

The Furniture History Society

Newsletter 230

May 2023



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William Hogarth's take on Half-Mourning

Fig. 1. *William Wollaston and his Family in a Grand Interior*, 1730. Oil on canvas, 99 x 124.5 cm. Courtesy of Leicester Museum and Art Galleries.



Hogarth's 1730 painting of seventeen members of the Wollaston and Fauquier families (Fig. 1) and their household servants shows in the centre William Wollaston (1693-1757) a wealthy landowner with estates in Leicestershire and Suffolk, dressed in black. He became M.P. for Ipswich. William married Elizabeth Fauquier in 1728, his wife presides over the silvered tea table and serves tea in Chinese export bowls from a silver tea pot and square silver cannister. The black servant in the background wears a silver collar. The Wollaston coat of arms are proudly displayed on the frieze of the tea table, demonstrating the family's established status.

William Hogarth served his apprenticeship as an engraver of silver to Ellis Gamble, Paul de Lamerie's business partner.¹ Hogarth well understood the significance of heraldry, and later designed the coat of arms for the Foundling Hospital. Hogarth also designed frames, sketching a surround for his painting *Paul before Felix* for the Hall at Lincoln's Inn which incorporated the coat of arms of the commissioning patron.²

This conversation piece retains its contemporary giltwood frame, similar to that surrounding the 1742 portrait by Allan Ramsay of the Mansel family (Fig. 2).³ Its Neo-Palladian design points to an architectural draughtsman, possibly one

working in the circle of William Kent, whom Hogarth despised. The architect Henry Flitcroft is a possibility.

For the interior of Montagu House, Whitehall, designed by Flitcroft in the 1730s, that architect also designed new frames for older paintings. Three Flitcroft frames for earlier flower paintings by Jean Baptiste Monnoyer, originally framed by the Pelletier workshop, were carved by Benjamin Goodison for the 2nd Duke of Montagu's Whitehall Drawing Room. They hang today in the North Pavilion Bedroom at Boughton House.

The Neo-Palladian frame surrounding the Wollaston family group contrasts with the interior shown in Hogarth's



Fig. 2: *Thomas, 2nd Lord Mansel of Margram with his Blackwood Half-Brothers and Sister*, 1742. Oil on canvas 124.5 x 100.3 cm.

© Tate Britain.



Fig. 3: Detail, showing silver chandelier.

painting. Was this intended to portray the Wollaston's town house in Charterhouse Square? Or one of their country homes Shenton Hall, near Market Bosworth, Leicestershire, which they owned since 1652 or Finborough Hall, Suffolk? (The Wollaston family archive dating from 1344 to the early 19th century is deposited in the Leicester and Rutland Record Office). The eight-branched silver chandelier (Fig. 3) hanging beneath a Baroque painted and stucco ceiling above the panelled room, captures the style of the previous generation, an appropriate context for a gathering which commemorates the recent death of William's older brother Charlton Wollaston (1690-1729) and his inheritance. Charlton's bust encircled with laurels sits in pride of place above the chimneypiece.

Such silver chandeliers are rare survivals. Examples at Chatsworth, Drumlanrig and Colonial Williamsburg testify to royal or noble patronage. Shown here, the chandelier implies considerable wealth.

The Wollaston family, landed gentry, married City money. Yet William Wollaston's father was an enlightenment philosopher, vicar, scholar of Latin, Greek and Hebrew and author of the best-selling *The Religion of Nature Delineated*, 1722. William Wollaston the elder married Catharine Charlton, daughter of another London merchant. Francis and William Fauquier (d.1789) were the sons of Dr Jean Francis Fauquier (c.1672-1726) a Huguenot from Bordeaux, who became Deputy Master of the Mint and also served as a Director of the Bank of England. Francis Fauquier (c.1704-68), sitting on the extreme left, became Governor of the Foundling Hospital from 1751 and Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Virginia from 1758.⁴ His brother William (also shown) became a significant collector⁵ and owned two paintings by Chardin; *Boy building a house of Cards* is today in the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon. Their sister Mary, also shown in white, married Francis Wollaston. Hogarth shows members of the Wollaston and Fauquier family in conversation, playing the fashionable card game *Whist*, a polite social activity, but also an opportunity for gambling.

This remarkable painting, on loan to Leicester Museums and Art Galleries from the 1950s, probably hung above a chimneypiece in the family home given its darkened state. In 2019 it was allocated to the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery

as a hybrid deal through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, following a public appeal and with grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund.

Both the painting and the frame require expert cleaning. The museum is currently seeking funds to cover the cost of this conservation and plans to redisplay the result as portrait in focus when the work is complete. Might it be possible to identify a silver chandelier and silvered table (cover image) to show alongside the restored painting? Members of the Furniture History Society saw a Huguenot eight-branched chandelier in a private collection on their visit to Malta some ten years ago, but perhaps the silvered table is a product of Hogarth's imagination? Yet despite the serious tone of the family group, Hogarth introduces a lively diversion for the viewer in the foreground. A mischievous pug, stands with its paws on a giltwood chair upholstered in silk velvet. Perhaps this represents artistic licence; Hogarth owned three pugs during his life time of which Trump is the best known. Paws off!

TESSA MURDOCH

This article is written to honour Edward Harley, Chair of the Acceptance in Lieu Panel from 2012-2022.

In May 2019, Edward wrote

I would like to thank the Wollaston family for offering this wonderful picture to the nation. Hogarth is one of this country's greatest artists and his conversation pieces such as this represent some of his most fascinating works. I hope that this example will encourage others to use the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, which continues to bolster museum and gallery holdings with cultural treasures.

Tessa Murdoch currently advises the National Heritage Memorial Fund and serves on the Acceptance in Lieu panel for Arts Council England.

¹ Tessa Murdoch, 'A glimpse of the apprentice William Hogarth engraving his master's shop-bill: the sign of the Angel', *Silver Studies, The Journal of the Silver Society* no. 31, 2014, pp. 63-65.

² Tessa Murdoch, 'Courtiers and Classics, The Gosset Family', *Country Life*, 9 May 1985, pp. 1282-3.

³ Thanks to David Oakey for this information. *Thomas, 2nd Baron Mansel of Margam with his Blackwood Half-Brothers and Sister*, Allan Ramsay, 1742. Tate Britain T05494.

⁴ 'Francis Fauquier's Will': *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jan., 1900), pp. 171-177 Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1920201>.

⁵ *A Catalogue of A small but well-chosen Collection of Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch PICTURES A Valuable Collection of Marbles; fine Prints, Books of Prints etc late the Property of William Fauquier Deceased from his House in Stratton Street, Piccadilly*. Christie's 30 January 1789 lot 75. The other Chardin lot 86 was 'A boy drawing'. Lot 18 was 40 prints by Hogarth.

FHS Events Calendar

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

2023

19-21 MAY	UK Spring Study Trip to Scotland (please note that dates have changed from 5-7 May due to the Coronation)
6-7, 13-14 JUNE	BIFMO online course: Furnishing the Country House (see p. 12)
13 JUNE	Visit to Ranger's House. This visit is already oversubscribed
5 JULY	Wainwright Collection Evening Pre-view at Blairmans
15-17 SEPT	UK Study Trip to Devon
5-8 OCTOBER	Overseas Study Trip to Andalucía, Spain
18 OCT	Online Seminar with LACMA and the Gilbert Collection
25 OCT	Annual Lecture
25 NOV	AGM & Talks



Side table designed by Sir John Soane for Stowe House, circa 1805, with plaster bust by George Bullock of William Roscoe, circa 1804.

Highlights from the collection of Clive and Jane Wainwright.

An exhibition to coincide with London Art Week.

Special evening viewing

H. BLAIRMAN & SONS, 15 QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, LONDON SW1H 9BU

WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023

6.00 PM - 7.30 PM

Blairman's is privileged to have been entrusted with the disposal of certain items of the collection of Clive and Jane Wainwright. *Highlights from the Collection of Clive and Jane Wainwright* will show a selection of furniture, sculpture, pictures and other works of art, reflecting the range of the Wainwrights' collecting interests. Enthusiasts for nineteenth-century design and the history of collections will be familiar with Clive's many original publications on the period, and some of the exhibits may be recalled too from loan exhibitions over the decades.

The exhibition at 15, Queen Anne's Gate, once the home of Edward Hudson, the founder of *Country Life* (to which Clive (1942-1999) made frequent contributions) will include an ebony and ivory side table designed by Sir John Soane for the Gothic Library at Stowe House; a watercolour by Francis Danby of William Beckford's Fonthill, a drawing table used by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, together with many other works conceived by leading architect-designers active throughout the nineteenth century.

