Furniture and Works of Art

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Exhibiting

The International Fine Art and Antique Dealers Show, New York
16–22 October 2009

TEAFAF, Maastricht
12–21 March 2010

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ISBN 0–9560432–1–4

MEMBER OF THE BRITISH ANTIQUE DEALERS’ ASSOCIATION
On the occasion of the firm’s 125th anniversary we recall with great affection the history of Blairman in its various locations. In 1884 my great-grandfather Harris Blairmann founded the ‘Blairmann’ business in Llandudno, North Wales. After the First World War (having dropped the final ‘n’ and changed the name to Blairman) my grandfather Philip began to be acknowledged as a leading dealer in old English furniture: the photograph (below) was taken outside his office in Grafton Street, in about 1950. The influence of my late parents, George and Wendy Levy (Wendy was the eldest daughter of Philip) remains an inspiration to us here in Mount Street.

As this catalogue goes to press, we shall accept an offer for our 119 Mount Street shop. We greatly look forward, however, to welcoming visitors by appointment in our private apartment, presently at 117a Mount Street (above the shop). In addition, we shall continue to participate at the International Fine Art and Antique Dealers Show in New York and at The European Fine Art Fair in Maastricht.

Among highlights in this year’s catalogue are the George I looking glass (number 1), the Thomas Hope chair, acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago (number 3), the Lepec nef (number 13) and the Gimson stationery box (number 22). The versatility, variety and vitality of Gillow during the second half of the nineteenth century is demonstrated by the pedestal writing table (number 16), the Godwin-designed table (number 14) and the seventeenth-century-style cabinet, acquired by the Judges’ Lodgings, Lancaster (final page).

Martin P. Levy.
Carved gilt-gesso and deal, with mirror glass
46½ in (118.2 cm) × 27¼ in (69.4 cm) × 2 in (5.1 cm)
English, *circa* 1715

**Provenance:**
Probably Sir William Humphreys (1651–1735); [...] private collection, by *circa* 1940, and thence by descent.

**Literature:**

The armorial crest can be identified as that of Sir William Humphreys (variously spelt), created a baronet in 1714, the year he was Lord Mayor of London. In common with some of the grandest carved gilt-gesso looking glasses and tables dating from the early decades of the eighteenth century, the use of armorials and initials within their decoration allows identification of patronage. Examples include the near-contemporary Stowe tables, now divided between the V&A and a private collection (see Tessa Murdoch, ‘The king’s cabinet-maker: the giltwood furniture of James Moore the Elder’, *The Burlington Magazine*, June 2003, pp. 408–20, fig. 14), and the stands with the cypher of George I (see Ralph Edwards and Margaret Jourdain, *Georgian Cabinet-Makers c. 1700–1800*, revised edition, London, 1955, pls 26 & 27).

The appearance of the frame shows a generic debt to the late seventeenth century, for example the work of continental designers, well-known at the time in England, such as Pierre Le Pautre (1618–82) and Daniel Marot (1661–1752). The use of bevelled mirror-glass borders is also a hangover from a slightly earlier period. What is remarkable in this frame is the survival of a virtually ‘untouched’ gilt-gesso surface, allowing the vigour of the carving to remain clearly expressed. The designer and maker of the present frame, which retains its original glass, remain unidentified, but in due course it may be possible to compare the hand of the carving to other surviving works from the period.

Something of the quirkiness of the design is suggested in an anonymous drawing for a frame, incorporating boldly-drawn acanthus corner ornament (see Peter Ward-Jackson, *English Furniture Designs of the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1958, pl. 12). Two frames that are undoubtedly by the same hand survive. An overmantel at Newhailes, Musselburgh, and a rectangular looking glass, not designed with the bevelled glass borders (advertised by Henry Phillips, June 1987).
Pair of Wall Lights

Gilded base metal (ormolu)
14 in (35.5 cm) overall height
English, mid-eighteenth century

Provenance:
Probably supplied to George, 2nd Earl of Macclesfield (1697–1764) for Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, and thence by descent.

Described by Marcus Binney as the ‘most secret moated castle in England’ (The Times, 17 January 2005), Shirburn Castle has, in recent years, given up many treasures, including its famous Psalter (now in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), its books and its sculpture. The present ormolu wall lights, which retain their original gilding, formed a set of at least ten which were in the library at Shirburn Castle. A further eight were sold at Christie’s, London, 5 June 2008, lots 117–119.

The linear rather than sculptural backplates, as well as the casting and gilding, differentiate the design and manufacture of the Shirburn wall lights from contemporary French production. The outline of the backplates and the loop of the arms can be related to two engravings in a bound catalogue of designs from a variety of unidentified sources, now in the collection of the V&A (94.G.14, accession no. E.297–1933; see Nicholas Goodison, ‘The Victoria and Albert Museum’s Collection of Metal-Work Pattern Books’, Furniture History XI (1975), pp. 1–30, fig. 10).

