

The Furniture History Society

Newsletter 200

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Lenygon & Morant: The American Connection

Today Lenygon & Morant is not a name well known outside the antiques trade and scholars of English furniture. Not long after their foundation in c. 1904, however, Lenygon & Morant became known as a leading 'high-class' firm of antique dealers, furniture makers, upholsterers and house of decorators, specialising in period-style interior décor and reproductions of historic furniture.¹ At the peak of his career, the firm's namesake and co-founder, Francis Henry Lenygon (1877–1943) (Fig. 1), was a 'celebrated decorator', although he is best remembered as the name under which Margaret Jourdain (1876–1951) published *Furniture in England from 1660–1760* (1914) and *Decoration in England from 1660 to 1700* (1914), discussed by Heather Burnet in the *Furniture History Society Newsletter* (November 2012).² It became just a vague recollection that 'there was an F. H. Lenygon who directed the American side of the decorating firm ...' and a commonly held belief that once Francis Lenygon started working in the USA, from 1910, he left the London firm entirely in the hands of former coachbuilder and ordnance manufacturer, Herbert Hall Mulliner (1861–1924), and salesman and decorator, Ralph Freeman-Smith (1877–1940).³

A study of the extant papers of the American side of the firm, housed in the



Fig. 1 Francis Henry Lenygon, c. 1920s/1930s, Francis Henry Lenygon and Jeannette Becker Lenygon Architectural Records and Papers, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University

Drawings and Archives Department of the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library at Columbia University, however, reveal closer ties between Lenygon & Morant Inc., and its parent company in London, Lenygon & Morant Ltd, than had been previously realised. It presents a picture of a transatlantic company that profited from international ties between members of the upper echelons of society during the

interwar years. Letters and audits indicate that Francis Lenygon retained an interest in the British firm which bore his name and that the two branches of Lenygon & Morant continued to share stock, craftsmen, profit and loss, and even clients and commissions, well into the 1930s. As a result, the largest body of furniture, with a solid provenance to the London workshops, today survives in the USA.

Born in the cathedral city of Lincoln, son of an iron moulder, Lenygon was apprenticed to an antique dealer and cabinetmaker in that city, before completing his education in London, at the City and Guilds Institute and the Regent Street Polytechnic. Once settled in the capital, Lenygon worked for the Art Workshops Ltd. and then C. J. Charles, the antiques business of Charles Duveen (1871–1940), before founding his own firm with his brother on Seaton Street, off the Hampstead Road in North London. The brothers soon acquired a number of investors in the form of Mulliner, Freeman-Smith, with whom Lenygon had worked at C. J. Charles, and financier Courtauld Thomson (later Baron Courtauld Courtauld-Thomson, 1865–1954). In 1908, Lenygon & Morant opened showrooms at 31 Old Burlington Street, displaying a series of period rooms furnished with a collection of antiques and reproductions, from where the firm would, for the next forty years, cater to a class of clientele that included members of the British royal family, the aristocracy and some of the wealthiest businessmen and industrial elites of the era. Besides the workshop and drafting room on Old

Burlington Street, from about 1910, Lenygon & Morant had additional workshops on Newman Street, just off Oxford Street, with a permanent contingent of painters, carpenters and upholsterers on hand. Lenygon later stated that, by 1914, he employed twenty-two interior designers and decorators, all of whom had ‘high school education’ and ‘English Polytechnic training’ and were ‘well-trained draftsmen’ with a good ‘technical vocabulary.’⁴

There are only a handful of examples of furniture and furnishings that can be firmly tied to Lenygon & Morant, although there are many ‘attributed’ pieces on the market. Furniture made in the London workshops was rarely marked and is therefore hard to identify with any certainty today. One exception is a George II style chair-back settee, sold by Sotheby’s in 2001, based upon an armchair in Lenygon’s 1909 publication (Fig. 2).⁵ Commissioned by William



Fig. 2 Lenygon & Co., chair-back settee, c. 1910, mahogany and parcel-gilt, *The Leverhulme Collection, Thornton Manor*, volume 1, Sotheby’s, London, 26–28 June 2001, lot 305. By kind permission of Sotheby’s

Hesketh Lever, 1st Viscount Leverhulme (1851–1925), in 1910, it was stamped 'Made by Lenygon & Company Ltd. Reproduction.'⁶ It was invoiced as, 'a mahogany carved and gilt settee, reproduction of old model as agreed,' and it has been suggested that the reproduction had been made and stamped at the request of the client.⁷ More recently, two mahogany and parcel-gilt tables in the William Kent manner, originally in the clubroom at the Royal Automobile Club in London, an interior the firm helped to decorate between about 1908 and 1911, were sold at Christie's in 2008. A number of other pieces by the firm survive in the National Trust Collection and private stately homes.⁸

Francis Lenygon first visited New York in 1910, to fulfil a decorating commission for US ambassador Whitelaw Reid (1837–1912). He returned in 1911, and again in 1912, when Lenygon & Morant Inc. was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, with the support of Mulliner, Freeman-Smith, and Thomson. Lenygon took control of the New York branch and directed its operations in the USA, until his death in 1943.⁹ Up to at least 1919, however, Lenygon returned frequently to the UK and continued to advise on British commissions. Mulliner and Lenygon maintained a constant stream of correspondence that reveal Mulliner to be, first and foremost, a businessman, and Lenygon and Freeman-Smith, the creative partners. These letters also testify to the logistical and financial ties between the two branches.