The introduction to the fully illustrated catalogue will include contributions from colleagues and former students recalling Clive's career as a curator at the V&A, and as a teacher.

COST: £20

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

FRIDAY 26 MAY 2023



Powderham Castle.

Autumn Study Trip to Devon

FRIDAY 15 SEPTEMBER TO SUNDAY
17 SEPTEMBER 2023

Our Autumn study weekend takes us to the Exeter area, led by Events Committee member Kate Dyson. Our visits will include privately-owned Ugbrooke Park, near Chudleigh, an early castellated house designed by Robert Adam, with grounds designed by Capability Brown. Since the 1960s, Ugbrooke has been painstakingly restored by the Clifford family, who have always lived there. The property is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Following this we visit another important private house for lunch and to study the family furniture collection.

Powderham Castle, built in the fourteenth century by Sir Philip Courtenay, is the seat of the Earl and Countess of Devon. More a fortified manor than a castle, Simon Jenkins, in his book *England's Thousand Best Houses* describes it as a 'family tree in architecture'. Treasures include two huge Baroque bookcases and a longcase clock made by John Channon in 1740, Rococo plasterwork, a music room added in 1794

by James Wyatt, and a splendid staircase praised by Pevsner as the most spectacular architecture of its date in Devon.

We will visit Knightshayes, a renowned house by William Burges, and will, we hope, see the Burges bedroom furniture on loan from the V&A, though currently not on display, and Holcombe Court, a private Grade I listed Tudor house, containing an interesting small collection of bespoke contemporary furniture inspired by William Burges and designed by Scott Cunningham. Since the thirteenth century twenty-three generations of the family have lived in privately-owned Fursdon House, which was rebuilt in 1723 and altered in 1818 when Waterloo hero George Fursdon returned to add a new colonnade, ballroom and library. The old great hall has its original screen. There is also a small family memorabilia museum. We will be staying in traditional thatched cottages overlooking the beautiful courtyard of Bickleigh Castle, a fortified manor house that stands on the banks of the River Exe near Tiverton.

To express interest please contact the Events Secretary at events@furniturehistorysociety.org.

FHS Annual Lecture

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES,
BURLINGTON HOUSE, PICCADILLY,
LONDON W1J 0BE

WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2023

6.00 PM FOR A 6.30 PM START

Decade by Decade: not just 'nineteenth century'; British Furniture 1820 to 1920

Christopher Payne will present some of the findings made whilst researching his new book *British Furniture 1820 to 1920 – The Luxury Market*, to be published by ACC Art Books in early September 2023.

Fashionable furniture does not fit neatly into a particular decade and the overlaps can be confusing. The book is divided into chapters each spanning a decade with a view to establishing a methodology, both visual and archival, for a more accurate form of dating. In the lecture, Christopher will explore the way in which the eclectic nineteenth-century fashions evolved and often continued side by side, hindering the furniture historian's attempt to position them, from the early origins of the so-called 'Victorian style' through the panoply of influences in vogue up until the 1920s. Whereas much has been written about the Gothic, Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts movements, Christopher will shine the spotlight on other, less well-known areas of the furniture trade, including the so-called Rococo Revival, 'Queen Anne' and 'Chippendale' styles. The words 'copy' and 'reproduction' are used frequently and without fear as he sheds light on the often-unidentified makers of reproduction furniture that dominated the market.

Christopher Payne, who served a term on the Council, has been an active member of the Furniture History Society since joining Sotheby's in 1970. His *European Furniture of the 19th Century* was first published in 1981, followed by other publications including a monograph on François Linke (2003) and *Paris Furniture – the Luxury Market of the 19th Century* (2018). Christopher worked on the BBC *Antiques Roadshow* for over thirty years and continues to work as an independent advisor to private clients.

Admission to the lecture is free for members, but attendance is by ticket only, which must be acquired in advance.

Please apply to the Events Secretary by email or post. Numbers are limited to 90. We plan to live-stream the event for those who cannot attend in person.



Christopher Payne leaning on a Windsor chair he made himself.

FHS Annual General Meeting and Works in Progress Talks

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

SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2023

11.00 AM – 1.00 PM

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

Talks will follow the business of the day. Details of speakers will be in the August and November issues of the Newsletter.

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

Bookings

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

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

Cancellations

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £20 or less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a £10 deduction for administrative costs. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours; terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

Online Events

We are continuing to arrange occasional online events, but we are sometimes unable to advertise them in the Newsletter owing to publication lead-in times. We let members know by email and send links to members about a week in advance. They will also be advertised on the FHS website, on Instagram and Facebook (@furniturehistorysociety).

Most online events are free to members. Non-members can join for a small fee. BIFMO study courses will charge a fee for both members and non-members.

Recordings of many of our past lectures are freely available to members on the Events page of the FHS website. If you need a reminder of the login details or have any enquiries, or suggestions for future speakers or topics please email the Events Secretary.

Forthcoming online event:

Wednesday 18 October 6.00 pm. Online Seminar: *China and India: New perspective on Decorative Stones.*

This seminar coincides with the exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum of Arts, *Eternal medium: seeing the world in stone* (20 August 2023 – 11 February 2024) which will be a collaboration with The Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the V&A. Speakers will be Adriana Concin, Lola Cindric, Nicholas Grindley, Rosie Mills, and Alice Minter.

FHS News

Membership News

Some housekeeping is required by members to improve communications with the Society.

If you have not yet set up your own password for your subscription account, please do so. You should have received an email in April with a link to set up a password which will enable you to do so. (Please check your spam if you cannot find it). Once set up you will be able to log into your account to change your personal details e.g., postal address, email address, telephone number.

Concerning spam, to reduce the possibility of emails from the Society going directly to spam please set up the following emails in your contacts:

finance@furniturehistorysociety.org
events@furniturehistorysociety.org
membership@furniturehistorysociety.org.

Whilst this will not eliminate the possibility of emails going to spam, especially those members with Gmail accounts, it does reduce the possibility considerably.

If you have any questions concerning the above, please do not hesitate to contact Keith Nicholls, Membership & Finance Officer at finance@furniturehistorysociety.org, mobile: +44 (0) 7951 211 996.

Part-time job opportunity: FHS Finance Officer's post

One of the Society's stalwarts, our Finance Officer, Keith Nicholls, will be retiring after this year's Annual General Meeting (planned for 26 November). There will be a proper opportunity to thank Keith for his service to the Society before he leaves. The Society is seeking to replace him and invites members (or anyone who is interested) to contact Keith for a copy of the job description and to discuss the post, either on +44 (0)7951 211 996 or at finance@furniturehistorysociety.org.

The job involves: keeping the Society's financial books and records (using a simple accounting package); preparing management accounts and a quarterly financial report for Council; preparing the annual accounts and the financial section of the annual report; regular liaison meetings with the treasurer and the other officers (6-8 times a year either by Zoom or in person); in conjunction with the appropriate officers preparing the annual budget; maintaining membership database including contact with national and oversea institutions; with the Website officer, overseeing the database and the website. Please see the job description for a fuller detail.

The post is part-time (approximately 50 hours per month), and you will work from home. You will be a self-employed contractor and the remuneration will be commensurate with your experience and the range of duties undertaken.

Correction to Journal Article

A slip in my article on the Seddon cradle, in *Furniture History* LVIII (2022) included Shackleton in the partnership that made it. In fact, he had left the partnership in 1798, following the retirement of George Seddon Senior. Archival references to the firm following this seems to favour the form 'Seddon & Co' although the report quoted from *The Examiner* reflects the high esteem in which George Seddon was held by still referring to the cradle as made by 'Mr Seddon'. This report was also affected by a gremlin but readers are likely to have self-corrected the year date of 1815, to 1814. By 1815 Joanna Southcott was no longer current news.

SARAH MEDLAM

Publications

Back issues of our journal, *Furniture History*, and other FHS publications are available. For details, see the website www.furniturehistorysociety.org/publications or contact Jill Bace at the email address given on the back page.

BIFMO UPDATE

British and Irish Furniture Makers Online

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

PLEASE NOTE the URL has changed to **bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org** due to moving our website host from the University of London and identifies the FHS as the owner of the website. The move will enable BIFMO to develop new and innovative ways of presenting research.