English Rococo wall lights are far rarer than their French counterparts. Among notable surviving examples, comparable to the Shirburn model, are two pairs at Winterthur, Delaware (see Rupert Gentle and Rachel Feild, revised Belinda Gentle, Domestic Metalwork 1640–1820, Woodbridge, 1994, pl. 9–10).
SIDE CHAIR

After a design published by Thomas Hope (1769–1831)

Mahogany, with inlaid ebony and ebonised details; the upholstery of later date
34\(\frac{1}{2}\) in (87 cm) × 25\(\frac{1}{2}\) in (64 cm) × 28\(\frac{3}{8}\) in (72 cm) at base of feet

English, early nineteenth century

PROVENANCE:
Probably Thomas Hope, Duchess Street; [ ... ]; with Mallett, circa 1970, from whom acquired by [Sir] James Stirling; thence by descent.

LITERATURE:
Thomas Hope, Household Furniture and Interior Decoration, London, 1807, pls V, XXIV (see below) and XXVI (see below).

The design of the present chair conforms in detail with plates in Thomas Hope’s Household Furniture. Pl. 5 shows two chairs of this pattern in the ‘Third Room Containing Greek Vases’; pl. 24, no. 2 shows a frontal view of the chair, and pl. 26, no. 6 shows a side view. This chair, the only one of this model known to survive, was very likely made for Hope, although it may not be one of the chairs from the Vase Room. In the text accompanying the plates, Hope specifically describes them as ‘Mahogany chairs, inlaid in metal and ebony’.

Evidence that this chair may indeed have been at Duchess Street, however, is re-enforced by the model’s presence in the Picture Gallery, published in C.M. Westmacott, British Galleries of Painting and Sculpture, London, 1824 (see David Watkin and Philip Hewat-Jaboor, Thomas Hope Regency Designer, ex’n cat., New Haven & London, 2008, p. 168).

There is a well-known drawing showing the architect James Stirling (1926–92) sitting in the present chair, with its invented pair opposite (see James Stirling: Architectural Design Profile, London, 1982, p. 4, fig. 4). The same chair was drawn by Philip Smithies in situ in Stirling’s home (see Michael Hall, ‘Stirling Wit and Passion’, Country Life, 31 August 2000, pp. 50–53, fig. 2).

Stirling’s own view of Hope chairs was that they were ‘extreme, outrageous, over the top, eccentric, and more gutsy than anything French Empire. There’s absolutely no feeling of restraint or lack of confidence.’ (see Mark Girouard, Big Jim: The Life and Work of James Stirling, London, 1998, p. 198).

The present chair design was revived in the late nineteenth century, in a weakened form, by the London cabinet-maker Edwards & Roberts; an example is in the collection of the V&A, London (W.29–1976).
‘Buhl’ Inkstand
Designed and manufactured by George Bullock
(1782/83–1818)

Brass and mother of pearl marquetry on red-foiled turtleshell ground, supported on ebonised structure, with leather base
16 in (40.7 cm) diameter × 3 in (7.6 cm) high
English (London), circa 1815

Provenance:
[ ... ]; Christie’s, London, 7 June 2007, lot 3; private collection.

This well-known form is documented by three designs in the ‘Tracings by Thomas Wilkinson, from Designs by the late Mr George Bullock 1820’ (City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, M.3.74, p. 123, see below) and p. 241, unbound (for the border) and 242B, unbound (for the flower motif in the circular wells).

The ‘very sumptuous circular ink stand, of the late George Bullock’s Buhl manufacture, with two richly cut glasses’ sold from the effects of the late Queen Charlotte (Christie’s, The Remaining Part of a Valuable Collection of Curiosities, 24–26 May 1819, third day lot 38, bt. Marquess of Queensbury, £10), may have been the same model as the present ink stand. The same applies to the ‘Handsome Buhl Inkstand of Pearl Tortoishell [sic] & Brass’ supplied in 1816 to William Nisbet of Biel for the considerable sum of £28 (Scottish Record Office: GD.205/48/18/3, f. 22.)

Five examples to this pattern are now known to survive. In addition to the present inkstand, three others in première partie are recorded. The first to resurface was with Carlton Hobbs (see Catalogue Number One, 1989, no. 1); the second was published in Martin Levy, ‘Taking Up the Pen’, Country Life, 23 April 1992, pp. 60–62, fig. 3, and the third is now in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. A fourth version (formerly at Bretton Park, Yorkshire), in contre-partie and retaining its original inkwells, is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (see Splendor and Elegance, ex’n cat., Boston, 2009, p. 73, no. 66).

Rectangular ‘buhl’ inkstands by Bullock (see design left) include the ebony and ivory version made for Matthew Robinson Boulton of Tew Park, now in the collection of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (see Clive Wainwright, et al., George Bullock: Cabinet-maker, ex’n cat., London, 1988, no. 24). Other examples with red-, black-, and brown-foiled turtleshell marquetry are also recorded. Bullock charged £12. 12s. for ‘A Buhl Inkstand’ supplied to Napoleon, but this is not known to survive (see Martin Levy, Napoleon in Exile, Leeds, 1998, p. 111).
Writing Table
Possibly from the workshop of George Bullock
(1813–19)

Birch, maple and ebony
31 in (79 cm) × 41 ¼ in (106 cm) × 21 ½ in (60 cm)
English, circa 1815–20

Provenance:
[ ... ]; Christie’s, New York, 28 January 1989, lot 92; with Vernay & Jussel; Betsy Babcock; Sotheby’s, New York, 18–19 April 2002, lot 673; private collection.