When Lenygon & Co. purchased the upholstery firm Morant & Co., in c. 1912, it

continued to operate the latter as an independent concern at its New Bond Street premises, until 1915, when the two companies were amalgamated in the UK (the New York branch already having taken the Morant name in 1912). At that time, the Morant accountant, J. B. Killens, was sent to New York to work for Lenygon & Morant Inc. Over the years, Killens was just one of many office workers, interior decorators, draftsmen and craftsmen that worked and/or trained at the London firm before joining the company's American business. The result was a consistency in quality of workmanship, style of design and services provided, by both sides of the firm.

The accounts of the different branches of Lenygon & Morant were likewise closely tied in these early years. The American branch was largely stocked from antiques supplied by the London firm. After the Federal government passed the Payne-Aldrich tariff act in 1909, the importation of antiquities over 100 years old were permitted to enter the USA duty free. Lenygon & Morant took full advantage of the change in the law and the company's papers at Avery Library abound with photographs of stock sent from London to New York. The Lenygon Collection of Architectural Fragments, now at Colonial Williamsburg, is formed from the remnants of historic interiors which the London firm sent for sale in America or as examples to be copied and replicated by the New York workshops (Fig. 3).¹⁰

For the first few years that Lenygon & Morant operated on the transatlantic market the New York branch was very



Fig. 3 Group photograph of items from the Lenygon Collection of Architectural Fragments. Photograph by Dani Jaworski, Assistant Curator of Architectural Collections, 2015, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

much dependant on its parent company. From the time of its incorporation in 1912, until 1920, the books for Lenygon & Morant Inc. were in debt to the London firm. The Great War, however, forced a reversal of fortunes, so that it was the American side of the firm that ensured Lenygon & Morant survived the political and economic after effects of the war. In 1918 and 1919, the London side of the business suffered severely as a result of the poor post-war British economy and, by 1920, Lenygon & Morant Ltd was in debt to the New York branch for approximately \$112,000.¹¹ It was decided that a set of cartoons after Raphael by Sir James Thornhill (1675/6–1734), at that time in the hands of the London firm, would be transferred to the New York books, and the seven framed canvases were shipped to the USA, in lieu of this debt. Today the paintings are still in the USA, in the collection of Colombia University's Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery.

While Mulliner was alive the two sides of Lenygon & Morant maintained an

active transatlantic business relationship. After 1924, there was a hiatus in the trade of antiques between the two branches, while, for reasons still unexplained, Lenygon & Morant Inc. purchased a large amount of its stock from the Bath-based dealer, Charles Angell Ltd, for a number of years. The relationship between the New York and London branches of Lenygon & Morant was restored in the 1930s under the directorship of Ralph Freeman-Smith. Along with Lenygon, he saw to it that projects and clients continued to be shared. Besides panelling, furniture and plasterwork, Lenygon & Morant Ltd provided a large amount of specially commissioned textiles based on historic models for the New York branch during this period. The firm owned its own blocks (some from Morant) and outsourced the weaving and printing of fabrics to textile houses such as G. F. Baker. 'As a firm we have found it necessary to weave our own fabrics and print our own linens and chintzes, and to have them all made in colours unobtainable except through similar



Fig. 4 Lenygon & Morant, Governor's chair, c. 1933–34, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation XR1978-85. Author's photograph, 2011. By kind permission of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

special efforts,' Lenygon stated in 1938, at a time when a large contingency of such material had just been supplied to Colonial Williamsburg.¹² In fact, it is at Colonial Williamsburg that the largest body of identifiable furniture, made in the London workshops, survives.

Throughout much of the 1930s, Lenygon & Morant worked for the

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation on the furnishing of historic and newly erected buildings. For instance, Lenygon & Morant made the Governor's chair for the new Capitol building. It is a turned high-back chair with elaborately carved crest and foot rails, based on the Bishop's armchair in St Paul's Cathedral (Fig. 4). The crown of William and Mary was

substituted for the Bishop's arms and mitre, as a more appropriate historical reference for the Virginia heritage site. Although the overall commission was overseen and coordinated by Francis Lenygon, the chair, like many of the furnishings for this project, was produced in the London workshop and shipped to America. As such objects were destined for a museum, they were allowed to enter the country duty free, despite being of modern origin.

Over the course of several years, the firm supplied some forty or more pieces of seat furniture for the Capitol building alone. The Colonial Williamsburg chairs represent an important body of work that can be firmly attributed to the Lenygon & Morant London workshops despite the lack of maker's marks. The collaboration between Lenygon & Morant Ltd and Lenygon & Morant Inc. in the execution of this and similar projects in the USA, is testament to the close collaboration between the two branches right into the late 1930s and Francis Lenygon's continued position of importance in the firm's history.

ELEANOR SARAH DEW

This article is based on the Ph.D. thesis of Eleanor Sarah Dew (joint winner of the CINO Award for Outstanding Dissertation), made possible by the support of the Bard Graduate Center, New York, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, London, and Furniture History Society's Oliver Ford Trust and Tom Ingram Memorial Fund.

1 As Lenygon & Morant was described during the redecoration of 10 Downing Street in 1938. James Roe to the Secretary to the Treasury, 3 February 1938, Office of Works and Successors: Official Residences, 10 Downing Street Works 1931-38, WORK 12/225, National Archive, Kew.

2 Mildred Acheson, Lady Gosford, to Colonel Astor, October 1910, Francis Henry Lenygon and Jeannette Becker Lenygon Architectural Records and Papers, c. 1910-1967 Lenygon Collection, 2000.008, box 2, folder 4, Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

3 Hector Bolitho (ed.), *A Batsford Century: The Record of a Hundred Years of Publishing and Bookselling, 1843-1943* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1943), note p. 53.