Save the Date: Online summer course

This year's BIFMO-FHS online summer course *Furnishing the Country House 1650-1800* will concentrate on the rise of the country house in Britain and Ireland and the relationships between furniture makers, architects and patrons when creating their interiors. The course will be held online at 4.00 pm - 7.30 pm (BST) on 6, 7, 13 & 14 June. It will be possible to book tickets for individual days as well as the entire course. Don't worry if you cannot attend the course live,

all ticketholders will be sent a link to a recording of the sessions for which they have booked. More detailed information will be available on the FHS website by the end of April and tickets will go on sale on Eventbrite in the second week of May.

British and Irish immigrant furniture makers in Early America

The contributions immigrant British and Irish furniture makers made to the Early American trade has been well documented over the long eighteenth century and particularly in Boston, Portsmouth, and Rhode Island. BIFMO has recently been the fortunate recipient of a research grant from the Decorative Art Trust of Philadelphia, to trace and document British and Irish furniture makers who settled in other north-eastern port cities: New York, Philadelphia, Annapolis, and Baltimore. A small team of interns will examine primary sources that include contemporary newspapers, trade directories, colonial prerogative court records, wills, inventories, and insurance records. We are most grateful to several American scholars and curators for their advice. Special thanks go Alexandra Kirtley at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Alyce Englund at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for generously sharing documentary evidence with the project.

Work began in late February with the appointment of our first London intern and several young American scholars will also be

offered positions in the coming weeks. Interns will be supervised throughout by Dr Laurie Lindey and will lead to their writing case studies published in a devoted collection page on the BIFMO site. Their research will also be used to inform existing and new biographies.

Online Intern Projects

During the summer of 2022, six students from the US and the UK took part in our second project funded by the Foyle Trust as part of the BIFMO outreach programme. The students worked in pairs across the Atlantic to create online presentations for the houses under the guidance of curators Julie Biddlecombe-Brown (Raby Castle), Eleanor Brooke Peate (Castle Howard) and George Roberts (Mottisfont Abbey).

CASTLE HOWARD Emily Main (University of Leeds) and Talia Perry (Bard Graduate Center) researched the commission by the 5th Earl of Carlisle from John Linnell 1729-1796) at Castle Howard. Using the house accounts as their source, the aim of this project was to produce an illustrated account of the commission, to investigate other pieces at Castle Howard attributed to Linnell and create a visual representation of the networks of craftsmen working at the house.

RABY CASTLE Kelsey Weeks (University of Buckingham) paired with Maura Tangum (Bard Graduate Center) to research a musical secretaire made by Thomas Weeks and George Simson. The aim of this project was to explore this remarkable piece in the round: from exquisite cabinetry to the clock mechanism and silver fittings marked with the crest of the Earls of Darlington.

MOTTISFONT ABBEY James Kiernan (University of Buckingham) and Katrina Reynolds (Winterthur Program in American Material Culture) used drawings, inventories, and sale records to research the furnishing of the Whistler room which was created in 1938 and 1939 by Rex Whistler for Maud Russell and her husband Gilbert.

The three blogs can be found at bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/blog. On 23 February, we held a highly successful online workshop, chaired by Adriana Turpin which many members attended. The recording can be found on the members' site.

Edinburgh Mapping

The maps will be on our new website as research blogs. The students will be presenting their research in person in Edinburgh on 7 July as part of a Graduate Student Conference in Economic and Social History.

From our Editors: Recent discovery about the Trotter and Dowbiggin Families

An interesting personal connection has been uncovered between two members of the Trotter and Dowbiggin families known for their upholstery and furnishing businesses and supply to the Royal Family: a marriage in 1840 between Charles Trotter (1816-1889) and Elizabeth Halsal Dowbiggin (1819-d. after 1871).

Charles was the 4th son of William Trotter (1772-1833) and St Clair Stuart Knox (a descendant of John Knox). He continued his father's business supplying furnishings to the Royal Family at Balmoral, 1851-52.ⁱ Charles was working as a cabinet maker



One of a pair of mahogany elbow chairs by William Trotter, 1796 (RCIN 26512). Royal Collection Trust © His Majesty King Charles III, 2022.

and upholsterer at 9 Princes Street, Edinburgh, employing 100 people and living at 21 Regent Terrace, South Leith.ⁱⁱ Elizabeth was a daughter of Thomas Dowbiggin (1788-1854), the esteemed upholsterer of Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, London, who in his final years was associated with Holland & Sons.

Charles Trotter retired from business at the age of thirty-six and by 1852 the business of Potts, Cairnie and Ray was situated at his business address in Princes Street.ⁱⁱⁱ Thereafter he and his wife Elizabeth lived at Woodhill, Blairgowrie. Their son, Charles Graham Trotter, entered the army in 1867 and was mentioned in the will of his maternal uncle, Capt. Edward Thomas Dowbiggin, of which his father was an executor.^{iv} Charles senior's obituary stated that 'when a very young man he succeeded to the large and lucrative business of his father...[and since retirement] had led the life of a 'useful though quiet and retired country gentleman'.^v Survived by his second wife, Miss Johnstone, a niece of the late

Lord Chancellor Campbell, he left over £45,000 to the Roman Catholic Church of Scotland.^{vi} Members of the Trotter and Dowbiggin families are known in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in London, Liverpool, and Edinburgh. It would be wonderful if any members of the Society know of connections which might have led to the introduction of Charles and Elizabeth prior to 1840, perhaps through the Royal commissions of their fathers.

LAURIE LINDEY AND CLARISSA WARD



Queen Victoria's State Throne Chair for the Throne Room at Buckingham Palace by Dowbiggin & Co., 1837 (RCIN 2608). Royal Collection Trust © His Majesty King Charles III, 2022.

- 1 TNA, LC9.
- 2 1850 Edinburgh Post Office Directory, 1850; 1851 UK Census.
- 3 1852 Edinburgh Post Office Directory.
- 4 LMA, 1872, Principal Probate Registry. *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration*.
- 5 *The Edinburgh Dispatch*, 30 July 1889.
- 6 *Elgin Courant*, 9 December 1890.

New Discoveries and Research

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

Tabernacle in the Shape of a Polygonal Temple

A baroque tabernacle from the workshop of a pupil of the famous Venetian sculptor and carver Andrea Brustolon in the new permanent gallery of the UPM (Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague), (Fig. 1).¹

Preparations of permanent galleries in large museums are usually a good opportunity to search in the depositories and present, in addition to a number of *chef-d'oeuvres* from their collections, some hitherto overlooked exhibits whose quality can be confirmed or newly revealed only by a thorough restoration research.

One of the sections of the new permanent exhibition of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague is devoted to a collection of luxury arts and crafts of the early European modern period, with reference to the world of royal *Kunstkammern* of this epoch, with a modest allusion to the mythical *Kunstkammern* of Emperor Rudolf II in the tradition of art collecting in the Czech lands. This collection is complemented by a set of



Fig. 1: Tabernacle, 1745, by Frà Francesco da Belluno, Inv. No. 79 415. Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.

unique Mannerist and Baroque display cabinets (this is how the museum's curatorial project researching this type of furniture in Czech collections could have been evaluated to some extent). The idea was to place a significant object in the centre of the hall, which would link the profane and sacred dimensions of the universe in its form and ideological context, thus evoking the phenomenon of Mannerist central cabinets.



Fig. 2: Christ as the Man of Sorrows supported by an angel, detail of the relief on the tabernacle door.

These wonderful display cabinets have been often inspired by the morphology of a sacred central cupola, or an altar *retable*, with a set of drawers – like a pantheistic ‘ostensorium’ for storing natural objects and art treasures. In a syncretic way they combine the concept of the contemporary natural philosophy *Deus in natura* with Christological motifs such as the *Redemptio mundi*, as well as with Neoplatonic ideas about the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm.²

In the final selection of exhibits, the choice fell on a 160 cm high wooden tabernacle in the form of a temple – a

small temple centrepiece with a cupola on an octagonal plan, with Roman Corinthian columns. This remarkable Baroque tabernacle was made in the 1740s in a joinery and carving workshop of the Capuchin monastery in Belluno in the Veneto region. The virtually unknown work has escaped attention due to its poor condition, when its complex restoration was delayed by its somewhat uncertain attribution. The tabernacle was reborn in the museum’s restoration studio when it was decided to add this unusual piece to the selected collection of furniture of the modern period.

The tabernacle has a body of soft wood and is veneered with poplar heartwood with carved elements in pear wood. On its door there is a relief featuring the *Vir Dolorum* – *The Man of Sorrows* (Fig. 2). The assumption that the tabernacle was made in northern Italy and that its brilliant carvings were the work of a highly trained sculptor-carver was confirmed by the discovery of extensive authentic inscriptions inside the carcass, revealed when it was dismantled during restoration (Fig 3).