A table of closely-related design, possibly in oak and ebony, was sold at Bonhams, Knightsbridge, 26 February 1981. The table at Bonhams had the stretcher at mid-level between the end supports, and scrolled terminations in place of the quadrants on the present table.

The single gothic arch in the end support of the table shown here can be compared with that on a larger oak table supplied by Bullock (perhaps from a design by Richard Bridgens) to Sir Godfrey Vassal Webster for Battle Abbey, Sussex, and now in the collection of the V&A (see Clive Wainwright, et al., George Bullock: Cabinet-maker, ex’n cat., London, 1988, no. 14). Another version of this pattern is at Scone Palace, where Bullock is known to have worked (see Anthony Coleridge, ‘The Work of George Bullock, cabinet-maker, in Scotland: 2’, The Connoisseur, May 1965, fig. 11), and a third was in the collection of Sir James Stirling (see Michael Hall, ‘Stirling Wit and Passion’, Country Life, 31 August 2000, pp. 50–53, fig. 4).

Our table and the one from Bonhams have features in common with designs for tables in the ‘Tracings by Thomas Wilkinson, from Designs by the late Mr George Bullock 1820’ (City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, M.3.74). On p. 36 is a table (see below) with double gothic arches in the end supports, the profile of which is the same as on the present table; the design also suggests similar quadrant terminations. The design for a more elaborate gothic-inspired table with the same profile to the end supports (p. 38) incorporates scrolled terminations, as on the Bonhams table. Finally, a table with more classically-inspired decoration (p. 34) incorporates both the same profile on the end supports and terminations as the table at Bonhams.

It has been observed that the end supports of the Battle Abbey table, and hence those on the table shown here, appear to anticipate the profile of a more elaborate table published by A.W.N. Pugin (1812–52) in Gothic Furniture (1835), pl. 13 (see Martin Levy, ‘George Bullock: Aspects of his Development and Influence’, Antologia di Belle Arti, Nuova Serie, nn. 35–38, (1980), pp. 67–74, fig. 12).
**Drawing**

*Marble chair of Potamon...*

**Thomas Rowlandson**

(1756–1827)

Pen and ink; the pearwood frame of slightly earlier date

7 ₅/₈ in (8 cm) × 4 ₂/₃ in (11.5 cm) excluding mount and frame

**English, circa 1815–20**

**Signed:**

'T Rowlandson' and inscribed by the artist: 'Marble chair of Potamon the Lesbion rhetorician still existing in Mitylene'

**Provenance:**

[ ... ]; Sidney Sabin; [ ... ].

Front and side views of the throne of Potamon, 'An Ancient Marble Chair at Mytilene' were published by Richard Pococke (1704–65) in *A Description of the East, and some other countries*, 2 vols, London, 1743–45 (a copy of which, now in the collection of the British Library, had been in the collection of the British Museum since 1799). Pococke's engraved depictions differ in details from Rowlandson's drawing. There is no evidence that Rowlandson visited Lesbos, so it seems likely that Pococke was the source for the present drawing, perhaps from the copy in the British Museum, where Rowlandson made frequent use of the Print Room. The throne itself, in a more weathered and distressed state than depicted by Pococke, survives in the Archaeological Museum, Mytilene, Lesbos. The museum dates the throne 1st century BC-1st century AD.

The full context for the present drawing is given in an article published as this catalogue was going to press (see Arline Meyer, 'Regency Rowlandson: Thomas Rowlandson’s studies after (long after) the Antique’, *The British Art Journal*, Spring/Summer 2009, pp. 50–60). Five albums of drawings after the Antique by Rowlandson survive; two in the collection of the British Museum, one in the V&A, a fourth at Princeton and a fifth in a private collection (see Meyer *op. cit.*, n. 31). The British Museum albums (BM 201.a.14–15) record Antique statues. Meyer suggests that Rowlandson's drawing in this manner should be seen 'as a conduit to a range of ideas not only about the prevailing marble mania ... but how new ideas about classical artefacts were brewing in antiquarian and artistic circles (Meyer *op. cit.*, p. 50). The author also contends that these works should be seen 'more in the nature of personal investigations than potentially marketable entertainments' (Meyer, *loc. cit.*).

Among the many further fascinating observations made by Meyer, she notes that: 'Together with their copious notations, these drawings should be seen in the fuller context of the barrage of publications that appeared in the first two decades of the 19th century illustrating ancient costume, furnishings, ornament and sculpture.' (*op. cit.*, p. 54). The style of this drawing has more in common with the published work of the architect Charles Heathcote Tatham (1772–1842) and the connoisseur Thomas Hope (1769–1831), than Rowlandson's familiar depictions of 'human appetites; eating, drinking, and amorous relationships' (John Hayes, *Dictionary of National Biography*).
Two Dining Chairs
The design attributed to William Atkinson
(circa 1773–1839)
Workshop of George Bullock
(1813–19)

Oak; the leather upholstery possibly original
36 in (91.5 cm) × 19½ in (49.5 cm) × 20 in (51 cm)

English (London), 1818

Provenance:
Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), Abbotsford; thence by descent; [...] Scottish art market; with H. Blairman & Sons, 2006; private collection.

