engagement relates directly to the survival of objects or, sensibly (as with papier mâché), to the existence of multiple other available studies.

These occupations, which could be pursued with an almost professional assiduity, created everything from Mrs Delany's shell-work chandelier (p. 202) to Mrs Montagu's feather room (pp. 214–15) and onwards to pen-work chess tables in the first half of the nineteenth century (the author carefully demonstrates that these are generally somewhat later in date than the description usually given to them of 'Regency') and leather-work brackets suggested by the author of *Elegant Arts for Ladies* in 1856. Not all work, of course, was of notably high quality, but even the charming and 'amateurish' pieces we might look at with indulgence were made to decorate rooms of differing status, and a knowledge of them is important in the understanding of all but the most formal of interiors at different dates.

This book also reminds us of the many creations of the professional makers who supported these activities, from the cabinet-makers who produced the finest card tables or music stands, or the carcasses of tea caddies to be embellished with rolled paper work, to the provision by turners of plain-turned vases as a ground for shell-work. The supply of materials, the framing of these creations and the giving of lessons must have occupied many unknown workers. The creation of specialist furniture for undertaking these crafts, especially in the nineteenth century, is worth remembering when faced with a

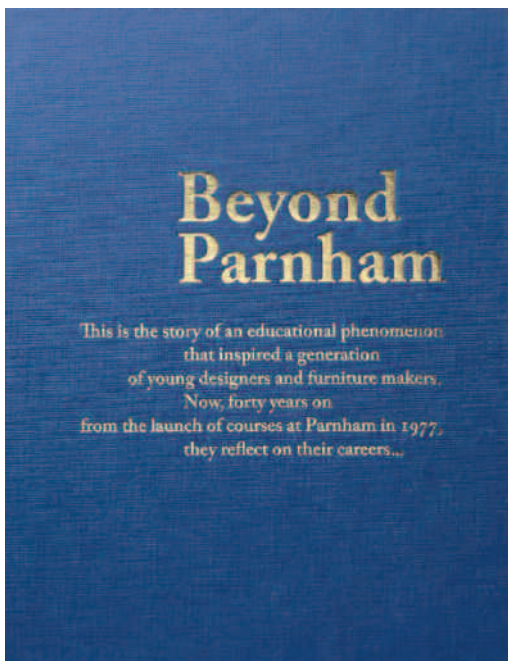
weirdly unknown piece of furniture. Could it be a hair-work table (p. 236)?

Even to someone with an established interest in this subject, there is much to be learned from this wide-ranging study, and I would recommend it as a present that would have a long and useful life on the bookshelves. It is well laid out, lavishly illustrated and, best of all, a good read.

SARAH MEDLAM

JOHN MAKEPEACE, JEREMY MYERSON, LESLEY JACKSON and OTHERS, *Beyond Parnham*, with Foreword by SIR CHRISTOPHER FRAYLING (limited edition, privately published, Beaminster, 2017). 184 pp., illustrated. ISBN 9781527206533. £40

John Makepeace is surely the outstanding furniture designer/maker of today. His innovative and finely made things have been objects of wonder for many years and



continue to excite our admiration. This book illustrates a goodly number of them, but that is not its primary purpose. His experience on the Crafts Council, on which he was invited to serve when Lord Eccles set it up in 1972, and his experience of the Oxford Centre for Management Studies, for which he made the furniture, led him to realize that there was a profound need for artists/craftsmen who wanted to earn a living to learn about the management of a business as well as about design and making. He conceived the idea of running a school for woodworkers which would include management studies, in parallel to his own growing workshop. So, he bought the semi-derelict Parnham House, a Tudor mansion set in beautiful gardens at Beaminster in Dorset, to house both enterprises as well as his home, restoring it and opening the main rooms to the public. It was a big risk, a financial stretch, and money had to be raised to equip the school, which was run under the aegis of the newly formed Parnham Trust, a registered charity. Anyone who visited the school, as I was lucky enough to do, will have been struck by its unbelievably romantic setting, and by the care with which John and his wife Jennie had carried out the restoration of house and garden, and would have thought that coming to school here to learn top-quality skills must be the answer to young (and some not so young) craftsmen's dreams. And so it proved.

Robert Ingham, a skilled and meticulous furniture-maker, was appointed as principal to devise and implement the first year's course in 1977

of Makepeace's new School for Craftsmen in Wood. He receives high praise in this book from many of the alumni, as they recall his technical and teaching skills. The teaching staff later included design tutors Guy Martin, Alan Deal, Greg Powlesland, Christopher Rose and Gordon Duggan, and business tutor Andy Christian, who enjoyed the stimulation of tutoring 'highly motivated students'. The first year taught practical skills, the second design and draughtsmanship and business skills. The workshops were open from 8 am to 11 pm every day. Visiting lecturers and tutors came to meet the students and contribute to their projects. The two-year course was residential — one alumnus described it as 'immersive', another 'monastic' — for which students paid £3,000 per year. Ten students enrolled for the first year and the school continued with eleven students each year, becoming Parnham College in 1991. They were from a broad range of ages, nationalities and backgrounds. Makepeace retired in 2000, selling the house and relocating his workshop, and Parnham Trust was merged with the Architectural Association. The site in nearby Hooke Park, a 350-acre woodland, which Parnham Trust bought in 1982 and in which Makepeace commissioned a professional team to build a large workshop and other buildings constructed from 'thinnings' — a revolutionary idea at the time because no building regulation existed for the use of 'roundwood' — is today one of the Architectural Association's campuses.

*Beyond Parnham* has three introductory essays — by Makepeace himself on why

and how he set up the School, by Jeremy Myerson, Helen Hamlyn Professor of Design at the Royal College of Art, on its unusual origins (a fee-paying school set up against the background of the public sector-oriented Britain of the 1970s when art and design courses were publicly funded), the teaching programme and the legacy of Parnham, and by Lesley Jackson, the design historian and author of a recent book on post-war British furniture design, who pays tribute to the creative achievement of the Parnham 'diaspora', observing that 'the seeds of creativity nurtured at Parnham have been planted and borne fruit all over the globe'. Both Myerson and Jackson illustrate work by several of the alumni. Makepeace adds two pages on the development of Hooke Park. The design and business tutors each contribute their reminiscences of what was clearly, for all of them, a stimulating period of their working lives.