Fig. 3: Inscription inside the tabernacle.

This text, written in brown ink, details the authorship of the work – it was created in 1745 by Frà Francesco da Belluno (Carlo Dolabella, called Francesco Dalla Dia, 1711–1788), a Capuchin cabinetmaker and carver who was a pupil of Andrea Brustolon, an important sculptor and carver of the Venetian Baroque (Fig. 3). The tabernacle was completed, perhaps due to a commission change, in 1748 by Giuseppe Banna, a cabinetmaker from Belluno identified in the inscription as the maker of the cupola, together with his assistant Gerolamo Conseroti and the turner Giacomo Conseroti. The inscription also commemorates the representatives of the Capuchin community of Belluno and the highest authorities, Pope Benedict XIV and Empress Maria Teresa (*Regina d'Ungheria e Boemia Maria Teresa*). Frà Francesco da Belluno is particularly famous for a similar tabernacle he created for the San Rocco church of his home monastery in Belluno, and later moved to the church of Santo Stefano.³

The tabernacle was made in the northern tip of Veneto, in the region of Cadore with the administrative centre of Belluno, which is today the capital of the province. Monasteries in Belluno specialised in the production of this type of altar. The monks of these monasteries are in some sources called *frati marangoni* – brother carpenters.

Tabernacolo dell'altare – a tabernacle intended for the storage of liturgical vessels with the Eucharist, placed above the altar stone, was, with its compact architectural design, essentially an altar item in itself, replacing the classic altar

retable. Its design, in the form of a small temple (*tempietto*), a miniature of a cathedral cupola, drew inspiration from a much older tradition going beyond the Venetian region. One can certainly recall, for example, Vasari's tabernacle in Santa Croce in Florence (c. 1566) in the form of an octagonal centrepiece, or the famous *Tabernacolo – altare*, a circular temple with a cupola on a high tambour, created between 1673 and 1674 to a design by Gian Lorenzo Bernini for the Cappella del Santissimo Sacramento in St. Peter's in Rome (Basilica di San Pietro, Città del Vaticano).

J. FRONEK

Curator of Furniture and Woodwork,
Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague
All images courtesy of the Museum of
Decorative Arts, Prague

¹ Tabernacle in the form of a polygonal temple by Frà Francesco da Belluno (Francesco Dalla Dia 1711-1788), Belluno, Veneto, workshop of the Capuchin monastery. Poplar heartwood veneer, pear wood carved relief sections, coniferous wood carcass, and other woods. Acquired through confiscation in 1948 from the Prague residence of businessman Heinrich Schicht. Inv. No. 79 415.

² On the influence of sacred architecture and the occurrence of sacred motifs in the Mannerist central cabinet concept, see, e.g., Dieter Alfter, *Die Geschichte des Augsburger Kabinettsschranks*, Augsburg, 1986; Michael Bohr, *Die Entwicklung der Kabinettsschränke in Florenz. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXVIII Kunstgeschichte*, Bd. 182, Frankfurt am M., 1993.

³ *Cronache bellunesi inedite* (ed. Bartolomeo Can. & Dott. Carlo Miari), Belluno 1865, p. 84. The citizens of Belluno even named a street after their native Capuchin carver.

Two imaginary accounts and a symbolic chest

For students of calligraphy *The Universal Penman*, engraved and published by George Bickham in London in fifty-two parts from 1733 to 1741, is an essential resource incorporating the work of no fewer than twenty-five contemporary writing-masters, including Bickham himself. However, its second half, commencing in 1738 and presenting 'Various Forms of Business Relating to Merchandize, and Trade', contains matter of some interest to the furniture historian. A sample credit note (p.124) mentions 'Red-Wood' purchased as sticks from the 'United East India Company', but this is likely to be wood for dyeing. Relevant, if

tangential, is 'A Carpenter's Bill' (p.126), which mentions 'Oaken Timber ... Fir Timber ... Oaken Plank ... Norway Deals ... Wainscot' and 'Double Quarter' (this refers to upright framing timbers, four inches square, see Richard Neve, *Builder's Dictionary*, London, 1726, p.229). And a specimen bill of entry (p.158), of 1739, for 'the Bonaventure, Theophilus Lemmington from Jamaica' includes, alongside sugar, pimento (allspice or 'Jamaican pepper') and 'Spanish cocoa', '11 Mahogany Plank'.

But Bickham hits the furniture bull's-eye on page 118, entitled 'Book Debts' and signed 'Joseph Champion Script.', which presents the following two model entries, which, although evidently fictive, seem very realistic:

The Rt. Honourable the Lord Spire Dr.

1738	To Thomas Noise Upholder	
April 5.	A Rich Crimson Damask Bed laced Compleat	£75.15. -
6.	A Set of Window Curtains, & Vallens Ditto	16.11. 8
May 7.	Chairs 10, with 2 Armd Do. Walnut Tree fram'd	34.12. 6
9.	A fine Carpet, Counterpane, and an Otterdown Quilt	12.10. -
June 6.	A Crimson Velvet Easy Chair, & 2 Stools ditto	13. 7. 6
	13. A Wrought Bed dimitty and Furniture Compleat	<u>28.14. 4</u>
		<u>£181.15. -</u>

Her Grace the Dutchess of Ogdinia Dr

1738	To Samuel Acres Cabinetmaker	
Octr. 3.	A Chimney Glass, and a pair of Sconces	£ 5.18. -
4.	A Pair of Peer Glasses 72 Inches in Guilt frames	80. - . 9
10.	A Pair of Indian Cabinets ... at. £43.10 each, is	87. - . -
12.	A Fine Indian four leav'd Screen, & a Fire Screen	17.10. -
Nov. 18.	A Book Case wth. Glass doors, & Corner Cupboard do.	26. - . -
21.	A Walnut tree Table, & a Set of dressing boxes Japannd	<u>3. 4. -</u>
		<u>£164.12.10</u>



Fig. 1: George Bickham (after Jean Bérain) 'A Foreign Chest' from *The Universal Penman*, 1739.

Joseph Champion described himself on the titlepage of his *The Penman's Employment* (London, 1765) as 'W. M. [writing master] and Accountant' and his first published work, *Practical Arithmetick* (London, 1733) was devoted to casting accounts. If he was responsible for the text above, as well as its calligraphy, he would doubtless have wished to demonstrate that he was au fait with values and merchandise, including the distinction between an upholder's wares and those of a cabinetmaker.

Champion was also responsible for the calligraphy of a later page (p.159) of 1739, whose title and theme is 'Merchants of great Benefit to the Publick' (Fig. 1). At its head, under the caption 'A Foreign Chest

full of Riches' Bickham has engraved a direct copy of a design by Jean Bérain for a commode, originally engraved by Marguerin Daigremont, embellishing it with four floral swags. This was published as a plate in the great collection of Bérain's designs issued after his death in 1711 by his son-in-law, Jacques Thuret, clockmaker to Louis XIV, but its original issue may have been a decade or two earlier. Bérain's influence has been detected in the celebrated gilt gesso Bateman chest, in the Victoria & Albert Museum, attributed to James Moore and dated to 1720, but by 1739 his was an outdated mode. Already in 1737 Bickham had in his *Musical Entertainer* demonstrated his modernity by copying an extreme rococo design of a dragon-protowed ship from a suite of cartouches published by Jacques de Lajoue in Paris in 1734 and in 1738 he adapted this engraving further to head a plate (p.119) in *The Universal Penman* entitled 'Merchandize' (Fig. 2). Nonetheless, while Bickham's use of the Bérain design may have been opportunistic, its powerful presence suggests that his influence may not have been extinct, and that a Bérainesque flavour may even lurk behind some of the gutsier models of, say, Chippendale and Langlois.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS



Fig. 2: George Bickham (after Jacques de Lajoue) 'The Dragon; or the None Such Galley' from *The Universal Penman*, 1738.

A Lost Mantelpiece from Barnstaple; where is it now?