Literature:

These chairs are believed to have been sold, together with other surplus items from Abbotsford, near Melrose, some time after the death of Jean Maxwell-Scott in 2004. A further group of these oak dining chairs (now stripped of their old, dark surface) remains in the dining room at Abbotsford (see Clive Wainwright, ‘Walter Scott and the furnishing of Abbotsford: or the gabions of Jonathan Oldbuck Esq.’, The Connoisseur, January 1977, pp. 3–15, fig. 4).

Although George Bullock (1782/83–1818) had supplied furniture to Scott and, probably with the assistance of his associate Richard Bridgens (1785–1846), created the Armoury at Abbotsford (Wainwright, op cit., fig. 8), the design of the dining chairs post-dates Bullock’s death on 1 May 1818. Correspondence shows that the conception of the dining room had been under way during Bullock’s lifetime. The design of the chairs, however, was still being debated on 7 June 1818 when Scott’s friend, the actor Daniel Terry (1789–1829), wrote to Scott that: ‘The pattern chair is made but I did not altogether like the effect in execution ...’ and on 17 June referred to the ‘Chairs for eating room (to Mr. Atkinson’s taste and yours) ...’ (quoted by Wainwright, op. cit., p. 7). A group of eight watercolour designs for chairs, two of which are inscribed ‘W SCOTT ESQ’ (V&A, E.758–1982) include the one, shown below, which differs only slightly from the chairs at Abbotsford, themselves identical to the present pair. Although the designs in the V&A relate to designs in the ‘Tracings by Thomas Wilkinson, from Designs by the late Mr George Bullock 1820’ (City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, M.3.74), the identity of the artist is uncertain. In addition to Atkinson or Bridgens, an alternative suggestion might reasonably be the architect responsible for Abbotsford, Edward Blore (1787–1879).

Bullock’s workshop was not finally sold off until May 1819, and rates on the premises continued to be paid until March of that year. Thus, the facilities for the manufacture of the Abbotsford dining chairs remained (see Martin Levy, ‘George Bullock’s Partnership with Charles Fraser, 1813–1818, and the Stock-in-Trade Sale, 1819, Furniture History XXV (1989), pp. 145–213, p. 148).
**Wine Glass**

Glass 6 in (15.2 cm) high
Bohemian, *circa* 1851

**Plaque**

Composition simulating carved wood; ebonised frame with gilt-metal mounts
13 in (33 cm) diameter
English, *circa* 1851

In August 1850, a vast area was boarded off on the south side of London’s Hyde Park, north of Queensgate. Over the next six months Joseph Paxton’s famous ‘Crystal Palace’ (1850–51), a vast metal and glass structure, rose rapidly from the ground, its hoardings being eventually used as the internal flooring. The century’s first major international exhibition ran between 1 May 1851 and the official closing on 15 October. For many of the six million visitors, it was their first trip to London. Anticipating this, Wyld’s issued a ‘Map of London & Visitor’s Guide to the Great Exhibition’ showing the location of the Crystal Palace, methods of transport to get there, and other sites not to be missed by neophyte tourists to the metropolis.

In addition to being an unprecedented showplace for the world’s manufactures and materials, it was an opportunity, at a humbler level, for the production of high-quality ‘souvenirs’ and other commemorative works of art.

The finely engraved Bohemian glass goblet shows the facade of the Crystal Palace from the south-west, and is inscribed ‘THE INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION FOR 1851.’ The reverse is decorated with vine leaves and grapes. According to the *Art-Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Industry of all Nations*, London, 1851, ‘The glass manufacture of Bohemia ... obtained high celebrity for the taste of its form and the beauty of its colour ...’ (p. 178).

The plaque, representing ‘MANUFACTURES – COMMERCE – RAW MATERIALS’, was designed by ‘Luke Limner’ (the pseudonym for the illustrator John Leighton, 1822–1912). The design was patented on 20 February 1851 by Elkington (various partnerships, 1807–1968). A label on the back describes the subject: ‘IN THE CENTRE IS THE WORLD – ENCIRCLED BY THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EXHIBITION & SURROUNDED BY THE PEACEFUL ARTS OF ALL NATIONS ... AROUND RUNS A WREATH ON WHICH IS INSCRIBED NAMES OF GREAT MEN OF ALL NATIONS WHO HAVE AIDED MANUFACTURES.’ The plaque was ‘Sold by J & J. Leighton NO 40 Brewer Street ... London’.