Lesley Jackson's remark about the seeds of creativity is amply borne out by the subsequent contributions of each of 103 alumni to this literary reunion. This section is the bulk of the book and includes illustrations of the work of most of them. Examples of the work of twenty of them appear elsewhere in one of the blocks of full-page illustrations, interspersed with the introductory and tutors' essays. Frustratingly, these are not referred to in the makers' texts, but their page references (there are no plate numbers) can be found in the contents list at the start of the book. Every illustration is captioned with name of maker/ designer, materials and date, but, alas, no

measurements. At the end, there is a list of the students' dates of attendance at Parnham, and their current websites and email addresses. The websites gave me several hours of happy browsing and are visual evidence of how the inspiration and disciplines of Parnham have borne fruit.

Very few of the alumni have not persisted with design or making. Some have graduated to interior and industrial design. It is revealing that many of them make it clear in their essays that attending the school changed their lives. It equipped them not just with the woodworking skills and the sense of design necessary to attract customers, but also the skills needed to manage the financial and marketing needs of their fledgling businesses. It proved to them that they could make a living from their skills. Their subsequent careers prove the point. The variety of their achievement is a treasure trove of applied art. They come from many parts of the world. They include furniture-makers such as Sarah Kay, who has made and designed individual pieces and designs for the likes of Heal's, SCP and Benchmark, and whose 'career break' was the commission with designer and maker Andrea Stemmer, another Parnham alumna, for the furniture for Cowley Manor Hotel, where her fumed oak reception desk sets an exceptional standard of quality and design — do not miss her doors at 55 St James's Street; Sean Sutcliffe, who in 1986 founded Benchmark with Terence Conran, which made all the furniture for Conran's restaurants, has built a large furniture-making business largely through apprenticeships and

supplied remarkable woodwork for the Sage, Gateshead, and Leicester Cathedral (the towering cathedra and crucifix); Rod and Alison Wales, whose limed and fumed oak cabinets can be seen in several museums and whose designs for street benches can be sat on in several municipalities; Constantin Grcic, who became an industrial designer in Munich and designs furniture in wood and other materials in bold angular form for mass production; Tony Portus, who managed the Conran shop in London, made bespoke furniture, helped to found the Cato Workshop and co-founded Makers' Eye, the online gallery of British furniture design; Isabelle Moore, who had a background in theatre design and at Parnham was 'struck by a chair-making bug' (five of her pieces are illustrated in the book); and Tom Kealy, who for ten years became Makepeace's senior craftsman and teaches at West Dean and the Building Crafts College in London; and many more, some well known, others less well known — furniture-makers and designers, small-scale and large-scale, designers of consumer goods, designers of living rooms, studios, workshops, showrooms, restaurants, mostly but not entirely in wood; many of them engaged also in teaching and tutoring.

Future furniture historians will struggle to attribute a particular style of design to Parnham alumni. The writers of saleroom catalogues will be at a loss for a catchword. Alan Peters, for example, the other outstanding furniture-maker of the late twentieth century, whose revised edition of Ernest Joyce's *The Technique of Furniture Making* was described by

alumnus Rupert Junior, who later made furniture in partnership with Charles Wheeler Carmichael for Chevening, Longleat and Petworth, as 'the Parnham students' bible', can be seen as recognizably in the Barnsley tradition. Parnham encouraged creativity, discipline and adventure rather than a style, and did not turn out a host of Makepeace lookalikes — except in the attention to quality of workmanship. But they do all show a strong sense of line and an eye for the decorative value of fine timber.

Parnham College is a remarkable story. It played a key role for over two decades in the training of a generation of furniture-makers and designers, and will continue to do so as its alumni teach the skills they learned to apprentices and students. It promoted fine craftsmanship and creative design at a time when the Royal College of Art was veering towards conceptual industrial design and the well-known furniture colleges — the London College of Furniture and the High Wycombe School of Art — remained rooted in traditional furniture-making.

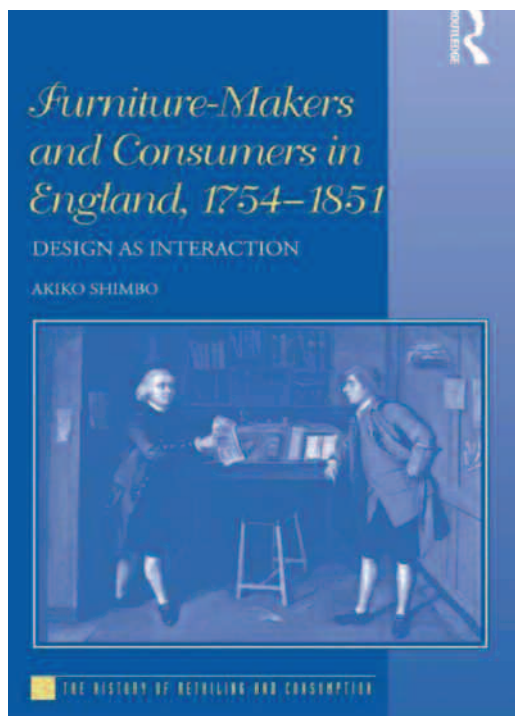
This book is a very welcome contribution to late twentieth-century furniture history.

NICHOLAS GOODISON

AKIKO SHIMBO, *Furniture-Makers and Consumers in England, 1754–1851, Design as Interaction* (London: Routledge, 2016). xvii + 261 pp., 10 b. & w. illus. ISBN 9780754669289 (hardback), £80; 97811383307155 (paperback). £35

Akiko Shimbo's book, based on her London University doctoral thesis, is one of Routledge's *The History of Retailing and*





*Consumption* series. As an academic discipline, the history of consumption is moving into middle age and has developed its own language and conventions. Shimbo, typically for this genre, pays tribute to anthropology (Malinowski and Mauss on gift exchange), to gender history, and to literary theory and the history of reading. Her interest is in the relationships between ‘producer retailers’ and consumers, evidence for which she seeks in a survey of some eighty furniture pattern books, and in other visual and documentary evidence, from trade cards and subscription lists to correspondence and accounts. Three of her eight chapters concentrate on the final years of her chosen period, two being centred on Gillows’ London Showroom Account Book, 1844–46 (acquired by Westminster Archives in 2000), with

analyses of their clientele at that time and of the wide range of services provided, while another spans the 1836 Select Committee Report on arts and manufactures and Heal’s catalogues of the 1850s or later. Her sources are widely drawn with, for example, nice quotations from Cowper’s *The Sofa* (1785) and Trollope’s *Barchester Towers* (1857), and two illustrations of cabinet-makers’ premises (1827 and 1833) by George Scharf. Even so, Thomas Johnson’s autobiography (1793) and John Stafford’s *Interior Decorations* (1816) might have enriched her discussion of the transmission of design skills, and the drawings of room arrangements produced by Gillows’ London branch would have been relevant to her exploration of showrooms.