Amidst the sales of historic carved timber work from Devon in the early 1900s was a fireplace which originated from 10 Cross Street in Barnstaple in Southwest England. This large overmantel had a crest dated 1617 and the initials of its owners, Pentecost and Elizabeth Dodderidge (Fig. 1). It was long assumed that Barnstaple Guildhall had this fireplace, but recent research establishes that it is a copy (Fig. 2). The three-storey property, a merchant's house, was demolished in 1901 and the owner sold original panelling, along with the fireplace copy, to a local individual sometime in the previous decade. In 1949 all the woodwork was purchased by Barnstaple Town Council and since then has been the pride of the town. At the time of the purchase, it was openly acknowledged that the overmantel was a copy, but subsequent generations forgot its actual history. A century ago, one writer even noted that the owner had 'spared no expense in having one as near as possible made with a splendid result... so near the original that unless one was told it would



Fig.1: The original mantelpiece at 10 Cross Street, Barnstaple.

be impossible to detect it'. It seems likely that the original had found an overseas buyer. The copy is 6 ft 8 in. in width and the carving is rich and detailed: there are four main female figures who hold a pelican, mirror, musical instrument and an undetermined object. The woodwork has been stained and varnished but the original was known to have been painted. A comparison between photographs of the two overmantels shows slight differences.¹ Is the original woodwork now somewhere in North America with the owner unaware that its home town would very much like to learn of its history in the last 130 years?

TODD GRAY

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Fig.2: The mantelpiece now in Barnstaple Guildhall.



¹ Todd Gray, *Barnstaple, 1640-1670* (Exeter, 2023), pp. 82-3.

Fig.3: A detail of the carving of the mantelpiece now in Barnstaple Guildhall.

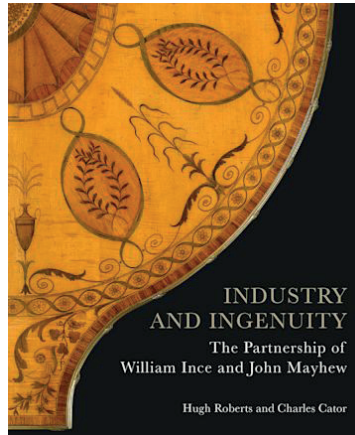
Book Reviews

HUGH ROBERTS and CHARLES CATOR,
*Industry and Ingenuity: The Partnership of
William Ince and John Mayhew* (London:
Philip Wilson Publishers, 2022). 448 pages,
533 col. illus. ISBN 978 1 78130 109 8. £75.

This book, so long awaited, is no disappointment. It has been a prodigious undertaking and has brought into clear light the full extent of the creativity of this leading firm. All furniture historians must be grateful to the authors for their persistence as well as their scholarship.

The format follows the earlier monographs on Thomas Chippendale and the Linnells, which appeared in 1978 and 1980. It is clear and eminently useable, starting with a history of the firm that underlines the complexity and variety of its business. This section gives us the origins of the success of the young partnership, examining the early connections of the partners with different tradesmen involved in the furnishing business, from their apprentice masters, the tapestry maker Paul Saunders and upholsterer and cabinet maker George Smith Bradshaw, to James Whittle and Samuel Norman, with whom Mayhew worked briefly in 1758. This section gives an account also of their business practices, the range of their clients and their relationship with architects, as well as the development of their recognizable style that won them such widespread approval.

From the second section, which deals with the commissions, it is clear that the success of the firm took off precipitously after the 1762 publication of *The Universal*



System of Household Furniture. This manifesto, like Chippendale's *Director*, with which it was in acknowledged competition, was the work of a young partnership and must have served to bring their name to public awareness, even though their designs soon departed from the rococo style shown in the engravings. Only five commissions had been started in the three years between the beginning of the partnership and this important publication, but twenty followed in the five years between 1762 and 1767. Several of these proved the start of long-standing relationships with clients or client families, of thirty years each with the Earl of Coventry and the Duke of Bedford. Clearly these young men, only just in their thirties in 1767, had skill not just in cabinet-making and upholstery but in the care and cultivation of their clients. They positioned themselves carefully in the market and it is noticeable how titled clients dominate in the list of commissions. Despite the strongly rococo flavour of the engravings in *The Universal System*,

the success of the firm was established with a brave adoption of the emerging neo-classical taste, the designs often with strong French influence.

The second section, a detailed study of the firm's known commissions, is a deeply satisfying narrative development of the list of clients, many of which did not appear in the *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* in 1986. The extent of information on individual commissions varies inevitably and though some may yearn for full transcriptions of the surviving bills, it is no mean accomplishment to turn invoice and inventory entries into descriptions that allow one to visualise interiors that have mostly disappeared. Details of colouring and of the smaller items provided as well as the grandest pieces contributes to a lively sense of the tailored personal service that the partners gave to their clients, often here characterised by pithy comments from contemporary writers such as Walpole or Gibbon. The partners must have early worked out the importance of keeping their clients happy.

In the section on putative commissions, we are given a very clear sense of the forensic work that has gone into this book, with complex links of friendship and family brought into play as evidence for the authors' suggestions, together with an unrivalled knowledge of pieces which have come to market in the last century and which meet their demanding judgement on design and detail to be put forward as candidates for possible supply by the firm. The bar is set high here, and the authors are exact in recording any hesitations or caveats.

Both these long and detailed textual

sections are supported by the large number of colour illustrations, of the highest quality. Looking back at the earlier works on Chippendale and Linnell, one can only be thankful for the technical developments of photography and printing in the last forty years.

This might seem the last word on Ince and Mayhew. We welcome it as authoritative, but the very quality of the text and the illustrations will, I am sure, prompt ongoing thoughts about the firm and its position in the cabinet-making world of London in the later eighteenth century - not least the whole question of design exchanges between London and Paris.

The book is as intellectually weighty as it is physically weighty. It is no mean feat to write, fund and produce such a fine volume and we are all in debt to the authors for it.

SARAH MEDLAM

ALVAR GONZÁLES-PALACIOS, *Il Mobile a Roma dal Rinascimento al Barocco* (Ugo Bozzi Editore, Rome, 2022). 506 pp., 379 illus. ISBN 8870030679 / 9788870030679. €285.

When the first monographic study of Roman furniture, *Il mobile romano* by Goffredo Lizzani, was published in 1970, Alvar González-Palacios contributed an important introduction. In it, he presented an overview of the field by characterizing the successive periods, and by identifying central issues such as patronage, the foremost designers and their surviving drawings and prints, the principal furniture makers whose names are known largely through written sources, and the difficulty in linking archival references



to existing pieces of furniture. After just over half a century, in which the author has enriched our knowledge of this field more than anyone else, through books and articles, exhibitions and their catalogues, and the assessment of many works of art appearing on the art market, he returns to the subject in this monumental book. With its splendid illustrations and copious text, it bears witness to an enormous expansion of available material, both as regards items of furniture and designs that have come to light and been aptly positioned, and archival material that has been discovered and sometimes even published. But it does not purport to be a definite assessment, let alone a smooth synthesis: the author implicitly concedes that such an approach to this vast subject would need to be superficial. Rather, he presents a series of subjects, more or less in chronological order, and treated quite individually, according to the nature of the matter at hand and the available material. Not surprisingly, the issues addressed in 1970 remain central to his enquiries.

Hardly any Roman furniture of the fifteenth century can be identified, and for this period González-Palacios concentrates

on patronage by characterizing the successive popes and their commissions in the field of woodwork. The sixteenth century poses another challenge: the collection of dubious Italian Renaissance furniture at the National Gallery in Washington is taken to illustrate the problem of identifying authentic pieces of Roman furniture from this period. González-Palacios chooses this example as he has long been involved with that collection, having been asked to produce a catalogue of it; by mentioning circumstances such as this, and the persons involved, the book also takes on the nature of a record of his work and of the evolution of his insights and opinions. A series of grandiose carved armorial cassoni, combined with a selection of drawn designs that relate to them, is singled out as most recognizably Roman. But the author stresses that Renaissance Rome was no major centre of furniture making: the majority of woodworkers came from Tuscany, and Florentine fashions were followed at a notable distance. Others came from north of the Alps, and, as almost everywhere else in continental Europe, the Germans, and to a lesser extent the Dutch and Flemish, appear to have dominated cabinet-making in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The comparison between Florence and Rome is central to the study of furniture decorated with hardstones (*pietre dure*) and marbles, one of the author's favoured subjects. The Roman contribution is illustrated through a dazzling sequence of masterpieces, many of which can be pinpointed as to date, maker and patron. The famous Sixtus V cabinet at Stourhead,

the subject of a recent book by Simon Jervis and Dudley Dodd, is convincingly linked to documents that show it to have been made around 1603-1604 by the cabinetmaker of German origin, Joannes Grinuald, to a design by the architect Alberto Martini – revealingly, both are almost equally obscure.