4 It is unclear if Lenygon was referring here to the New York business, London company, or both. Committee on Education of the American Institute of Decorators, *Proceedings of the Round Table Discussions on Training for the Interior Architect and Decorator* (New York: American Institute of Decorators, 1939), 19.

5 Francis Lenygon, *The Decoration and Furniture of English Mansions During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1909), 39.

6 *The Leverhulme Collection, Thornton Manor*, volume 1, Sotheby's, London, 26-28 June 2001, lot 305.

7 Ibid.

8 *Interiors: Style & Spirit*, Christie's, London, 13 May 2008, lots 280, 281.

9 Lenygon & Morant Inc. was officially dissolved on December 3, 1951.

10 Lenygon & Morant Inc. had premises at 16 East 60th Street and, from 1929, 1082 Madison Avenue, New York.

11 Lenygon Collection, 2000.008, box 1, folder 3, Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

12 'A. I. D. Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Governors,' 10 October 1938, Lenygon Collection, 2000.008, box 2, folder 2, Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University.

Future Society Events

Bookings

For places on visits please apply to the Events Secretary, Anne-Marie Bannister, Bricket House, 90 Mount Pleasant Lane, Bricket Wood, St Albans, Herts, AL2 3XD (Tel: 07775 907390) enclosing a separate cheque and separate stamped addressed A5 envelope for each event using the enclosed booking form. Where possible, joining instructions will be despatched by e-mail so please remember to provide your email address you have one. There is no need to send a 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 and email address where you can be reached. Please note that a closing date for applications for all 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 for applications.

Please use the blue form for booking events, or email 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 also note that in the rare instances where members have promised to pay on the day of the visit, they will still be charged the full amount of the day if cancelling less than seven days before the visit or if they simply fail to attend. This is necessary as the Society has normally paid in advance for a certain number of members to take part in e.g. tour/lunch. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours and terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case

Research Seminar on European Furniture for Sir Nicholas Goodison in Celebration of 25 Years as President of the Society

THE WALLACE COLLECTION, HERTFORD
HOUSE, MANCHESTER SQUARE,
LONDON W1

FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2015,
10.00 AM – 5.00 PM

Following the success of its two previous FHS Research Seminars, held in London in 2012 and in New York in 2014, the Society is delighted to announce that a third Research Seminar will take place, once again hosted by the Wallace Collection, on 20 November 2015. This year, the Seminar will be held in honour of Sir Nicholas Goodison, in celebration of his 25 years as President of the Society.

Ten speakers – all at an early stage of their career – will present short papers on their current research, with papers encompassing a broad chronological and geographical representation of European furniture history.

- 10.00–10.20** Registration and coffee
10.20–10.30 Welcome
10.30–10.55 Ada de Wit (Radboud University, Nijmegen / The Wallace Collection)
Anglo-Dutch relationships in seventeenth-century wood carving
10.55–11.20 Olivia Fryman (Historic Royal Palaces)
A leather chest of drawers from the household of Queen Anne
11.20–11.45 Esther van der Hoorn (Rijksmuseum)
Patterns of production, invention and taste in a late seventeenth-century design for a chaise à porteurs in the Rijksmuseum

- 11.45–12.10** Jean-Baptiste Corne (École du Louvre)
Georges Jacob and the Rousseau Brothers: Enlightenment of a brief cooperation
12.10–12.35 Annemarie Klootwijk (Duivenvoorde Castle, The Netherlands)
A set of rococo trumeaus at Duivenvoorde Castle
12.35–13.00 Discussion
13.00–14.00 Lunch (not included in ticket price)
14.00–14.25 Julie Godin (Université de Nantes)
Regency furniture at Chatsworth: from classical revival to chinoiserie
14.25–14.50 Christiane Ernek-van der Goes (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)
Johann August Türpe: rebel, entrepreneur and court cabinetmaker
14.50–15.15 Tea
15.15–15.40 Thomas Deshayes (Cultural Property section, Ministry of Defence, Paris)
Léopold Double: a French Lord Hertford?
15.40–16.05 Caroline McCaffrey (Chitra Collection, London)
The influence of French art and design on the furniture of Robert Lorimer
16.05–16.30 Benjamin Zurstrassen (Musée Horta, Brussels)
Henry van de Velde's furniture: between making and thinking
16.30–16.50 Discussion
16.50–17.00 Concluding remarks

Tickets are priced at £15 (£5 for student concessions) and are available from the Grants Secretary, Joanna Norman, email grants@furniturehistorysociety.org or tel: 07790 669240

The FHS Research Seminar is generously supported by the Oliver Ford Trust and the Wallace Collection.

Annual General Meeting and Works in Progress Talks

THE EAST INDIA CLUB, 16 ST JAMES'S
SQUARE, LONDON SW1

SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2015,
11.00 AM – 1.00 PM

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30 June 2015 will be held at the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00 am (coffee from 10.30 am).

Three talks will follow the business of the day: David Dewing, Director of the Geffrye Museum will speak about future developments there; Laura Houlston of English Heritage and FHS Council member will speak about the re-structuring of English Heritage; and Leela Meinertas of the Furniture, Textiles

and Fashion Department at the V&A will talk about the Napoleonic Medal Cabinet which was recently acquired by the Museum with financial help from the Society.

Admission to the AGM is free but all members wishing to attend should notify the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance. Tickets for a sandwich lunch with a glass of wine at the price of £15 per head should be booked with the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance.