Three diagrams, partly speculative, representing models of the interchange between pattern books, producers and consumers, based on three letters, exemplify an over-reliance on small sets of data. Lady Knatchbull’s involvement in furnishing decisions at Mersham in about 1770 is worthy of mention, but was the use of women’s own embroidery on 1840s upholstery ‘radical’? The reader may be left with an impression that Shimbo’s own instinct is for a pragmatic approach accepting the vagaries of contingency, which is in tension with an academic matrix that insists on viewing matters through various theoretical lenses. Nonetheless, the solid material she has assembled should stimulate further exploration of her demanding but interesting territory.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

CHRIS HOW, *Historic French Nails & Fixings: Tools and Techniques* (Furniture History Society of Australasia, 2017). 126 pp., c. 139 illus. ISBN 978-0-6480405-0-7. £21.80 incl. postage.

This is the first major publication on the subject of nails and fixings. Perhaps this is understandable as, to use the author's own word, they could be considered 'mundane'. Nonetheless, this book reveals how knowledge of fixings can play a significant part in identifying and dating buildings and furniture. Small but comprehensive, it brings to life a little-known, dynamic and inventive industry, now forgotten and superseded by modern industrial developments. Chris How's twelve years of research and evident passion for the subject have produced a book rich in illustrations, technical sources and historical examples. As well as being full of technical detail, the book provides a fascinating view of the life of the nail-maker and thus an insight into a specific aspect of eighteenth-century social history.

Despite the title, Chris How does not restrict his study to French fixings. He also looks at developments in neighbouring European countries that played an equal, if not more important part in technological developments in the industrialization of fixings. If I were to express a disappointment, it would be that the book falls short in its study of wood screws, an area particularly significant for furniture historians. It only illustrates screws from 1751, but does not mention the three main different styles of handmade screws dating from the preceding century. Indeed, given its comprehensive coverage of nails, which

are more typical of buildings rather than furniture, *Historic French Nails & Fixings* seems orientated towards the architectural historian.

Nails and screws are, of course, not the only way to date an object, but Chris How demonstrates that their identification can play a major role. His small book will undoubtedly become a reference text for anyone interested in such dating evidence as well as for technological historians. While I enjoyed reading it and discovering new sources, I have to admit that this is not a light read. Even with a useful index, the technical explanations can be hard to follow. For a lighter read on wood screws, I highly recommend Witold Rybczynski, *One Good Turn: A Natural History of the Screwdriver and the Screw* (New York, 2000), which would serve as a good introduction to Chris How's more scholarly work.

YANNICK CHASTANG

HELENA KOENIGSMARKOVA, *Director's Choice: The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague* (London: Scala Arts and Heritage, 2017). 80 pp. ISBN 978-1-78551-120-2. £9.95

TERESA LEONOR M. VALE (ed.), *The Chapel of St John the Baptist in the Church of São Roque: The Commission, the Building, the Collections* (London: Scala Arts and Heritage, 2017). 175 pp. ISBN 978-1-78551-103-5. £25

These lavishly illustrated works form part of the Scala Arts and Heritage series on sites in Europe and their collections. The first, a booklet of highlights from Prague Museum of Decorative Arts, has many objects of interest to FHS members,

including a *pietre dure* panel of 1601 made in Prague, showing a townscape with Prague Castle. While its technical quality does not approach contemporary Italian work, its different palette and subject matter provide a fascinating variation in this medium. There are local examples of reverse painting on glass, *scagliola*, a carved box with exquisite baroque carving from Eger, and a wonderfully abstract walnut Biedermeier chair. The entries are concise and informative.

The volume on the Chapel of St John the Baptist in Lisbon has nine scholarly chapters with footnotes and a helpful bibliography. Numerous colour illustrations include close-up views illuminating technical points. The mid-eighteenth-century chapel was built under the patronage of João V, a notable promoter of the arts, who also commissioned furniture from London cabinet-makers. The chapel was lavishly decorated, and many of the techniques used by the (mostly) Roman craftsmen can be paralleled in contemporary furniture. Two walnut confessionals of c. 1750 by the Roman cabinet-maker Giovanni Palmini are perhaps the only real furniture illustrated. Some features bear a striking resemblance to London work by such as William Vile. The international quality of late baroque design is clearly demonstrated by this attractive and informative book.

MEGAN ALDRICH

MARGITTA HENSEL (ed.), *Stroh zu Gold / Straw into Gold* (Moritzburg, 2016). 72 pp., 158 col. and b. & w. illus., 3 maps. ISBN 978-3-00-057003-2. €9.90

A room in the Fasanenschlösschen, the enchanting pavilion attached to the pheasantry in the park of Schloss Moritzburg, outside Dresden, is hung with straw hangings of about 1780 embroidered with flowers and birds. The restoration, completed in 2013, of this remarkable survival led to linkages with the Strohmuseum in Wohlen, Switzerland, and beyond, and to the exhibition commemorated in this richly illustrated bilingual leaflet. Its main theme is hats, including accounts of the industry in the Aargau, in Saxony and in Luton. But the net is spread wider to include straw marquetry (a key text was Andrew Renton's article on the Hering family in *Furniture History*, 35 (1999)), prisoner-of-war work and furniture, with illustrations of an oval sewing-table made for Queen Dowager Friederike Luise of Prussia in 1803. A brief reference to Georg Ernst Kürsten of Orlamünde, who exhibited straw hangings at the Leipzig Easter fair in 1797 whets the appetite for further exploration of this theme.

S. S. J.

# Reports on the Society's Events

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

## An Empire-Themed Visit to Paris

MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY–TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2017

*Hôtel de Beauharnais, Residence of the German Ambassador to France*

The Hôtel de Beauharnais was built in 1714 by the architect Germain Boffrand, on the left bank of the Seine, facing the royal gardens of the Tuileries. The house is an extremely important example of interior decoration in Paris in 1803–12. It was bought in 1803 by Eugène de Beauharnais, the son of Joséphine, wife of Napoléon, from her first marriage. An able and successful soldier, he accompanied Napoléon on many campaigns. The expedition to Egypt in 1798–99 made a deep impression on him and influenced the renovation and decoration of his new house. In 1803–05, an Egyptian-style portico, attributed to the architect Jean

Augustin Renard, was added to the façade.

In 1805, at the age of twenty-four, Eugène was appointed Viceroy of Italy by Napoléon. As he lived in Milan, far from Paris, his mother Joséphine oversaw the costly renovation and decoration of the house, and is likely to have had considerable influence over the choice of furnishings. In 1799, she had finished the decoration of her own house, Malmaison, with the architects Percier and Fontaine, the creators of the Empire style. Many motifs in the interior can be directly linked to their designs. The architect in charge was Laurent Edmé Nicolas Bataille.