Quintessentially, Roman furniture of the seventeenth century is sculptural in character. Even some fairly unexceptional church furnishings of walnut that are among the rare examples of cabinetmaking to be documented, are primarily distinguished by their carved decoration. The woodworkers involved did not adhere to any strict specialization, and many occur in the accounts in various roles, such as carver, joiner and cabinetmaker: Andrea Battaglini, whose work for cardinal Bernardino Spada (1594-1661) is analyzed in some detail, is just one example among many. Nearly all sculptural decoration was heraldic in nature, which ties in with patronage being predominantly aristocratic – including, of course, princes of the church.

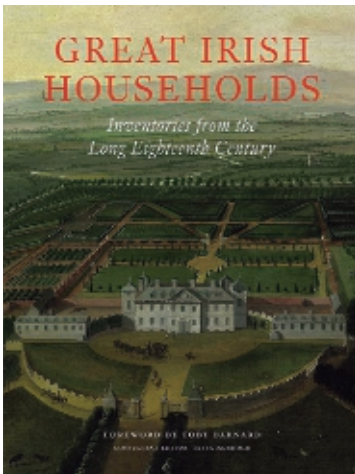
The towering artistic personality of Bernini dominated the evolution of seventeenth-century furniture styles, and the book includes an Italian translation of a pioneering article published by González-Palacios in the *Burlington Magazine* of 1970, in which he argues that Bernini was responsible for what may be the first fully sculptural support for a table, the carved and partly gilded wooden stand for his marble *St Lawrence* of about 1618. But next to returning to some established arguments, the text makes full use of a large range of recent publications by Italian art historians who were themselves not

primarily interested in furniture, but whose work provides much pertinent information not easily accessed by readers from other countries. This new information is occasionally presented without much comment, to the extent of reproducing long excerpts from archival documents in which furniture is mouth-wateringly described: González-Palacios is here gathering together material that he feels to be of significance for future research. This material includes photographs of furniture that the author has kept for decades and that continue to engage and puzzle him. The book is therefore as much a call to a new generation of furniture historians as the harvest of a life-long application. It will be a long time, however, before any future student of the field will have acquired sufficient experience, and indeed courage, to rival the deeply personal pronouncements that enliven much of the text. Who will ever again liken the artistic personality of Innsbruck-born Johann Paul Schor, Bernini's highly-esteemed accomplice whom he put in charge of many an important decorative commission, to that of an Austrian pastry cook with a penchant for *Kitsch*?

REINIER BAARSEN

TESSA MURDOCH (ed.), *Great Irish Households, Inventories from the Long Eighteenth Century* (John Adamson, Cambridge, 2022), 435pp., 18 col., 41 b.&w. illus. ISBN 978-1-898565-17-8. £75.

In the present writer's *British and Irish Inventories* (2010) and its *Addenda* (2012), sixty-five published transcriptions of Irish inventories are listed, slightly over half a percent of the total of 12,758. The



devastating fire which destroyed Ireland's Public Record Office in the Four Courts in Dublin in 1922, an early casualty of the Irish Civil War, has a lot to answer for. A century later the present handsome volume publishes nineteen Irish inventories from 1702 to 1821 (and one taken in England, the Duke of Ormonde's house in St James's Square, London, of about 1710). It also complements Jane Fenlon, *Goods & Chattels* (Kilkenny, 2003) which published sixteen Irish inventories from 1575 to 1753, heavily weighted towards the seventeenth century (and one taken in France, the exiled Marquis of Ormonde's goods listed at Caen in 1653). But the closest model for *Great Irish Households*, a tribute to Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, is *Noble Households* (2006), devoted to English eighteenth-century inventories, a tribute to John Cornforth.

Inventories can be monotonous; mahogany furniture occupies four columns of *Great Irish Households'* comprehensive, dense and detailed index, but this very emphasis serves to confirm the stock observation that this wood was particularly popular in well-to-do Irish houses. Ostensibly Irish

ingredients include some textiles: the presence in the library at the Bishop's House, Elphin, of *The several acts for the improvement of the hempen and flaxen manufactures in this kingdom* (Dublin, 1722) is relevant, and it is nice to note that there is still a copy at the National Trust's Springhill, Co. Londonderry. '1 Turf Basket' at Hillsborough Castle in 1777 is a specifically Irish type, but these are few and far between. Indeed there is little on the surface to distinguish these interiors from their English contemporaries. The range is wide with many, many items of interest: in 1705 there was silver-mounted hearth furniture at Kilkenny Castle (and 'A Wooden Squirt for the Confectioner's Use') whereas Elphin in 1740 was full of oak furniture. In 1829 Lady Leitrim's bed chamber at Killadoon was equipped with '2 Plumeaux for Dusting Furniture' and at nearby Carton in 1818 the Duke of Leinster had '1 Tomahawk' in his study and '1 Rich Tortoise shell Table inlaid with brass' in his large library. Spelling can be entertaining: at Mount Stewart in 1821 a 'Braunes Uran' conceals a bronze urn.

Each location is prefaced by an introductory essay and the whole, apart from the excellent general index already noted, is buttressed by a full glossary, a bibliography, a nominal index and three appendices, one listing the purchasers of objects from Captain Balfour's house in 1742, and three identifying books listed at Kilkenny Castle in 1705, at Elphin in 1740 and at Newbridge in 1821. Relevant illustrations include three portraits by Pompeo Batoni. All in all this is a model production which will be of permanent use to students of Irish houses, and indeed of those throughout Great Britain.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

Reports on FHS Events



Sigmund Freud's study.

Visit to the Freud Museum

TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2023

During this engrossing visit we saw a surprising variety of furniture as well as having the opportunity to learn about Sigmund Freud's life and work. Although he was elderly when he sought sanctuary in Britain in 1938, and lived in the house in Maresfield Gardens, now the Freud Museum, for only one year, Freud managed to bring his furniture and impressive sculpture collection from Vienna and his study is still displayed just as he left it. His belongings are augmented by the contrasting taste of his daughter, the psychoanalyst Anna Freud, who lived on in the house until she died in 1982. She collected both modernist and Austrian vernacular painted furniture. Our guides gave us an excellent in-depth introduction to the collections.

We started by examining the eighteenth century painted and varnished soft wood (*Stollenschrank*) furniture from upper Austria bought by Anna Freud in the 1920s and 1930s. The nine pieces, showing Anna's taste for traditional painted furniture, are well-travelled: transported to London from the country cottage in Hochrotherd outside Vienna shared by Anna and her companion Dorothy Burlingham, via the US and their summer house in Walberswick. They display floral decoration as well as Catholic imagery, perhaps surprising in the collection of an ethnically Jewish family. Some were lined inside with wallpaper which looked original.

In Freud's study and library, almost everything had been brought from their home in Berggasse 19, Vienna, including the large bookcases containing his Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Etruscan artifacts. The sixty-five objects on his desk are arranged as he left them, mostly gods and goddesses who were evidently a source of inspiration for his writing. His almost anthropomorphic desk chair, reminiscent of a Henry Moore sculpture, was designed by the architect Felix Augenfeld as a commission from Freud's older daughter Matilde, to suit his posture when reading with his legs thrown over the arm. The famous analytic divan couch, covered with a richly coloured Persian carpet, contributes to the warm and decorative feel of the room, with layers of pattern formed by the carpets, upholstery and curtains in shades of deep red. Other items of interest were a carved bust of Freud by

Oscar Nemon, a small Middle Eastern side table with an apparently Jewish motif, Windsor chairs, and ceramics by Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. Lucie Rie, the Austrian-born British studio potter, knew Anna Freud personally, being the youngest child of Benjamin Gomperz, a medical doctor who was a consultant to Sigmund Freud.

Upstairs we saw a collection of Biedermeier furniture of about 1815-48. These small utilitarian pieces would have suited the Freuds' flat in Vienna. One chest of drawers has brass fittings and geometric patterning.