Study Weekend to Shropshire

FRIDAY 11 – SUNDAY 13 MARCH 2016

The Society is planning an early March study weekend in Shropshire, to be co-led by Gareth Williams, Curator and Head of Learning to the Weston Park Foundation



Peter Tillemans, view of Combermere Abbey, 1730

and Kate Dyson. We will be staying in the extremely well appointed guest houses of Combermere Abbey. The grade I scheduled Abbey was built in 1130 as a Cistercian Monastery. In later life it became a private home. Its current owner is in the midst of a major restoration programme involving the Georgian wing.

Visits are planned to a fine group of country houses in the area including Weston Park.

Please register your interest via the Events Secretary. Details will be sent out as soon as the programme has been finalised.

Fragment of a wall-hanging, Hertfordshire, c. 1600, W. 41–1952. © Victoria and Albert Museum

Annual Symposium

THE WALLACE COLLECTION,
MANCHESTER SQUARE, LONDON W1

SATURDAY 16 APRIL 2016

The Symposium in 2016 is scheduled to take place slightly later than usual. The subject will be *Colour in Interiors*. It will include papers on painted furniture and panelling in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on the importance of dye technology to the Gobelins Tapestry workshops, and on colour in Riesener marquetry, as well as discussions of colour in particular interiors. The programme is still in development and will be published in full in the February *Newsletter* and on the Society website.



Occasional Visits

Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, London EC2V 6BN

MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2015,
5.00 PM – 7.00 PM

This visit was advertised in the August 2015 edition of the *Newsletter*. At the time of going to press places are still available. Please contact the Events Secretary for details.

COST: £25 LIMIT: 20 MEMBERS

Charles and Ray Eames

The World of Charles and Ray Eames, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS

THURSDAY 14 JANUARY 2016,
9.00 AM – 10.00 AM (WITH FREE TIME TO LOOK AROUND AFTERWARDS)

Charles and Ray Eames are among the most important designers of the twentieth century. Their enduring influence is widely acknowledged and continues to be celebrated worldwide. *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* is a major new exhibition



surveying the careers of Charles (1907–1978) and Ray (1912–1988) Eames and the extraordinary work of the Eames Office: a ‘laboratory’, active for over four decades, where the Eameses and their collaborators and staff produced an array of pioneering and influential work – from architecture, furniture, graphic and product design, to painting, drawing, film, sculpture, photography, multi-media installation and exhibitions, as well as new models for education. Members will enjoy a private visit before opening time co-led by Christopher Wilk, Keeper of the Furniture, Textiles & Fashion department at the V&A and Lotte Johnson, Assistant Curator at the Barbican Art Gallery.

COST: £20 LIMIT: 20 MEMBERS

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER 2015

Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, London W14 0QX

THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2016,
2.00 PM FOR 2.15 PM START – 4.15 PM

This year our visit to the V&A Study Collections at Blythe House will concentrate on items with historic upholstery. We are delighted that Frances Collard will be joining V&A curators to lead this visit.

COST: £25 LIMIT: 20 MEMBERS

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 29 JANUARY 2016

Europe 1600–1815 Galleries, Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL

WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 2016, 8.45 AM –
10.00 AM

The V&A’s Europe 1600–1815 galleries will open to the public in December 2015, following the transformation of seven galleries for the redisplay of the Museum’s unrivalled collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European art and design. Europe 1600–1815 will be home to some of the most magnificent works held by the V&A, many of which were made in Europe by its finest artists and craftsmen for the period’s most discerning leaders of taste such as Louis XIV, Marie Antoinette, Catherine the Great and Napoleon. The displays will demonstrate how France succeeded Italy as the undisputed leader of fashionable art and design in Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century and will include some of the V&A’s most exceptional examples of continental furniture of the period. Members will enjoy a private visit before opening time, led by Lesley Miller, lead curator for the Europe 1600–1815 Galleries, and Leela Meinertas, senior curator in the Furniture, Textiles & Fashion department.

COST: £25 LIMIT: 20 MEMBERS

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
FRIDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2016

Overseas Event



Palacio de Cibeles, Madrid

Madrid

JUNE 2016 (EXACT DATES TO BE CONFIRMED)

The last FHS trip to Madrid, organised about ten years ago, offered members a broad overview of the major furniture collections in and around the city and an opportunity to meet with Spanish furniture scholars. The focus of a new study tour to this city, being planned for early summer of 2016, will be eighteenth-century furniture, interiors and collecting. Participants will be able to see royal palaces and museum collections in the company of the curators in charge and access some private collections. A number of guided visits, tailored specifically to the

topic of this overseas event, are being planned, as well as an informal gathering with short presentations by scholars whose research ties in with the subject.

Work on this trip is in progress. Members may register their interest with the Events Secretary and information will be sent out when available.

The FHS Grants Committee now meet 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. Please contact Jo Norman at grants@furniturehistorysociety.org for further information and grant application forms.

Furniture History 1978–2012: Sale of Selected Back Numbers

In order to reduce storage costs, the Society is offering for sale some back volumes of *Furniture History* at a specially reduced price of £9.25 (inc. p&p) to UK addresses, £9.85 (inc. p&p) to European addresses and £15.35 (inc. p&p) to non-European addresses.

This offer applies until 31 December 2015 for the following editions of *Furniture History*:

XIV (1978), XV (1979), XVII (1981),
XVIII (1982), XXV (1989) – XLII (2006),
XLIV (2008) – XLVIII (2012)

A full list of articles published in these editions can be found on the website: www.furniturehistorysociety.org/journals

Please send your remittance, made payable to the Furniture History Society, together with the numbers (or dates) of the volumes you wish to purchase to the new Publications Officer, Jill Bace, 21 Keats Grove, Hampstead, London NW3 2RS. Alternatively you can e-mail your order to her at publications@furniturehistorysociety.org and she will send you an invoice. Orders will be despatched by Oblong (the Society's printers) upon receipt of payment.