After Napoléon's defeat, the Hôtel de Beauharnais was bought by Frederick William III, King of Prussia in 1818 out of his own pocket. It first served him as a private Paris home and then became the seat of his legation. Although part of the contents had been sent to Munich (in 1806, Eugène de Beauharnais had married Princess Augusta of Bavaria), a considerable portion had been left behind.

In the 1850s, an extra floor was added to the building by the architect Jacob Ignaz Hittorf. Plans to demolish the fantastic Egyptian portico luckily proved to be too expensive. After 1871, the house served as the embassy of the German Empire. In 1944, after the Second World War, the building was confiscated by the French government, but it was restored to Germany in 1961, under the condition that

it would pay for a complete renovation. The house was re-opened in 1968 as the Ambassador's residence.

Since 2002, extensive research has been carried out on the history of the house and its collections. Under supervision of the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte (German Forum for History of Art) in Paris, several state rooms were spectacularly refurbished in a more authentic Empire style, based on information found in a newly discovered sales inventory of 1817 (see J. Ebeling and U. Leben, *Empire Style: The Hôtel de Beauharnais in Paris* (Paris, 2016)).

The Vestibule is sparsely furnished: two mahogany banquettes by Jacob-Desmalter and a pair of gilded bronze candelabras by Ravrio on console tables. It leads to Prince Eugène's Library, with doors opening to the gardens overlooking the Seine. It is in the centre of the enfilade: his private apartments are to the left and the Picture Gallery, now a dining room, is to the right. Since 2010, the Library has again its original colour scheme and textiles.

The sconces, with the Apollo masks, are by Pierre-François Feuchère. The console tables are signed by Jacob-Desmalter and the seat furniture is by Charles Cressent. The monumental mahogany bookcases, original to this room, are attributed to Jacob-Desmalter and normally found in Napoléon's palaces only.

The Green Salon, part of the private apartment, was redecorated in 2002. It has many Egyptian and military references. The curtains and upholstery are made of a bright green gourgouran, with a black and gold border with lotus flowers. The clock by Revel is, like all other clocks, original to

the house. The white-painted, partly gilded seat furniture, with palmettes, and the console table, with Egyptian-style capitals, are attributed to the workshop of Jacob-Desmalter. The Red Salon, a small dining room redesigned in 1968, used to be Prince Eugène's bedroom. The French chairs and table were purchased by the Prussian legation in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Small Salon has German furniture in the neo-rococo and neo-Renaissance style. The Louis XVI cylinder bureau, however, is French and attributed to Godefroy Dester. The large Dining Room, with its pale colours, is a good example of the interpretation of the Empire style in the mid-1960s. The Egyptian fireplace is the most important decorative element here; it



Pier glass and table with gilt bronze candelabra inside the newly restored Salon des quatre saisons at the Hôtel de Beauharnais, the German Embassy



was returned to its original place in 2007. The gilded bronze mounts are by Feuchère and the plaques of lava stone (added in 1850s) are by Hachette. The two gilded bronze candelabras by Feuchère, with kneeling Nubian figures and an Egyptian obelisk, were also returned in 2007.

The first room on the first floor functioned as the Throne Room from 1867 to 1918. The original throne is in store at Versailles, while the portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II is now lost. The current red silk wallcovering, with palmettes, was woven in Lyon in 1901. It was a replica of the one that was made for Napoléon's library in the château de Saint Cloud in 1805. The console table is by Pierre Marcion. The adjacent room, formerly a dining room, was turned into the Ambassador's study in the 1960s. Its furnishings comprise a large bureau (the so-called Bismarck desk) and mahogany seat furniture attributed to the Jeanselme workshop (1835–40).

The Drawing Room of the Four Seasons and the Music Room are one of the most important early Empire interiors in Europe. They both have an exceptional quality of decoration inspired by Percier and Fontaine. The allegories of the four seasons on the east and west walls are possibly by Anne Louis Girodet-Trioson or Francois Gérard. A great deal of the original furnishing is still present. A few years ago, the colour scheme was changed to the original blue and grey. Opposite the fireplace, placed on the console table with gilded chimeras, we find a large gilded bronze vase by Claude Galle. The clock and vases on the mantle are designed by Thomire; the clock was bought by the King of Prussia in 1817. The gilded seat

furniture is probably by Pierre-Antoine Bellanger. As the room is quite dark, four smaller chandeliers were hung in the corners in 1840s. The round mahogany table with porcelain plaques by the Manufacture de Clignancourt, at the centre of the room, was a present from the City of Paris to Prince Eugène.

Some of Eugène's original furniture has inlaid decorated glass panels, which is quite rare. In the Music Room, a glass panel is set into the base of the console table. It shows two golden swans on a background of imitation lapis lazuli in the *verre églomisé* technique. The console table is by Jacob-Desmalter and has gilded bronze mounts. The gilded seat furniture, with carved swans, is part of the set made for the bedroom. Above the panelling, the paired swans, with coral necklaces, and the muses Erato, Terpsichore, Urania and Clio are painted on the walls. Inspired by classical antiquity, the depiction of Apollo as a swan, seen here and throughout the house, represents Eugène de Beauharnais himself.

In 2009, the Cherry Red Drawing Room was reconstructed according to the findings in the 1817 catalogue. The chimney bears micro-mosaics from the workshop of Francesco Belloni. The gilded seat furniture is attributed to Pierre-Benoit Marcion. The fact that there are three sets of gilded chairs in the house is extraordinary; usually, giltwood seat furniture was the privilege of Napoléon's residences. The mahogany console table has painted glass panels in the *verre églomisé* technique.

The bedroom of the Prince, with its original decoration and furniture, has the only painted ceiling in the house. The

female figures on it represent Night and Day. The panel, again with a *verre églomisé* painting, is set into the side of the ceremonial bed, and represents Dusk. The bed and giltwood seat furniture are attributed to Jacob-Desmaller. The fireplace, signed by Francesco Beloni, shows scenes from the myths of Cupid and Psyche in micro-mosaics.

The small Turkish Boudoir is an early example of the oriental fashion in the nineteenth century and was probably designed by Percier and Fontaine. It is the only room in the house that still has its original oak parquet floor. The fresco around the top of the room depicts a Turkish sultan relaxing in his harem. The painted furniture is also in the Ottoman style. Its unique connection with the bathroom makes the Turkish Boudoir genuinely oriental. The bathroom is decorated in the Roman style inspired by the *Domus Aurea* in Rome. It has mirrored walls and scagliola columns. On the inlaid marble floor by Francesco Belloni, the abduction of Europe is depicted. The ceiling is one of the few remaining unaltered ceilings in the house dating from the Empire period. The mahogany armchair is attributed to Jacob-Desmaller.