Anna Freud's life is illustrated in an upstairs room containing personal items including a nineteenth century Japanese travel chest. The psychoanalytic couch from her study is believed to have been obtained in London and would have been used by adult patients rather than children. Adults made up about 30% of Anna Freud's private practice. For children she would have used lower furniture or the floor. Anna was an expert craftswoman and knitted some of the textiles on display. She took up weaving in 1955 and bought two looms, one for this house and one for her country home in Walberswick. While weaving blankets and clothing she would often ponder work problems and think about her next lecture, believing that people who worked with their mind needed a creative activity to give 'a good balance'. Anna also had an interest in Modernist art and design, acquiring contemporary furniture. The MR10 Cantilever lounge chair by Mies van der Rohe c. 1927, is typical of her generation's taste for futurist utilitarian pieces. The Alvar Aalto birchwood stacking stools may have been used when treating children. Interestingly Anna's brother Ernst had

attended Adolf Loos's private *Bauschule* in Vienna. The writing table was a present from Sigmund Freud to Anna when she was 18, in an attempt to console her for being left out of her sister Sophie's wedding. In December 1932, Anna, now 37 years old, received \$100 to buy another writing desk of her own choice. In 1925 she had also received a chair, with the note: 'Good(s) to sit on for many hours'.

With thanks to Marina Maniadaki – Curator, and Jamie Ruers - Events Manager for our excellent tour.

BEATRICE GODDARD

Study Trip to Cardiff

23-25 SEPTEMBER 2022

Tredegar House

'This is not a house for decorative arts', the House Manager informed the group before embarking on our tour of Tredegar House. Under the National Trust, Tredegar is there for research, education, and to tell a story—and not just about the Morgans, who built the house, accumulated the latterly dispersed collection, and lived there for 500 years. We are grateful to Emily Price who guided us throughout and generously allowed us to see areas which are not normally accessible.

Displaying Tredegar would always be a challenge. The last family member to live in the house was Evan, Viscount Tredegar, probably the most eccentric and colourful of the Morgans. The diarist Chips Channon, who was part of a house party at Tredegar in July 1936, described it as 'magnificent', the rooms as 'overcrowded' and the master's bedroom as resembling 'that of a Firbankian



Small cabinet, Tredegar House.

cardinal.' Evan's sudden death in 1949 effectively brought things to an end. It later became a school, then Newport Borough Council, who built a council estate in what had been the kitchen garden, took over the house and ninety acres in 1974. By then, the house was in poor condition and a programme of restoration began.



Detail of carving, Brown Room, Tredegar House.

The early curators (David Beevers and for twenty years David Freeman) set about borrowing and when possible acquiring contents and displaying Tredegar as a home, with furniture lent by the V&A (since returned). In one of the storage rooms we saw a small cabinet, perhaps a novelty for a child or an adult, in the style of a bureau bookcase of the early to mid 1700's, and a large, ebony, ivory and turtle-shell cabinet, probably seventeenth century Flemish on a nineteenth century stand.

The Brown Room is decorated with carving of the 1680s: scrolling acanthus and putti, panels separated by foliage with animals and heraldic shields. The Gilt Room remains the most spectacular of the state rooms, with pine grained to imitate walnut, lavish gilding, and a baroque gilded overmantel. Upstairs, the cedar closet is the only surviving closet in the house. Cedar, we discussed, relates back to Solomon's Temple, and there were Solomonic columns. Finally, we visited 'below stairs', including the kitchen which has an original table, and a display about the lives of the servants.

DAVID WURTZEL

Castell Coch

Greeting us upon a sunny arrival was a fairy tale Gothic fantasy, pointed towers emerging from its wooded and moated surround. Castell Coch as we see it today is largely the creation of William Burges and his great patron, John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, the third Marquis of Bute (with the important caveat that a great deal of the work was completed after Burges' death in 1881). Bute was working with Burges in developing Cardiff Castle

when in 1872 Burges presented his client a report regarding the medieval ruins of Castell Coch, which sat within Bute's estate, five miles from Cardiff. Burges suggested two options: 'one is to leave them as they are and the other to restore them so as to make a Country residence for your occasional occupation in the Summer.' Bute chose the latter, and so from 1875 began rebuilding the castle.

Designed as a fantasy medieval castle for day trips and picnics, Castell Coch, whilst containing a modern kitchen, water closets, central heating and servants' stairs, is relatively modest. Three towers surmounted with conical roof are arranged around a circular courtyard. They are joined by external timber galleries following French medieval prototypes. Most accommodation, including three bedrooms, a drawing room and the kitchen are set within the towers. The Banqueting Hall is the largest room in the castle, situated between two of the towers.

Internally, rooms are decorated in a full-throated, fantastical style, with virtually every surface painted in a dazzling array of colour, geometry and imagery. One cannot overstate the startling effect this has upon the visitor, who is immediately transported into a world seemingly lifted from the pages of a fairy tale. The Banqueting Hall was the only room completed before Burges' death, after which, John Starling Chapple, who worked at Burges' architectural practice from 1859, completed the design work. As at Cardiff Castle, the skilled craftsmen at the Bute workshops were used to carry out the work. The Banqueting Hall demonstrates Burges' studied Gothic style, while the

other rooms give way to a more contemporary, Aesthetic taste.

Much of the furniture, whilst all indigenous, was designed after Burges's death, but closely modelled on the architect's furniture made for his homes, at Tower House and Buckingham Street. The furniture heavily architectural, including a massive medieval-style trestle table and benches in the Banqueting Hall. Most of the furniture is painted, in contrast with Cardiff Castle, where walnut and teak with marquetry decoration dominates.

In Lady Bute's bedchamber there is a large cabinet, unornamented in form, but stencilled in paint and gilt in the twentieth century. The form appears to be identical to the cabinet from Tower House, although this example is more richly decorated, with Pre-Raphaelite images in the reserves. The bed is based upon an illustration by Viollet-le-Duc of a supposedly fourteenth-century example, albeit with finials made from glass and lacking the tester shown in the drawing. The castellated washstand is reminiscent of the Burges examples at the V&A and the Higgins Art Gallery, again by Chapple.

ADAM TOOLE

St Fagans National Museum of History

Our visit was opened by an excellent introduction by Dr Sionedd Williams, Keeper of Modern History, who skilfully combined a history of this pioneering museum with an overview of the extensive collections. This provided us with a key to our subsequent individual



Cottage interior, St Fagans.

explorations, which led us through farmhouses, a chapel, the famous row of slate-worker's cottages and the grocer's shop from Ogmoor Vale, with exceptional mahogany fittings from the 1890s, by the Bristol shop-fitting firm of Parnall & Sons.

The different areas of the museum display the very active role of the staff as combined recorders and researchers, as well as interpreters of Welsh material culture, reflecting the founding intentions, in particular of Dr Iorwerth Peate, who was much influenced by Scandinavian open-air museums. The crowds of people on the day we visited certainly supported his vision of a 'Museum for Everyone'.

The buildings in the park contain extensive collections of furniture (although a torch is a necessary accessory) Important are the number of dated pieces that offer evidence for and against the tradition of a 'time lag' between new ideas in

metropolitan fashions and their appearance elsewhere in Britain. The new 'Gweithdy' building uses materials and techniques as its matrix for displaying some outstanding pieces, such as the turned ash chair of c. 1600, a cabinet-maker's chest of c. 1850, and 'Brynmawr' furniture made at Blaenau Gwent as a social enterprise originated by Quakers in the difficult years between the two World Wars. Although the first floor of St Fagan's Castle is currently closed, the ground floor offers some major pieces to be seen in a domestic setting, including the enormous 'Jesus College Cupboard', made in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. In the 'Life is...' galleries, displays include the much-discussed bed reputedly made for Sir Rhys ap Thomas, the ally of Henry Tudor, who is said to have killed Richard II.

We had little time to explore this last section and what is clear is that, particularly with the possibility of a visit to stores in the future, a return visit would be just as rewarding as the one we have just enjoyed. It is not surprising St Fagans was awarded the accolade of Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2019.

SARAH MEDLAM

Llandaff Cathedral

'Llandaff has never been a lucky cathedral' explained our guide. The building has suffered major structural damage, acts of God and man, from the first years of the fifteenth century to the early twenty-first century - the latest, a lightning strike in 2007. The current structure blends Norman architecture with nineteenth and twentieth century additions. Originally constructed

in the twelfth century on the site of an earlier church, it suffered damage during the 'English' Civil War and near-demolition during the Great Storm of 1703, when the medieval tower collapsed on the building. John Wood the Elder restored it in classical style, but with only a small budget, only half the building was rebuilt and the West front is now considered one of the most notable medieval works of art in Wales.

In 1840 the increased prosperity of Cardiff funded its continued restoration, by John Pollard Seddon and John Prichard, during which all Wood's work was removed. Seddon commissioned art from Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Thomas Woolner, and stained glass from Morris & Co. Following post-WWII restoration of the Cathedral, Rossetti's triptych for the reredos of the High Altar, *The Seed of David* was moved to the newly-created Illtyd Chapel.



Llandaff Cathedral.