The same design, in gilt and silvered bronze, was adapted as an inkstand; an example is in the collection of the V&A (481 & A-1901).
Two Pokers
The design after A.W.N. Pugin
(1812–52)
The manufacture attributed to John Hardman & Co.
(1838–1900)
Supplied by the firm of Crace (1768–1899)

Steel and brass
34\(^{\frac{3}{8}}\) in (88 cm) high
English (Birmingham), probably \textit{circa} 1852–53

Provenance:
James Watts, Abney Hall, Cheadle; thence by descent; [...].

Abney Hall (Cheadle Town Hall since 1959) was built in 1847 as ‘The Grove’ for Alfred Orrell. In 1849 James Watts, owner of the largest wholesale drapery business in Manchester, purchased the house and re-named it Abney Hall. Although Pugin supplied designs for Abney Hall towards the end of his life, Megan Aldrich has observed that this late commission owes more to John Gregory Crace (1809–89) than to Pugin himself. The interiors were largely completed under the supervision of Crace after Pugin’s death (see Megan Aldrich, ‘Gothic Interiors of the 19th Century John Gregory Crace at Abney Hall, \textit{The V&A Album} 5 (1986), pp. 76–84). On the other hand, Pugin’s relationship with his favoured manufacturers, such as Crace, John Hardman (1811–67) and Herbert Minton (1793–1858), was such that they had routinely interpreted and realised his designs with their own interventions. The state rooms at Abney Hall, where the poker stands would have been installed, were completed by late 1853. Crace, however, remained involved until 1857, when he completed the Consort’s Bedroom for a visit by Prince Albert (see Aldrich, \textit{op. cit.}, fig. 9).

Poker stands similar to the present pair can be identified to the left of the Drawing Room fireplace at Abney Hall (see Aldrich, \textit{op. cit.}, fig. 3) and to the right of the Dining Room fireplace. It is not clear if these would have been used ornamentally as a pair either side of a fireplace, or one per fireplace. The \textit{Contents of Abney Hall} were sold by Messrs. Brady & Sons, 17–21 and 24–28 March 1958, but it is said that the present pokers were acquired directly from descendants of James Watts. On day 4 of the sale, lot 957 included a ‘Brass Poker stand’ which is the only item in the sale that could conceivably be identical with one of the present items. The design of the Abney Hall pokers is redolent of the grand Pugin-designed candelabra that greet visitors at the top of the stairs at Westminster Hall in the Palace of Westminster, London.

Surviving furniture from Abney Hall includes the octagonal library table (see Aldrich, \textit{op. cit.}, fig. 6, now in the collection of the V&A); a rectangular writing table and large bookcase, \textit{in situ} (see R.W. Symonds and B.B. Whineray, \textit{Victorian Furniture}, London, 1962, pls 38–39; a cabinet-on-stand in the collection of Salford Art Gallery (see Elizabeth Aslin, \textit{19th Century English Furniture}, London, 1962, pl. 35), and a pair of chairs in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (D.1.1–2–1985). A giltwood firescreen (\textit{Contents of Abney Hall, op. cit.}, lot 1936) was noted at Cliveden, Taplow in 1993. A further group of furniture was sold at Sotheby Beresford Adams, 26 February 1981, lots 84–89, including a pair of side tables now on loan at Lotherton Hall, Aberford.
**Pair of Bellows**

The silver by Elkington

*(various partnerships, 1807–1968)*

Walnut and silver, with leather and brass

20 in (50.8 cm) × 7½ in (19 cm)

English (Birmingham), *circa* 1853–54

Inscribed:

‘Napoleon’s Willow and Shakespeare’s Elm.’

The silver nozzle of these bellows has the mark of Elkington & Co., Birmingham, 1853–54, allowing a reasonable estimation of this object’s date. The carving, although most likely executed in England, suggests a Continental hand, perhaps an immigrant craftsman.

‘Napoleon’s Willow’ in the inscription refers to the well-known tree that overhung the fallen Emperor’s tomb on St Helena, where he was buried in 1821. In 1840, Napoleon’s body was exhumed and returned to France, where it now rests under the dome of Les Invalides, Paris. The willows, depicted below in the medal *Mémorial de Ste Hélène*, reflect the fame of Napoleon’s original resting place.

The reference to ‘Shakespeare’s Elm’, however, is less clear. The tree associated with Shakespeare is the famous mulberry, thought to have been planted by him at New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon and infamously cut down in 1759 by the Rev. Francis Gastrell. The destruction of the mulberry led to a local industry which saw the tree multiply into a miraculous quantity of lucrative souvenirs; many of the objects that have survived may not be from this tree, and indeed are not all made from mulberry. In 1853 (around the date of these bellows), Dante Gabriel Rossetti visited Stratford-upon-Avon and wrote a sonnet on the subject of the tree (not published until 1871): ‘This tree, here fall’n, no common birth or death / Shared with its kind.’

If the elm does have a notable place in British history, it is on account of the Waterloo Elm (see Geoffrey de Bellaigue, ‘The Waterloo Elm’, *Furniture History* XIV (1978), pp. 14–18).