*An Empire-Themed Visit to the Stores and Conservation Studios of the Mobilier national*

On Tuesday morning, we assembled in the courtyard of the Mobilier national and the Manufacture des Gobelins, rebuilt in the 1930s on the site of the original Gobelins Manufactory, to house and preserve the multifarious collections of furniture and textiles held by the French State. With some notable exceptions, the furniture

collections date primarily from the nineteenth century, particularly from Napoléon I's campaign to refurnish the royal residences that had been stripped during the Revolution.

The organization now has the dual purpose of equipping the official buildings of State (such as the Elysée Palace, the Senate and Assemblée Nationale, numerous government offices and embassies) and of conserving important works of art for public display. We witnessed projects of both kinds in the workshops devoted to joinery, cabinet-making, ormolu and carpets, by graduates of the École Boulle. We saw chairs from two simple Empire suites (one richly documented, with names of its maker, a later upholsterer, and several inventory marks), and a Second Empire fire-screen requiring extensive re-carving, being prepared for the arrival of the new government (the French general elections took place in May 2017; we visited in February). We were fascinated by the work of restoring a fine circular mechanical tea table *à l'anglaise*, attributed to Adam Weisweiler, with a rising centre section which is to be recreated on the basis of another example recently sold at auction (Christie's Paris, 22 April 2013, lot 504). The conservator explained to us the extraordinary complexity of restoring the construction (including revisiting old repairs) to accommodate the new mechanism, as well as re-gluing badly warped veneers by the use of re-hydration and vacuum-suction (by chance we were later to see a near-identical but altered example of the same model, in the British Embassy — see below). Other highlights included a roll-top desk by Bernard Molitor

and a superbly mounted library cabinet from the Elysée Palace by Jacob-Desmaller. In the ormolu workshop, we were shown the backs and fixings of several dis-assembled mounts, including the exquisite ornaments of a Riesener console table.

Perhaps most remarkable of all was the carpet conservation workshop, with work under way on carpets of the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, mostly, but not exclusively, Savonnerie. Two ravishing seventeenth-century Savonnerie carpets, made for Louis XIV, at the Louvre are currently undergoing conservation — one from the Grande Galerie (from an original series of 93) and one from the Galerie d'Apollon (an earlier, smaller series). Both retain astonishingly vibrant colours,

reminiscent of *pietra dura*, and it was an unforgettable experience to have a length of the second carpet rolled out for us to admire at close quarters.

In the stores, we were welcomed firstly by Mme Marie-France Dupuy-Baylet, Curator of the enormous collection of gilt bronze, including chandeliers, lamps and, especially, clocks. She led us to consider French Empire clocks in a new light, as the product of a greatly increased demand for good time-keeping after the Revolution: different types of clock could express the social status of the owner and/or the function of the room in which it was used; and clocks with elaborate iconography — often directly derived from paintings — encapsulate the dialogue between 'fine' and



Exclusive behind-the-scenes access: the Mobilier national's textile conservation studio, where one of Louis XIV's Savonnerie carpets woven for the Long Gallery of the Louvre was being conserved for the exhibition *Sièges en société*

‘decorative art’ that was topical at the time.

In the furniture stores — both *menuiserie* and *ébénisterie* — we could only glimpse the riches. So, we were relieved to have our attention focused on a few exceptional pieces, such as a mahogany *jardinère* attributed to Jacob Frères, one of a pair made for the Empress Josephine at Saint Cloud in about 1802, which has a sliding lead-lined tray to catch water drips and a loose mahogany top to convert it to a table when not in use for plants. A mahogany pedestal desk, with highly elaborate ormolu mounts and moving parts, is one of an ambitious group of furnishings made in 1809/10 at the École de Châlons, the school of arts and crafts established by Napoléon. Said to have been made originally for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prince Talleyrand, it was returned to the Mobilier national in the 1830s, and since then has been used just occasionally for the President’s investiture. Among a vast array of seat furniture are a few notable pieces retaining their original upholstery, including a rotating library armchair attributed to Jacob-Desmalter, in green velvet trimmed with metal-thread braid and brass nailing, which is thought to be the last chair supplied to Napoléon before he went into final exile; and a giltwood suite upholstered à *tablette*, with an exquisite paned and bordered scheme of eighteenth-century Chinese silks, a gift to the Empress Josephine in 1806. A very high note on which to end.





## Visit to Knole House

MONDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2017

This visit was arranged by Dr Wolf Burchard following more recent work at Knole, including the installation of the new Hayloft Centre, and the new conservation studio and stores, housed on two separate floors in a wonderfully repurposed barn. (Note: A video showing the Conservation Studio with its wonderful new timber pitched roof and, more importantly, images of Heather Porter, Senior Conservator, working on the 'iconic Knole Sofa', together with many other items of furniture from Knole, can be viewed at: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/knole/conservation-studio](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/knole/conservation-studio) and [www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk)).

An extensive climate control system is being installed at Knole. Work on this commenced in 2000 and is still ongoing. We

were fascinated to see, in the climate-controlled store, a Gerrit Jensen black lacquer table and two *torchères* fitted up with tiny microphones linked by computer to Warsaw University, where Polish scientists are recording and 'listening' to sounds made by the movement of the wood. This could be compared with recordings made whilst the items were *in situ* in the house, thereby providing conservators and others with more detailed knowledge and understanding of the environmental impact on such fragile items as are to be found at Knole. A further 'Polish connection' (apart from that of this scribe) was Jan Cutajar, working on a very large jigsaw puzzle, which was in fact a massive seventeenth-century ebony *Kussenkastje* ('pillow cupboard'); so-called because of the wooden 'pillows' built-up on each of the massive doors. Jan had been the recipient of a FHS grant, which had enabled him to visit the Rijksmuseum to study the ebony on oak cupboards there. The cupboard had lain in seventy pieces in the attic of Knole and some parts of it still remain to be found. As a result of his trip, Jan had been advised to check whether there was a removable slide on the inside of the 'pillows'. There was, and he removed it to reveal eight small oak drawers in pristine condition, each with an inexplicable blob of red lacquer inside, which will be subject to analysis and further research. Made of an oak carcass with an ebony veneered surface on the exterior and Indian rosewood on its interior, this would, in the typical Dutch tradition of the seventeenth century, have been a most impressive display piece of furniture in the home's principal room. It was interesting to see that where bas-reliefs

on the upper section had carved masks, the actual 'face' of these had been carved separately on thinner pieces of ebony and then glued to the substructure — a 'safer' way of completing a difficult task, which would not result in the loss of a larger piece of ebony had the carving gone wrong. Some of these 'faces' are lost, and so the search through attics and elsewhere will continue! Jan also pointed out the auricular style of carved ornament on the top frieze of the cupboard which, he told us, was often found on carved picture frames but was unusual on a piece of furniture. The first reference to the cupboard being in Knole was in 1730 when it had been described as 'A German Press' located in the Spangle Bedroom.

