

18th Century Furniture at Blair Castle

Lead by David Jones

Friday 1st November 2019 10am-4.30pm

Blair Castle, Perthshire, was transformed in the first half of the eighteenth century, employing the most fashionable craftsmen to create a Palladian mansion furnished with pieces by the leading

English and Scottish cabinet makers. James Murray, 2nd Duke of Atholl (1690-1764) spent over ten years working on the interior, creating new State Rooms, installing marble chimney pieces by Thomas Carter, rococo plaster work by Thomas Clayton and a new staircase designed by Abraham Swan, who was responsible, also, for chinoiserie garden architecture in the surrounding designed landscape.

Between 1748 and 1761 a varied roll-call of cabinet makers supplied items to the house. The list includes Thomas Chippendale the Elder, Chipchase & Lambert, John Gordon (of Gordon & Taitt), William Masters, John Hodson, John Schaw and George Sandeman. Their work is fully documented and supported by a series of bills kept in the castle archive.

Highlights of the collection are undoubtedly the Chippendale pieces, which are the earliest documented (pre- Dumfries House) items in the Director style and the furniture made from estate materials. These include the striking broom wood desk and bookcase (1758) by George Sandeman and the pair of larch and Glen Tilt marble cabinets made by George Bullock for John, 4th Duke of Atholl, in 1817/18.

The study day will be based in the Private Library of the castle, where it will be possible to scrutinise pieces and their associated documentation in some detail. Other furniture will be studied in situ. There will be opportunity (weather permitting) to see over the extensive rococo gardens - the most northerly in Britain.

COST: £80.00 (INCLUDES A SOUP AND SANDWICH LUNCH, TEA & COFFEE)

Accommodation if required is available:

helen@atholl-estates.co.uk

Email archive@blair-castle.co.uk to book. Early booking recommended as places are limited.