After the Cardiff Blitz in 1941, restoration was entrusted to the modernist George Pace (1915-1975). Wherever possible, Pace restored earlier work, but where new work was necessary, it was to be 20th century. Llandaff is considered one of his finest works, including the reintroduction of a dramatic pulpitum. The great, parabolic arch in hammered concrete soars over the nave, framing the view down to the altar. It is surmounted by a hollow drum on which is mounted the figure of Christ in Majesty, by Epstein, cast in aluminium.

KERRY MONAGHAN SMITH

Cardiff Castle

The evening prior to our visit to Cardiff Castle, the group was privileged to be given a lecture by Matthew Williams, Curator Emeritus at Cardiff Castle. Matthew's wit, humour and expert knowledge of the castle provided us with the perfect primer for the day ahead, giving insight into the 3rd Marquess of Bute and his creative partnerships with William Burges and other designers and craftsmen.

While it is the Victorian alterations that make Cardiff Castle one of the most remarkable examples of Gothic Revival architecture in Britain, the history of the site began as a fourth-century Roman fort. It was later transformed into a Norman castle, and eventually a medieval mansion by the Earls of Pembroke. The granddaughter of the 7th Earl of Pembroke married the 1st Marquess of Bute in 1766, and the Butes spent the next thirty years undertaking major renovations, employing Henry Holland and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. It is only with the 3rd Marquess of



Detail of marquetry, sideboard in Winter Smoking Room, Cardiff Castle.

Bute – that the castle developed into the vision of the romantic medieval past that we are familiar with today. Lord Bute first met William Burges at the age of eighteen. Both men were scholarly writers and avid travellers who shared a passion for the Middle Ages. Bute called Burges ‘the soul-inspiring one’, and together they combined a huge variety of eclectic influences to create fantastical, highly personal buildings, interiors and objects.

Despite being personally well-prepared and intimately familiar with the stylistic preferences and patronage of the 3rd Marquess of Bute, nothing could have prepared me for the fantasy of Welsh Victorian Camelot that awaited us. As we entered the Winter Smoking Room with our warm and welcoming guide Maureen, we were instantly struck by the intimate scale of the room, which gives the rich decoration a sense of immediacy. The eye moves endlessly between the chimney piece carved by Thomas Nicholls, to the vaulted ceiling with the signs of the zodiac, to sweet

species of birds painted on gilded circular backgrounds across the walls, before taking in the stained-glass windows illustrating the Norse gods by William Gualbert Saunders.



Carved stone figure representing one of the four winds, Summer Smoking Room, Cardiff Castle.

Being a comprehensive architect, Burges designed fittings, furniture and textiles for his spaces in addition to the architecture. In the Winter Smoking Room, there is a walnut sideboard that Burges designed in 1872, inset with witty allegorical marquetry panels of alcoholic drinks - wine depicted by an angry grape vine, mead by a three-legged beehive with cloven hooves and mother-of-pearl bees. Burges writes that 'a keen sense of the comic is generally found in most superior men' - and this sense of humour is a consistent feature in the detailing throughout the castle rooms, and across the work of Burges and the 3rd Marquess at Cardiff Castle, Castell Coch, and at Mount Stuart.

Much of the furniture and woodwork in the castle was made in the 'Bute Workshops', where a talented team of carvers, joiners and inlay specialists worked to supply fittings for Lord Bute's many restoration projects between 1870 - 1920. The attention to detail was so great that the workshop would occasionally produce full-size models of furniture before the final piece being made.

Not all of the rooms contain original pieces of furniture. In 1947 amidst post-war austerity, the 5th Marquess of Bute gave Cardiff Castle to the city as a gift. Much of the furniture was offered to the Council for purchase, however they countered with an offer that totalled only 1/10 of the valuation price. Offended by the indifference of the Council, Lord Bute instead held a final sale of castle furniture in June 1849.

During Matthew Williams's time as Curator, he went to great efforts to repatriate furniture back to Cardiff. It was a joy to see the c. 1874 gothic revival table in

ebony, walnut and ivory inlay in the Arab Room, and the ebonised fire screen in the Summer Smoking Room, returned to their rightful places. Loans of furniture from other institutions - such as the altarpiece in Lord Bute's Sitting Room - added a further layer of authenticity to the wonderful interiors.

JESSICA INSLEY

National Museum of Wales

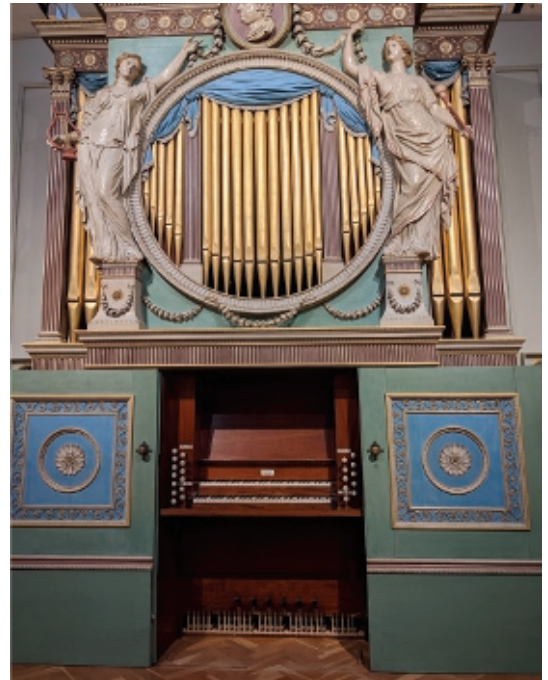
Our last visit was to the National Museum of Wales, where we enjoyed a rich visit under the generous tutelage of Andrew Renton, Head of Design Collections, looking at the Adam furniture made for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn. This included an ensemble of serving table and flanking urns made for 20 St James's Square, London, and the enormous and impressive chamber organ made for the same house. The dining room ensemble, in blue and white, showed the delicacy of carving that is also evident in the drawing room candlestands now in the V&A (inv. no. W.36&A-1936). Shown with the table and urns is Adam's mahogany wine cooler of sarcophagus form, carved by Sefferin Nelson for the same client.

In contrast the chamber organ, with case carved by Robert Ansell, must have dominated even Sir Watkin's large music room. Andrew explained that the figures of Euterpe and Terpsichore were originally in plaster but were replaced in wood within a few years. The organ itself is by Snetzler, 1775. It was altered by Samuel Green in 1783 and in 1864 the organ was re-built by Gray & Davison when it was moved to Wynnstay. It was at this time that the current paint scheme was applied,

largely following the original. The organ remained in the house during its 'school years' until 1994 when it was acquired by the National Museum, where it is now used for regular recitals.

We also looked at a sofa by Charles Arbuckle, the design possibly by William Chambers, made for the Great Drawing Room of the Berkeley Square house of the Clive family in 1774, as part of a suite of nineteen pieces. It was acquired by the National Museum in 1958 and the sofa was written up by Oliver Fairclough in volume XXVI of *Furniture History* (2000). We are grateful to Andrew for so willingly giving up his Sunday afternoon to give us this grand finale to our Cardiff weekend. Our thanks to Kate Hay for organising and leading this study trip.

SARAH MEDLAM



Chamber organ, National Museum of Wales.



The FHS group at Cardiff Castle.

Calling All Scholars and Museum Professionals

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

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

Tom Ingram Memorial Fund

Grants are awarded from the Ingram Fund towards travel and associated expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture. These grants are offered, whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society, where travel could

not be undertaken without funding from the Society; and only where the study or research is likely to further the Society's objectives. Applications towards the cost of the Society's own foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars and museum professionals. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Ingram Fund in any resulting publications and will be required to make a short report on completion of the trip.

Oliver Ford Trust

The Oliver Ford Trust supports research by emerging scholars and junior museum professionals in the fields of furniture history, the decorative arts and interior design mainly by sponsoring places on the Society's study weekends or foreign tours. Recent awards have included grants to enable participation in the Society's Symposium at The Frick Collection in New York; a weekend visit to the TEFAF (The European Fine Art Foundation) fair; and international conferences.

Applications from individuals who are not members of the Society will be considered.

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

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Registered UK Charity No. 251683.

Copy Deadline

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next Newsletter is Thursday 8 June 2023. Copy should be sent by email to Ian.Stephens@royal.uk.

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COVER PICTURE: Detail, *William Wollaston and his Family in a Grand Interior*, William Hogarth, 1730. Courtesy of Leicester Museum and Art Galleries.