Tefaf Fair

For the past few years, the Grants Committee of the FHS has organised a study tour to the TEFAF art fair in Maastricht with the sponsorship of the Oliver Ford Trust. We invite applications to attend the visit from UK-based curators of furniture collections at an early stage of their career. Applications should be sent to Jo Norman, Grants Secretary at grants@furniturehistorysociety.org by 30 November 2015. Applications should include a CV, one reference letter and a letter explaining how they see the trip as benefiting them.

Elizabeth Jamieson

The Society is indebted to Elizabeth Jamieson for her twelve years of committed and efficient voluntary work and service on the Activities Committee, as Council member, and finally as Hon. Newsletter Editor since 2011; this being the final publication for which she is Editor.

Other Notices

Please note that the following are not organised by the Furniture History Society. Information/booking instructions can be found under individual items.

Exhibition: Made in the Americas: The New World Discovers Asia

CONTINUING UNTIL 15 FEBRUARY 2016, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BOSTON, USA

Made in the Americas is the first large-scale, pan-American exhibition to examine the profound influence of Asia on the arts of the colonial Americas. Featuring nearly 100 of the most extraordinary objects produced in the colonies, this exhibition explores the rich, complex story of how craftsmen throughout the hemisphere adapted Asian styles in a range of materials – from furniture to silverwork, textiles, ceramics, and painting. Exquisite objects from Mexico City, Lima, Quito, Quebec City, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, dating from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, include blue-and-white talavera ceramics copied from imported Chinese porcelains, elaborately decorated furniture inspired by imported Japanese lacquer, and luxuriously woven textiles made to replicate fine silks and cottons imported from China and India.



C. Charles shop at 27–29 New Bond Street, c. 1903

Conference: Antique Dealers – The British Antiques Trade in the Twentieth Century, A Cultural Geography

14–15 APRIL 2016, TEMPLE NEWSAM HOUSE, LEEDS

Advance notice that the end of project conference will take place at Temple Newsam House, Leeds, on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 April 2016. More information and booking details will soon be on the project website at www.antiquedealers.leeds.ac.uk

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

PHILIP A. SYKAS, *The Beauty of Experiment Shadow Tissues at Turnbull & Stockdale* (Isle of Man: Turnbull & Stockdale, 2013) 96 pp., 88 col. illus, 37 b.&w. illus. ISBN 978-1-905476-87-9, £15.95 UK, £19.95 overseas, available through Manchester Metropolitan University on line shop buyonline.mmu.ac.uk

This scholarly account of a particularly rich period of textile design and production describes the development of a warp printed cotton fabric with a shadow effect, designed for upholstery and soft furnishings. The firm of Turnbull & Stockdale, founded in Bury in 1882 by William Turnbull and William Stockdale, specialised in machine printed cottons and rapidly expanded to include a range of printed furnishing fabrics including velveteens (cotton velvets) and cretonnes (cotton or cotton and linen). Turnbull's interest in developing machine printed textiles as an artistic alternative to handcraft methods and the resulting fabrics were praised by Lewis F. Day in 1887 although he criticised the dependence on Japanese inspired designs. He subsequently joined the firm as Art

Director. Further expansion included the appointment of a London agent with a West End showroom in 1892, the establishment of a New York office in 1903 and a display at the St Louis Exhibition in 1904. Demand for novelty in furnishing fabrics appears to have influenced the introduction of shadow effect tissues which were available in several London and Manchester department stores by 1914, including Shoolbreds, Liberty & Co., and Kendal Milne & Co.

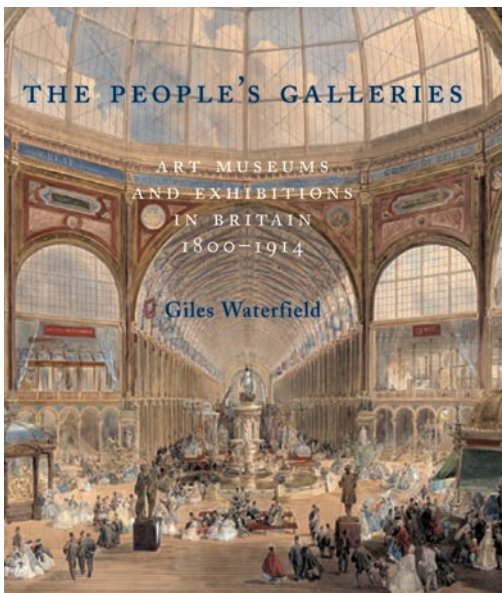
The rapid rise of house building after the First World War stimulated the market for soft furnishings. Even a modest house of five rooms required twenty-nine yards of fabric for window curtains, as illustrated by *The Cabinet Maker* in 1924, and matching loose covers, door curtains, cushions and floor hassocks all offered greater opportunities for textile manufacturers. Popular patterns, using strong colours, included Jacobean designs, inspired by seventeenth-century crewelwork, and naturalistic florals, both suitable for production as shadow tissues which could also be given signs of artificial ageing, appropriate for use in fashionable interiors furnished with antiques or reproduction pieces. The introduction of geometric backgrounds for floral patterns and reversible patterns, suitable for unlined curtains, were further innovations of shadow tissue manufacture before their decline in popularity in the late 1930s.

Philip Sykas has assembled a fascinating range of detailed and technical information about the production and popularity of this particular type of furnishing fabric, much of which is based on his research in the archives of Turnbull and Stockdale. The illustrations in this

attractive publication include textile samples, trade advertisements, contemporary photographs of interiors, details of prices and sales, and a table identifying the contributions of Day and other principal designers.