What seems beyond doubt is that these bellows were created to celebrate two key figures in European history and culture.
Buffet

Oak
51\(\frac{1}{2}\) in (130.8 cm) × 54 in (137.2 cm) × 20 in (50.8 cm)

English, circa 1865

Inscribed:
‘CIB’(?) in panel on backboard.

This gothic-revival three-tier buffet, unmarked and lacking provenance, cannot be attributed to a particular manufacturer with any certainty. In overall conception, it relates to Pugin-inspired furniture supplied during the 1860s by firms such as Crace (1768–1899), Gillow (circa 1730–1897) and Holland (1843–1942), all of which had made furniture to the designs of A.W.N. Pugin (1812–52), during the architect’s lifetime.

A close parallel with the present buffet is one recorded in 1891 in the Gillow-furnished dining room of Abbots Wood, Barrow-in-Furness (see Martin Levy, ‘Abbots Wood, Barrow-in-Furness: Furniture by Gillow for Sir James Ramsden’, Apollo, June 1993, pp. 384–88, fig. 3, reproduced below). This photograph shows a typical gothic interior, created for a newly-wealthy Mycaenas during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

An identical buffet, with the same initials, was with Blairman’s in 1989 (private collection).
Oil Lamp Base

The design attributed to Emile Reiber
(1826–93)
Manufactured by Christofle et Cie
(1830–present)

Gilt-metal, with silvered, gilded and brown-patinated galvanoplastie
16 in (40.7 cm) high
French (Saint-Denis), circa 1873

Marked:
‘CHRISTOFLE ET C-IE’ (on rim above encrusted decoration).

This model is recorded at the Christofle Archive in a nineteenth-century photograph showing a pair of these lamps, either side of the well-known jardinière also attributed to Reiber, an example of which is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (see Charlotte Gere, ‘European Decorative Arts at the World’s Fairs: 1850–1900’, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Winter 1998/99, p. 41; Gere states that the probable executant for Christofle was Eugène Guignard).

According to Anne Gros, this oil lamp base, the only example identified to date, was first shown at the Vienna Weltausstellung, 1873. It seems that the same model reappeared at the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1878 (see Louis Gonse, Exposition Universelle de 1878: Les Beaux-Arts et les Arts Décoratifs, I, Paris, 1879, illustrated below).

Reiber, who also designed for the céramiste Théodore Deck (1823–91) was one of the leading exponents of japonisme in France. His encrusted objects, executed in galvanoplastie were much admired at the time of their manufacture. Frank Jackson of Birmingham wrote admiringly of French ‘Works in the Precious Metals, Electro-plate &c.’ at the Vienna Exhibition. He made particular mention of ‘metallic incrustations’ and improved techniques in galvanoplastie. He also commented on the ‘development of the process of inlaying metals. To this mode of decoration [which also applies to raised work] Messrs. Christofle have paid great attention for considerable time ... filling in the cavities with silver and gold ...’ (see Artisans Reports upon the Vienna Exhibition, Manchester, n.d. [1873?], part II, p. 38). Other examples of Reiber’s work for Christofle shown by Blairman’s include a bowl based on a Chinese censer, now in a private collection (H. Blairman & Sons, Furniture and Works of Art, 1995, no. 15); a pair of Japanese-inspired vases (2008, no. 16), and a clock set incorporating champlevé enamels, now in the collection of the Musée d’Orsay Paris, (1998, no. 16).
Nef
Charles Lepec
(1830–? after 1888)

Enamel, silver-gilt and gilt-bronze
3 ⅜ in (9.6 cm) × 4 ⅜ in (11.5 cm) × 1 ⅝ (4 cm)
French (Paris), 1873

Marked:
‘CH LEPEC’ and dated ‘1873’ in the decoration on the sides, to the right and left of the putto, respectively.

The nef, a vessel in the form of a ship, was used in the later middle ages as the holder for a nobleman’s table linen or eating utensils. By the sixteenth century nefs had become prevalent as table ornaments, particularly in Germany and Switzerland (see, for example, the 1503 German ‘Schlüsselfelder’ nef in the collection of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg). The present example is a brûle-parfum (incense burner).

Our nef-form brûle-parfum, including decoration emblematic of love (Venus being led by Cupid bearing a flaming torch), is a diminutive variant of one of Lepec’s masterpiece’s, the nef exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle 1867 and owned by Lepec’s greatest patron, the English collector Alfred Morrison (1821–97). The Morrison nef is now in the collection of the Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe (see Daniel Alcouffe, ‘Les Emailleurs Français à l’Exposition Universelle de 1867’, Antologia di Belle Arti, IV, 13/14, 1980, pp. 102–21, figs 4–5).

Lepec, a pupil of the artist Hippolyte Flandrin (1809–64), was recorded in 1861 at 61, rue du Faubourg-Montmartre, Paris. In the Salon of 1861 Lepec exhibited two enamels on copper, La fortune conduite par l’amour and Clémence Isaure; Lepec also exhibited in Lyon. Works by him, some enamelled on gold, were shown in the Salons of 1863–66, but by far his most important exposure appears to have been at the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867 (see Alcouffe, op. cit., p. 104). Until now, his last recorded work in enamel was a portrait shown at the Salon of 1869 (see Pierre Sanchez, Dictionnaire des Céramistes, Peintres sur Porcelaine, Verre et Email, Exposant dans les Salons, Expositions Universelles ... 1700–1920, II, Dijon, 2005, pp. 918–19). A drawing signed by Lepec and dated 1888 raises the question of what other work might survive from the period after 1869 (see Olivier Gabet, L’objet et son double Dessins d’art décoratifs des collections du musée d’Orsay, ex’n cat., Paris, 2006, no. 36).