Dr Frances Parton, the new curator at Knole, together with Dr Burchard, showed and discussed the 'Double Throne' or 'Couch of Estate', as well as the seventeenth-century X-framed chairs, which are now in the store, whilst climate control and other work on the Brown Gallery is in progress. With a sneaky snapshot taken on his mobile phone, Dr Burchard showed us the Hampton Court inventory stamp of 1661 on the underside of one of the Throne Chair's upholstery. (Note: This can be seen on page 308 of *Furniture History*, L (2014) in Emma Slocombe's article about the display and alteration of the upholstered seat furniture and textiles associated with the Brown Gallery. Page 304 shows the inventory stamp for Whitehall Palace (with no date).)

Emma Slocombe's article is particularly pertinent to those of us who listened intently as Heather Porter talked about



Ebony cupboard

and showed us the work she was doing cleaning the 'iconic Knole Sofa'. First impressions were that she had not really got underway with her task — but when we were shown the 'before' pictures of it looking positively grey, with its accumulation of dust and dirt, we appreciated just how much painstaking work she had undertaken. The images on the NT website provide superb pictures of the sofa from all angles (with Heather working on it) and especially of the ratchets by which means the arms could be let down and supported. What we were learning about in greater detail than hitherto was the long-standing debate about 'conservation vs restoration'. As Emma Slocombe's article describes, and as Heather showed us, pieces of different but ancient material had been used to 'repair' the sofa, and other upholstered items. The conservator's aim now was to retain the integrity of the sofa together with all those 'repairs' (many of which were apparently taken from other pieces of more or less the same period) and, of course, to help

preserve it for the future. Removing dust from velvet and carpet pile can be difficult, and Heather's solution had been to 'solubilize' the dirt with a damp microfibre cloth and then to dry it. Being raised on a stand, the sofa could be inspected from all sides — something which would not have been possible on previous visits to Knole. An interesting point for debate/discussion is whether the sofa ever had the knobs associated with modern versions, over which cords to support the arms are attached. The Knole sofa's ratchets, which could be 'stopped' at any desired incline, obviate the need for such cords. Whilst one hole at one end had been discovered, it was far from clear that this was for a knob. A hole in the middle of the top rail marked where timbers in fact joined.

Our next port of call was the Gatehouse, in which Eddy Sackville-West had lived during the 1920s and 1930s. Access to his rooms was by steep stone steps — not to be encountered in the dark or whilst tipsy! The view from the top parapet of the gatehouse over Kent is spectacular. His former sitting room has a splendid full-length portrait of him by Graham Sutherland (NT 40420).

After lunch, Julie Milner, the NT guide at Knole, teamed up with Dr Burchard and took us on a highly informative tour of those parts of the house, which were currently accessible. We entered the Great Hall, cleared of all but a very long seventeenth-century shuffleboard refectory table whilst cleaning of the ceiling was being undertaken. This ceiling and others in Knole are by Richard Dungan, James I's master plasterer.

The famous screen, installed in the time of the 1st Earl in the first decade of the seventeenth century and believed to have been carved by William Portington, is described in the current handbook to Knole as: 'Almost barbaric in its vigour and density of its decoration' — few would disagree. Now covered in Victorian shellac, the screen may have been painted originally and it is relevant to comment that modern-day analysis of early woodwork supports the view that much more of it was painted than was hitherto understood.

Julie provided an excellent commentary on the wall paintings, 'The four stages of man' and the senses and virtues, at the base and up the Italianate styled staircase, which had formed a wide processional route from the Great Hall to the upstairs rooms. From the landing we were able to see, but not enter, the Brown Gallery *sans furniture*, which was in the process of having work done. We then entered the Ballroom, which had originally been Archbishop Bourchier's 'Solar', that particular function having been obliterated by the panelling concealing where four massive windows had once been sited. The frieze above the panelling is exceedingly richly carved with mermaids, mermen and sea horses interspersed with grotesque figures. Of note, on the panelling were the large Kent-style wall sconces with ducal coronets, which probably came from Dorset House in the eighteenth century. As for the furniture, there was a mixture of English and French pieces, some of which were recently published by Christopher Rowell and Wolf Burchard in *Furniture History*, 1 (2016).

Next came the Reynolds room — with its collection of Joshua Reynolds' paintings. In order to be able to view the pictures, and the eighteenth-century suite of walnut settees and chairs, which retain their original stamped woollen velvet, matching that on the walls, visitors are encouraged to walk on what at first looks to be a seventeenth-century carpet, but is in fact a full-scale photograph of one on canvas with heated pads underneath which raise, very slightly, the temperature of the room. In the Cartoon Gallery, we viewed the Charles II oak and walnut furniture, some of which have the Whitehall Palace inventory stamp referred to above and were fortunately taken as a perquisite by the 6th Earl of Dorset, as Whitehall Palace was to burn down in 1698, together with much of its contents.

The climax to a Knole visit is to enter the King's Bedroom with the magnificent Louis XIV State Bed, which was so painstakingly cleaned and conserved from 1974 to 1987, and is now seen from behind a sealed glass screen.

The following image is a scan (hence not of the best quality) of a slide taken by me in the 1980s on a FHS visit, showing the bed in the process of having its hangings removed for conservation. It does, however, give a good impression of just how 'grubby' the bed was at that time and shows the very simple beech bed posts, which would not have been visible because of the hangings, and the black-painted bed and stool feet.

We left the confines of Knole into a torrential downpour of rain, which failed to dampen spirits so enthused by the wondrous revelations we had received at Knole.



Knole bed

Thanks go to Dr Wolf Burchard for both suggesting and leading this visit, to Anne-Marie Bannister for her meticulous organization of it and to the staff of Knole for providing us with new insights and a wealth of information about Knole and its furniture.