FRANCES COLLARD

Offer to FHS Members



GILES WATERFIELD, *The People's Galleries: Art Museums and Exhibitions in Britain 1800-1914* (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art: Yale University Press, 2015).

The People's Galleries traces the rise of art museums in Britain through World War I, focusing on the phenomenon of municipal galleries. This richly illustrated book argues that these regional museums represented a new type of institution: an art gallery for a working-class audience,

appropriate for the rapidly expanding cities and shaped by liberal ideals. As their broad appeal weakened with the new century, they adapted and became more conventional. Using a wide range of sources, the book studies the patrons and the publics, the collecting policies, the temporary exhibitions, and the architecture of these institutions, as well as the complex range of reasons for their foundation.

Special offer to FHS Members: £35.00 (RRP £45.00) including free postage and packing within the UK. Members who wish to take up this offer should contact the Sales Department of Yale University Press London on 020 7079 4900.

Reports on the Society's Events

A Note on Reports

The Society is extremely grateful to all those members who write reports on our activities. We know that members who cannot attend particular events greatly value these accounts and it is clear that both the information passed on during visits and the accounts of them are of great benefit to owners, who frequently say that they have learned from our visit. The reports provide an archive of the Society's activities which is an extremely useful record. Members are asked to provide reports as soon as possible after events, to help our visit leaders and *Newsletter* Editors, who need time to prepare these for publication.

IRELAND: CROSSROADS OF ART AND DESIGN 1690 TO 1840

The exhibition was the first ever exhibition of Irish decorative arts in the USA and celebrated the full range of craftsmanship in Ireland with furniture, paintings, drawings, ceramics, musical instruments, silver, glass and bookbinding. Its set of ten room displays opened with Irish elk's antlers measuring 10 feet across, and nearby was an Irish portable harp by John Egan *circa* 1820. Amongst the silver was a cup and cover with an orb finial which recorded the career of John Bowes, Lord Chancellor of Ireland during the reign of George II, an outstanding centrepiece supplied by the London goldsmith George Wickes for Joseph Leeson, Earl of Milltown. Other spectacular silver made in Dublin and Cork and imported from London demonstrated sophisticated dining habits and celebrated spectacular sporting wins. A cistern by Thomas Sutton from the Earls of Kildare stood out in the context of Irish mahogany furniture. There was a remarkable brass and silvered hunt table attributed to Samuel Mason, Dublin, 1785. The idiosyncratic nature of the brass furniture mounts on the desk and bookcase acquired in the 1920s for Governor's House, Colonial Williamsburg, supported the suggestion that these were made in Dublin but more research is needed. One of the secretary

desks from the Art Institute's collection, inlaid with marquetry, was signed by the cabinet-maker John Kirkhoffer, the son of a refugee from the Palatinate who had settled in Dublin. A series of Irish mahogany tables for tea and gaming or for console or sideboard use were dominated by one with a central lion mask with tongue sticking out, a reminder that eccentric carved details have long been associated with Irish furniture.

A display of eighteen mezzotint life-size portrait heads (1759–61) by Thomas Frye, hung together in their original pressed paper frames, was a striking tribute to this talented Irish artist. A group of artists' portraits of their own family members included a delightful watercolour by Adam Buck, with his wife and children, 1813, with the artist's right hand supported on a decorated sabre-legged chair complete with buttoned cushion. A section on the Library included examples of the quality achieved by bookbinders who supplied volumes exquisitely tooled with unique feather patterns.

The musical instruments included the inlaid case of the neat piano *circa* 1780 attributed to William Moore of Dublin that demonstrated that this new upright form of the familiar keyboard instrument was invented in Ireland. A pochette (dancing master's kit) by Thomas Perry and a sophisticated cither viol made by Perry in partnership with Wilkinson with its flame-shaped sound holes reminded us that Thomas Perry was connected to the celebrated violin maker Claude Pire who worked in Paris. The strong tradition of carved-gilt looking glass frames was evidenced by a spectacular, partly gilt

frame attributed to John Houghton, surrounding a woven portrait of George II.

Christopher Monkhouse (with the assistance of Leslie Fitzpatrick) led the tour through two generous mornings at the Art Institute. In addition, Ghenete Zelleke, FHS member and Samuel and M. Patricia Grober Curator of European Decorative Arts, walked us through the European decorative arts galleries and showed us the stores.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

The Richard Driehaus Museum is located in the former Nickerson house, one of the rare survivors of Chicago's gilded age. Although it ceased to be a home in 1919, original furniture by Herter Brothers and George Schastey (usually in the Renaissance Revival style) survives along with panelling of ebonised cherrywood and the stained glass dome and skylights. There was a special exhibition of art nouveau jewellery.

The Glessner House, the last work by H. H. Richardson is a tribute to the Glessners' admiration for the English Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic movements. Much of the furniture was designed by Charles Coolidge and Francis Bacon (who worked for A. H. Davenport) and the Chicagoan Isaac Scott who had a long relationship with the family. We were taken round by the Director, William Tyre, who also showed the group the nearby Second Presbyterian Church, one of the most intact religious arts and crafts interiors in the country and largely unchanged since 1901. It is noted for its stained glass windows by Tiffany, William Fir-Kline and Burne-Jones. The architect was Howard Van Doren Shaw, a pioneer of the American Craftsman movement.