The present, recently rediscovered nef adds to the small number of works signed by Lepec. In addition to the large Clémence Isaure (1866) in the collection of the musée d’Orsay, Paris, other works include a covered tazza in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge; a tazza now in the collection of the Saint Louis Art Museum, and a pair of plates, now divided between the collections of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and the Musée Municipal de l’Evêché, Limoges; these four pieces, all of which were exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1867, were with Blairman in 1994. The ‘Visconti’ vase on stand (H. Blairman & Sons, Furniture and Works of Art, 2004, no. 11) is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and L’art Triomphant (1863) was exhibited (together with an unsigned coffret) by Galerie Roxane Rodriguez (see Emaux, Paris, 2003, unpaginated).
‘Coffee Table’

After a design by E.W. Godwin
(1833–86)
Manufactured by Gillow & Co.
(circa 1730–1897)

Mahogany (?), stained red
27\(\frac{3}{4}\) in (70.5 cm) × 16\(\frac{1}{4}\) in (41.6 cm) × 16 in (40.8 cm)
English (Lancaster), circa 1874–75

Marked:
‘L 2334’ (stamped on underside of frame supporting top).

First designed in 1867, probably for his own use, the coffee table was subsequently, frequently and inaccurately plagiarized, much to Godwin’s irritation. Critical to Godwin’s creation are the proportions of the design and the elegance of the turnings. A later drawing, dating from 1872, appears in one of Godwin’s sketch books now in the collection of the V&A (Susan Weber Soros, *The Secular Furniture of E.W. Godwin*, New Haven & London, 1999, fig. 212.1), and in another, dated 1875 (Soros, *op. cit.*, 207.1); it was also published by the manufacturer William Watt in *Art Furniture Designed by Edward William Godwin*, trade cat., London, 1877, pl. 15.

Godwin’s ‘coffee table’ was made by William Watt and Collinson & Lock (1870–97), both firms for whom he provided designs (Soros, *op. cit.*, figs 207 and 212). Godwin also had an association with Gillow, although this requires further investigation. According to notes in one of Godwin’s ledgers (V&A AAD 4/2–1988), Gillow made for him a ‘wicker chair, round armchairs, dining room chairs, an escritoire, music stand, table, dressing table and wardrobe’ (quoted from Soros, *op. cit.*, p. 38 and n. 64). There are two references linking Godwin and Gillow in the correspondence of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). Around 1 October 1877 Godwin writes to Whistler that ‘Gillows have written to undertake work …’ (V&A, AAD4/3–1980) and sometime the following year there is a record of an unspecified payment to Gillow (V&A, AAD4/12–1980); Whistler moved into the Godwin-designed White House in Tite Street, London in July 1878.

A further connection between Godwin and Gillow involves the speculative building in 1877 of three houses on Chelsea Embankment, London.

The dating of the present table, the only red-stained version to be recorded, is based on the interpretation of Gillow’s numbering system given in Susan Stuart, ‘A Survey of Marks, Labels, and Stamps used on Gillow and Waring & Gillow Furniture 1770–1960’, *Regional Furniture XII* (1998), pp. 58–93, fig. 7. The prefix ‘L’ indicates Lancaster manufacture (Stuart, *op. cit.*, p. 70). Other ‘coffee tables’ manufactured by Gillow include an ebonised example numbered 6178, dateable to circa 1878 (Christie’s South Kensington, 8 July 2009, lot 113); a more elaborate variant numbered 12367, dateable to circa 1881, at Lotherton Hall (see Christopher Gilbert, *Furniture at Temple Newsam House and Lotherton Hall III*, Leeds, 1998, p. 667, no. 835), and an amboyna-topped ebonised table said to have been numbered 876; (see *Whistler & Godwin*, ex’n cat., London, 2001, no. 45).
Mosque Lamp
Albert Pflub

Enamelled and gilded glass
5 8 in (15.1 cm) high
French (Paris), 1876

Marked:

Very little is known of Albert Pflub, whose address in 1874, was 12, Faubourg Saint-Denis, Paris. In the same year, he is listed as in partnership with ‘Pottier’ at 42, rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis. Pflub exhibited at the London International Exhibition, 1874, the Union Centrale, 1876 and the Paris Exposition Universelle, 1878 (see Pierre Sanchez, Dictionnaire des Céramistes, Peintres sur Porcelaine, verre et Email, Exposant dans les Salons, Expositions Universelles ... 1700–1920, III, Dijon, 2005, p. 1184).