JANUSZ KARCZEWSKI-SLOWIKOWSKI





## FHS-funded Research Trip to New York

MONDAY 23 OCTOBER–WEDNESDAY  
8 NOVEMBER 2017

At the end of October, I was lucky enough to visit New York for a three-week research trip supported by a travel grant from the FHS. I planned to expand upon my research on the taste for fine and decorative eighteenth-century art in the second half of the nineteenth century as part of my doctoral research on the collections of the Bowes Museum. At the Frick, I pored over copies of the diaries of Matilda Gay (née Travers), who was married to the American painter Walter Gay. The American couple lived in Paris from 1878 onwards, immersing themselves in literary, artistic and aristocratic circles, and engaged in the study of historic buildings and interiors. I was interested to read Matilda's detailed descriptions of the places they visited, both as tourists and as guests. Her writings offer fascinating insights into fashionable Parisian society at the turn of the century. Like the Bowes, the Gays also split their time between a Paris apartment and various country houses. They were drawn to the history of the former aristocratic owners of the châteaux they stayed in. Matilda had strong views about a whole range of topics, from cross-cultural marriage to the best way to

renovate sites of the *ancien régime*. I spent one week working in the peaceful Frick Reference Library, where archivist Susan Chore and the reading room staff were very generous with their help.

The other strand of research I developed in New York focuses on collections of gilded metal furniture mounts and ornaments, and the collectors' motivations for gathering such objects. I have been exploring collectors' responses to the damage suffered by Paris in 1870 and 1871. A small sample of gilt-metal furniture mounts in The Bowes Museum collection have sparked my interest in salvaging remnants of spaces that were destroyed. I was familiar with the research project led by Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide and Ulrich Leben with Bard Graduate Center (Georges Hoentschel and French Decorative Arts from the Metropolitan Museum of Art), and was excited to see part of the collection put together by the decorating firm Maison Leys and Georges Hoentschel. I met with Daniëlle at the Met to look at the research files and the objects themselves. We delighted over the jewel-like qualities of some of the ornaments. I was interested in putting a third collection into dialogue with those of the Bowes Museum and the Met: the Cooper Hewitt museum houses a substantial collection of similar objects. Sarah Coffin and Emily Orr kindly let me read documentation on the gifts of Jacob Schiff, historic inventories and early Annual Minutes to the Trustees of the museum.

In between my own research, I was able to attend three conferences: the FHS Research Seminar on Furniture and the domestic interiors at the Frick, 'Have to

Have It: Philadelphians Collect 1850–1930' at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and 'Morgan: Mind of the Collector' at Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.

The FHS/Frick symposium brought together other emerging furniture scholars from European and North American institutions, and displayed a range of approaches to furniture history — the field of decorative arts is alive and well! The seven talks were excellent, each covering a different aspect in furniture studies. Although each talk was quite specialized, the day showed how many different approaches could be taken. Some of the papers looked at the significance of object — for example, Susanne Thueringen on mirror-shaped clocks in the sixteenth century or Hannah Lee on Venetian Moorish stands. Still others considered the role of a piece of furniture: Pasquale Foscari considered the place and display of the *camarile* in the seventeenth-century Florence interior, while Margot Bernstein showed the many different types of chairs in Carmontelle's portraits and how the position of each sitter varied, reflecting the artist's interpretation of their character. Finally, my fellow PhD candidate at the Bowes, Simon Spier, examined the acquisitions of John and Joséphine Bowes and how they were regarded after the death of the donors.

The music room at the Frick was packed with furniture historians, curators and design historians, and there I met Sydney Ayers, a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh working on the reception and reputation of Robert Adam, and I look forward to getting in touch with her now that we are both back in the UK. Having

already started a dialogue by email with David Pullins (Frick), it was a pleasure to meet him in person after the symposium to talk about the display of pastiche art in nineteenth-century interiors. After the conference, I was invited to join the visit to TEFAF with the conference speakers where I was entranced by Madame de Pompadour's cat!

The 'Have to Have It: Philadelphians Collect 1850–1930' symposium was organized with the Frick Collection Center for the History of Collecting to coincide with the remarkable exhibition on John G. Johnson and collecting Old Masters now. I was pleased to catch up with Imogen Tedbury (National Gallery and the Courtauld Institute of Art, London) who is currently on a fellowship at the Met. I was happy to meet Yuriko Jackall (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) after her



Madame de Pompadour's cat, exhibited by Christophe de Quénétain, TEFAF, New York, Autumn 2017



Wadsworth Atheneum: Graduate students posing alongside the man of the hour. Left to right: Katherine Koltiska, Isobel MacDonald, J. Pierpont Morgan, Daniel Ralston, Lindsay Macnaughton

paper to question her about Joseph Bonaparte's choice of furniture in his Philadelphia and New Jersey residences.

At the Morgan conference at Wadsworth Atheneum, I began a discussion with fellow CDP students Barbara Pezzini (National Gallery, London, and University of Manchester) and Isobel MacDonald (Burrell Collection and University of Glasgow) about the methodological challenges we face in the field of the history of collecting. We also met some North American graduate students — Daniel Ralston (Columbia) and Katherine Koltiska (Penn State), also working on collectors. I travelled back to New York with Christine Brennan (Met) who had spoken at the conference, and she told me about her Masters research on Prince Soltykoff and current doctoral work on the Brummer Gallery.

Thanks to the generosity of the FHS, my three-week visit to New York enabled me to make significant progress in my



Exploring the city with Pasquale Focarile, Suzanne Thüringen and Simon Spier (FHS Seminar speakers). We visited the Morgan Library, Cooper Hewitt, TEFAF and Christie's, saw Grand Central Station, walked across the Brooklyn Bridge, found happiness at the Strand bookstore, and shared some delicious meals together

research, by consulting valuable primary sources and meeting scholars in and around my field. I visited as many museums and galleries as I could and was fortunate to see in person a number of pieces of furniture I had until then only read about. These visits, the conferences I attended and the opportunity to examine objects in store have given me new tools for my research at the Bowes Museum. I am especially grateful to the FHS members who shared their expertise, advice and contacts in preparation of and during my trip.

LINDSAY MACNAUGHTON

*PhD candidate,*

*Durham University and the Bowes Museum*

## Visit to the Foundling Museum

TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2017

The Foundling Hospital opened in 1739 after a nineteen-year campaign by Captain Thomas Coram to establish a home for

babies born out of wedlock. Coram had been deeply shocked by the numbers he saw abandoned by mothers unable to care for them. The original buildings were designed by Theodore Jacobsen. The Foundation decided to leave its purpose-built premises in 1936, moving to Berkhamsted, and almost all the original structure was demolished, barring a few outbuildings which still survive in the park. This episode contributed to the foundation of the Georgian Group. Fortunately, some original fittings and furniture, together with the Court Room, have been preserved and form an important part of the modern Museum. A few elements of the chapel, together with Coram's tomb, can now be found in St Andrew's, Holborn. Coram enjoyed the support of several artists, including William Hogarth and Handel (neither of whom had children), who made important donations to the fledgling institution. In 2001–02 a Trustee wanted to sell these works in order to raise funds; protracted legal arguments followed and the Coram Foundation found itself obliged



Seventeenth-century  
elm refectory table



to raise funds to buy many of the contents of the museum, receiving assistance from the NHMF and Sir Nicolas Goodison.