In Oak Park we saw the home and studio of Frank Lloyd Wright, where he lived and worked until 1909. Both provide keys to his later style as well: fitted furniture with window seats 'dissolving the walls', the famous dining table and high-backed chairs creating a 'room within a room', and the use of compression and expansion, as a

low-ceilinged corridor led to the high-ceilinged playroom. There was more built-in furniture in the studio, where the library had a series of rotating octagons spiralling upwards towards the light. We also saw his other local masterpiece the Unity Temple. Afterwards we had lunch at the nearby John Toomey Gallery before an upcoming auction, which included a number of Stickley pieces.

As a break from the past, we were hosted at the design studio of Suzanne Lovell, Inc. who, with her team, design interiors all over the United States. They reflect her 'couture' design approach involving architecture, the decorative arts and art history, combining both 'memory-rich' pieces and contemporary painting and crafts.

We are immensely grateful to all our hosts for generously allowing us to visit their collections and for sharing their knowledge with the group.

DAVID WURTZEL (ORGANISER),
DAVID AND TESSA MURDOCH,
SIMON SWYNFEN AND FIONNUALA
JERVIS, MARY ELLEN JOHNSON,
ROBERT WILSON, SOODIE BEASLEY,
ROBIN MILLER, STEPHEN O'CONNELL,
SARA ORME, AND DAVID WALKER

Renishaw Hall, Tuesday 16 June 2015

Eighteen members arrived at Renishaw Hall on a late spring day to be greeted by Kate Dyson who introduced the group to Christine Beevers, the archivist at Renishaw and our guide for the day. A general tour of the house in the morning

was followed after lunch by a more detailed inspection of the furniture. Little research has been undertaken regarding the furniture and Christine Beevers emphasised that Alexandra Hayward, the owner of Renishaw, would welcome any advice members could give over the provenance and history of the furniture. It was not long into the tour before we were all swayed by our tour guide's infectious enthusiasm for the furniture and contents of Renishaw.

Renishaw, originally a 1627 manor house, was built on the back of the iron and coal trade in nearby Sheffield and extensively improved by Sir Sitwell Sitwell with the addition of large Regency rooms built either side of the 1627 house between the years 1793–1808. On entering the hall, a collection of watercolours and pencil drawings from the archive were shown to us, revealing the transformation of the house and gardens from 1776 to the 1830s.

Renishaw has had a chequered history regarding its furniture, the nadir being the sale of most of the contents at the auctions between 1849 and 1870. From 1880, Sir George Sitwell refurbished the house, satisfying his penchant for German and Italian Baroque furniture by purchasing eighteen such cabinets all to be found on the ground floor.

The entrance hall consisted of an eclectic mix of furniture and paintings, from a 1667 oak cradle to a series of John Piper paintings which are part of a collection of about 70, started by Sir Osbert Sitwell. Of particular note was an ebony cabinet most likely to have been made in the town of Eger (now Cheb, CZ)

between 1640 and 1660. Inside were nine unpainted drawer panels with an interesting message on the central drawer panel, translated from the German by a member as: 'You can be the painter of your own art'. The feature that identified this as an Eger cabinet was the three-dimensional marquetry, carved in low-relief, on the internal drawers.

Moving through to what was the Great Parlour in 1625, we were confronted by an impressive library and family sitting room, containing the oldest piece of furniture in the house. This was a fine example of a seventeenth-century country oak bobbin chair. The Regency drawing room, some 60 feet in length, was designed in 1803 mainly for the tapestries purchased on the Grand Tour. Much attention was given to several major pieces of furniture. The most important of these was Thomas Chippendale's inlaid and ornamented commode, not dissimilar in design to his commode at Harewood House, Yorkshire. Several FHS members had made the journey specifically to see this piece at close quarters, especially as its provenance is now known. The cabinet was made for Melbourne House, Piccadilly (now the Albany), which was one of William Chambers's most important commissions. For full details see Christopher Gilbert, *Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale* (1978), pp. 260–64, and especially Joe Friedman, 'New Light on the Renishaw Commode', *Furniture History*, vol. 33 (1997), pp. 143–49. There was a debate as to why and when a glass plate had been inserted into the central panel on top of the commode. The top rectangular glass panel is not original, but

FHS members glimpsed a smaller oval glass plate underneath it, which could possibly be the original one. Another commode attributed to Chippendale was also examined. Although the ormolu was comparable to the work of Matthew Boulton of Birmingham, there is evidence that the Chippendale workshops manufactured ormolu for their own furniture. It is closely related to documented furniture at Harewood. Overall it was considered that this commode was most likely to have been made by Chippendale. Some FHS members remarked that the ormolu on both cabinets was closely related. Sir Osbert Sitwell bought the commode with a provenance stating it was believed to have been from Fonthill House, Wiltshire. There is a very similar commode belonging to Manchester City Art Galleries. This is housed at Heaton Hall, Manchester. Much interest was shown over a table, probably by Linnell, but the design was too generic for certainty. Notably it had a vertical 'hidden drawer', which retained its secrets as the key could not be found. The Augsburg ebony cabinet was an impressive example of the Baroque furniture purchased by Sir George Sitwell.

The Regency ballroom was the last major addition by Sir Sitwell Sitwell in 1808. Being again 60 feet in length, it is well proportioned in particular to display a pair of Italian commodes made in 1793 and two Flemish cabinets of about 1680. One of the commodes is dated 1793. Dominating the end wall, is a magnificent gilt frame in the style of William Kent encompassing a painting by Salvator

Rosa, originally from Raynham Hall, Norfolk. There was some debate as to whether the frame was wholly Kentian in period, Kentian with some additions, or Regency. No conclusions were made.

In the ante dining room, the four walnut chairs around the English table c. 1710, were considered to be provincial Italian but with English attributes. These were probably inspired by English furniture and intended to look English. The dining room is again well proportioned. The Regency mahogany dining table is surrounded by fourteen chairs, eight of which are circa 1770s, the remainder being excellent copies by G. Bird, c. 1960, and later by Julian Stanley of High Wycombe. Interest was shown over the console table used as a side board in the classical apse. There were divergent views as to the provenance. This piece of furniture, along with some others in the house, was repurchased later in the nineteenth century, following the major auction sale in 1849. There was a debate about the original nature of the piece, which certainly fitted well into the curved wall. Members speculated that it could have been made up, originating possibly before 1849. Its size prompted the suggestion that it might have been constructed for a large public interior before being modified for its present home.

After the tour of the house, members were invited to walk the impressive and sunny gardens, initially designed by Sir George Sitwell in the 50 years from 1886, before completing a very interesting and memorable day with tea in the old stables.

JEREMY ACKROYD



Firle Place, Monday 7 September 2015

Furniture History Society members were welcomed to Firle Place by Deborah Gage, Curator of the Collections of Firle, and cousin of the 8th Viscount Gage, who with his son Henry also hosted the tour. We started in the Great Hall, where Deborah Gage outlined the history of Firle Place and the Gage Family. Firle is indeed a magnificent repository of collections from a number of different sources, including Fawsley Hall (Northants), Panshanger (Hertfordshire) and Taplow Court (Buckinghamshire), as well as the Gages' town house in Arlington Street. Many of the star items, including the Van Dyck (1634), were inherited in 1952 by Imogen, wife of the 6th Viscount, who was a Grenfell and whose ancestors included the Cowpers and the Melbournes. In addition, Firle is associated with General Thomas Gage, who played a crucial role in the earlier stages of the American War of Independence and whose dispatch box for the year 1768 is displayed in the great hall, next to his full-length portrait. Items in the Great Hall also included a pair of late seventeenth-century Beauvais tapestries with *Commedia dell'Arte* figures, a pair of roughly contemporary French (or Swedish?) *torchères*, and two fine English chests of about 1740, probably from Panshanger or Taplow.

The Ground Floor Drawing Room included a set of fox side tables, similar to those at Stourhead, and thought to have come from Arlington Street but not as yet traceable in the archives, as well as a very

fine set of 'Chinese Chippendale' chairs, with interesting construction details in the upper corners of the back. The Little Hall was furnished with green Gothick stools, originally from the dairy, supplied by Gillow in the 1790s, and a side table of about 1740, most likely originally from Arlington Street, which had recently been stripped of its white paint, as part of a student conservation project, to reveal original 18th century matt and burnished gilding.

It is on the upper floor that the 'blockbusters' are found. The Upper Drawing Room includes a pair of pier tables of the 1790s by Gillow, copying the latest fashions in France, and a very important pair of marquetry cabinets by Chippendale from Melbourne House in London. The main veneer is now thought to be holly rather than satinwood, and the upper section of the cabinets may have originally served to display porcelain, if not books. The Long Gallery includes two important Zoffany portraits of the 3rd Earl Cowper and his wife, and the Melbourne Service (1771), one of the best documented purchases from the Sèvres manufactory by a foreign customer. The furniture includes a bureau mazarin that generated much speculation as to whether or not it was North Italian (Ladatte?) and a nineteenth-century bureau plat with Boulle work dating from about 1700 applied to it. There were also some very interesting eighteenth-century gilt chairs from Florence, where the 3rd Earl Cowper spent some thirty years, but perhaps the most important pieces were a pair of signed and dated commodes by Pierre Daneau (1733). The signature is hidden

behind the drawers and is an extremely rare example of signed and dated French furniture before the introduction of the compulsory stamp in 1743. After lunch, the visit concluded with a lively discussion about the origins of a seventeenth-century ebony cabinet in the Victorian Ante Room, with attributed origins ranging from Antwerp to Spain.

So ended an enjoyable and successful trip. The society is most grateful to

Deborah Gage for her unparalleled knowledge of the collections and to both Lord Gage and his son Henry, for their kindness and hospitality.

JAMES YORKE

The Oliver Ford Trust and the Tom Ingram Memorial Fund

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 tours and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Fund in any resulting publication and must report back to the FHS Grants Committee on completion of the travel or project. All enquiries about grant applications should be addressed to Jo Norman at grants@furniturehistorysociety.org.

In line with one of its roles – the promotion of interior design – the Oliver Ford Trust most generously sponsors students or junior museum professionals to develop their knowledge of furniture and interiors. This year, as well as supporting the Research Seminar at the Wallace Collection, the Oliver Ford Trust is sponsoring the study trip for curators to attend TEFAF at Maastricht as described above on page 14.

The FHS Grants Committee now meet 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. Application forms can be downloaded from the FHS website. Applications for the next meeting of the Grants Committee should be sent to the Grants Secretary, with a current Curriculum Vitae, by 5 December 2015.

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This issue edited by Elizabeth Jamieson

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 December**. Copy should be sent, preferably by email, to Matthew Winterbottom,

matthew.winterbottom@ashmus.ox.ac.uk, or posted to Matthew Winterbottom, Department of Western Art, The Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PH.

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COVER PICTURE Medal cabinet, Paris, c. 1810, made in the workshops of Martin-Gillaume Biennais (1764–1843), probably to a design by Charles Percier (1764–1838). Burr amboyna or thuya, inlaid with silver. © Victoria and Albert Museum W8-2014. The Furniture History Society joined a large number of donors to secure this piece for the new European Galleries at the V&A.