The study group was warmly welcomed by Caro Howell, the Museum's Director. Our guide was Jane King, who has worked at the Museum for many years and done an enormous amount to save furniture from sale and inappropriate use in offices in the 1990s. Surviving furniture comes from three periods: eighteenth century, nineteenth-century partners' desks and Heal's furniture for the Treasurer's flat.

The Committee Room (ground floor) contains a seventeenth-century elm refectory table, with an exceptional thick top made of a single piece, and an unusual stretcher, with a single central bar from one end to the other.

The frame on the painting by George Lambert above the chimneypiece, topped

by a bust of Mercury (according to legend, designed by Hogarth), is clearly by a different hand from the rest of the structure. The frame on Hogarth's *The March of the Guards to Finchley* (1749–50, painting donated by the artist via a lottery) has been cut down and may originally have been on the artist's portrait of Coram, but Jonathan Harris thought it more likely to be of the 1720s/30s. There is a useful discussion of the frames by Jacob Simon available online via the National Portrait Gallery website, [www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/the-art-of-the-picture-frame](http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/the-art-of-the-picture-frame)

The Coade stone font from the Chapel is on display on the ground floor.

Longcase clocks include one with a walnut case presented by John Ellicot in 1750, secured for the Foundling by Nicholas and Judith Goodison, and a puzzling one signed Foulsham, which



Hogarth's *The March of the Guards to Finchley*



cannot be traced to a known eighteenth-century clock-maker. The oak staircase is the original Boys' Staircase (the Girls' was removed to Berkhamsted).

The first-floor landing displays a number of works, including the original chapel altarpiece by Andrea Casali, the *Adoration of the Magi*, 1750, which was disliked by the governors and replaced by *Christ Presenting a Little Child* by Benjamin West, 1801. The Casali has a frame attributed to William Linnell. A surviving pew from the chapel is tucked away on another landing.

The Picture Gallery is a replica of the room in Jacobsen's building and its contents include two nineteenth-century 'Bishop's chairs' of ornate design.



Nineteenth-century 'Bishop's chair'

A Lambeth delftware punchbowl said to have belonged to Hogarth is also here, as is another on loan, with views of the Hospital's original buildings and of Vauxhall Gardens, the only two places in London where paintings were on public view. The frames on many of the paintings in this room had been stained dark brown, and recent cleaning has revealed the original stone-coloured scheme. The Palladian frame above the chimneypiece by William Hallett was always intended for this position. The early nineteenth-century circular table in this room may originally have been a rent table. Hogarth's portrait of Captain Coram is displayed here, donated by him in 1740; he also donated the original frame in 1741. Shortly after this, Coram was ousted from his position at the Hospital.

The Court Room survives from the original building with little alteration, apart from the floor. The spectacular rococo plaster ceiling was donated by William Wilton (father of Joseph) and paintings here by Hogarth and Francis Hayman with subject matter appropriate to the Hospital were also gifts. It was probably due to Hogarth that the sculptor John Michael Rysbrack became involved and provided the marble overmantel *Charity Children Engaged in Navigation and Husbandry*. The marble frame for this and the marble chimneypiece were given by John Devall. Many of the artists involved were elected governors of the Hospital and began the practice of holding annual dinners, which ultimately led to the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768, to which concept Hogarth (d. 1764) was always opposed. The most innovatory



Rococo table by an unknown maker

paintings in this room are the eight roundels depicting other well-known hospitals, such as the Charterhouse by Thomas Gainsborough, donated 1748. These all have frames with oak leaves and acorns carved by William Hallett, as were the door friezes and the brackets for the busts of Caracalla and Marcus Aurelius (donated by Richard Dalton 1754). Hallett is the exception amongst the artists and craftsmen involved in this project, because he charged where others gave. This policy

no doubt enabled him to build himself a new house on the site of the demolished mansion, Canons, built by the Duke of Chandos. The rococo table by an unknown maker also features oak leaves and acorns, perhaps representing growth and education. It has suffered some damage from carelessness by members of the Court and, although plain pine now, may have once been gilded or painted stone colour.

SUSAN BRACKEN

# The Tom Ingram Memorial Fund and Oliver Ford Trust

The Tom Ingram Memorial Fund makes grants towards travel and other incidental expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture (a) whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society; (b) only when the study or research is likely to be of importance in furthering the objectives of the Society; and (c) only when travel could not be undertaken without a grant from the Society. Applications towards the cost of FHS foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Fund in any resulting publications and must report back to the Panel on completion of the travel or project. All enquiries should be addressed to Jill Bace at [grants@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:grants@furniturehistorysociety.org), or for further information and grant application forms see the Grants page of the Society's website, [www.furniturehistorysociety.org](http://www.furniturehistorysociety.org).

In line with one of its roles — the promotion of interest in interior design —

the Oliver Ford Trust has generously expressed the desire to sponsor a place on each FHS study weekend or foreign tour. Applicants should either be a student with a particular interest in interiors, or a junior museum professional. Applications from non-members will be considered. Grants will be awarded via the Tom Ingram Fund, to which candidates should apply.

The FHS Grants Committee now meets quarterly to consider all grant applications, either for independent travel/incidental expenses for the purpose of study or research, or for participation in FHS foreign and UK study trips.

Completed application forms should be submitted with current curriculum vitae by the following deadlines so that they can be considered at these meetings:

10 JUNE, 10 SEPTEMBER OR 10 DECEMBER

TOM INGRAM MEMORIAL FUND/FHS GRANTS  
SECRETARY: Jill Bace, 21 Keats Grove,  
Hampstead, London NW3 2RS. Email:  
[grants@furniturehistorysociety.org](mailto:grants@furniturehistorysociety.org)

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Council members can be contacted through the Events or Membership Secretaries, whose details are shown above. Contributors can be contacted through the Newsletter Editor, who is Sharon Goodman, 26 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0JZ. Tel. 07855 176779; email: [sctgoodman@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sctgoodman@yahoo.co.uk)

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 15 March 2018.

Copy should be sent, preferably by email to Sharon Goodman, email:

[sctgoodman@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sctgoodman@yahoo.co.uk), or by post to 26 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0JZ.

Tel. 07855 176779.

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COVER PICTURE Flower table by Betty Joel, designed for John Colville in 1935 and used at Gribloch, Stirlingshire, the house designed for Colville by Basil Spence in 1937. © National Museums Scotland, K.2001.890