This small-scale mosque lamp is only the third work to be recorded by either Pflub or the partnership of Pflub et Pottier. The others are a ‘footed beaker’ in the collection of the Corning Museum of Art (2005.3.116) and a verre à pied, dated circa 1888, in the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon (G.356).

Mamluk-style enamelled glass, and the mosque lamp form in particular were, revived and popularised in France through the efforts of Philippe-Joseph Brocard (fl. 1865–96); (see H. Blairman & Sons, Furniture and Works of Art, 2008, no. 14). Lamps on such a small scale are unusual, but a pair by Brocard (13.8 cm high) exhibited at the Vienna Weltausstellung, 1873 is in the collection of the Gewerbemuseum, Nuremberg, and another (20 cm high) is in the collection of the Musée de Verre, Charleroi. A further pair (15 cm high) is in a private collection.


Pe destal Writing Table
Manufactured by Gillow & Co.
(circa 1730–1897)

Mahogany, with brass handles; the leather top of later date
29\frac{1}{2}~\text{in} ~(74.9~\text{cm}) \times 56~\text{in} ~(142.2~\text{cm}) \times 28~\text{in} ~(71.2~\text{cm})

English (Lancaster or London), circa 1880

Marked:
‘GILLOW & CO’ and ‘9633’ (stamped onto central drawer).

‘CHUBB’S / PATENT / 39 ST PAUL’S CHYD / LONDON’ and ‘CHUBB & SON / MAKERS TO / HER MAJESTY’ on each lock, and numbered 675394–675405.

Based on an interpretation of Gillow’s numbering system given in Susan Stuart, ‘A Survey of Marks, Labels, and Stamps used on Gillow and Waring & Gillow Furniture 1770–1960’, Regional Furniture XII (1998), pp. 58–93, fig. 7, the present table can be dated to circa 1880. This dating is perhaps called into question, however, by the sequence of Chubb locks, which date from earlier, circa 1872–73 (see Chubb Lock Records; photocopied list held at the V&A).

The practical design, excellent materials and fine execution of this writing table reflect the attention to detail that typifies the firm of Gillow from its earliest days in Lancaster. The somewhat conventional form is an example of the continuity of traditional furniture for which the firm is renowned. The base board of each of the drawers is attached to its back by a screw inserted into a U-shaped cut-out, which allows the base board to shrink without splitting, is a constant feature on later nineteenth-century Gillow furniture. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Gillow was continuing to make furniture emulating eighteenth-century patterns, often following their own earlier designs, while, at the same time, embracing the latest trends in, for example, gothic-revival and aesthetic taste.

With its narrow flap under the centre of the frieze to the front, pull out slide to the right (when sitting) and arrangement of small pigeon holes, this pedestal writing table would appear to have been a special commission. Nothing similar has been identified in the Gillow ‘Estimate Sketch Books’ (Westminster Archive Centre, London).
**Child’s Chair**

The design attributed to W.A.S. Benson

**(1854–1924)**

The manufacture attributed to Morris & Co.

**(1875–1940)**

Painted beech, with wooden castors; the contemporary upholstery added later and the finials restored

37 ¼ in (95.9 cm) × 20 ¾ in (51.4 cm) × 18 ¼ in (46.4 cm)

English (London), after 1881

**Provenance:**

Thomas Matthews Rooke (1842–1942); thence by descent; H. Blairman & Sons, 1990; private collection.

**Literature:**

Peter Barnet and MaryAnn Wilkinson, *Decorative Arts 1900: Highlights from Private Collections in Detroit*, ex’n cat., Detroit, 1993, no. 20.


This chair was said to have been given by Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98) to his studio assistant T.M. Rooke following the birth of his son Noel (1881–1953). The elder Rooke met Burne-Jones through Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. (1861–75), which the former joined in 1869; thereafter Rooke remained closely associated with Burne-Jones until his death. The younger Rooke became a well-known wood-engraver, illustrator and teacher. The chair was acquired from Noel Rooke’s widow, Celia Mary [Molly] (1902–98), also a wood-engraver and painter. The details of provenance, which seem very plausible, were given verbally by Mrs Rooke.

The attribution of the design to Benson is strengthened by the green-stained two-seater settee also acquired from the Rooke collection (see Barnet and Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, no. 19). Benson himself owned an identical settee, recorded in a photograph of his studio in Camden Hill Road, London (see Ian Hamerton, ed., *W.A.S. Benson: Arts and Crafts Luminary and Pioneer of Modern Design*, Woodbridge, 2005, pl. 29). Benson also owned an armchair that is clearly by the same designer as the child’s chair (see Hammerton, *op. cit.*, pl. 37). In 1883 Benson published another armchair that relates in design to the Rooke chair (see *Notes on Some of the Minor Arts*, London, 1883, pl. II), and was certainly involved with Morris & Co. by 1884, but perhaps earlier (see Hamerton, *op. cit.*, pp. 155–56). A ‘Settee or Window Seat’ from a ‘Design of Mr. W.A.S. Benson’ is illustrated in a Morris & Co. trade catalogue dating from *circa* 1910; the form suggests the same hand as the present chair, notably in the shape of the spindles and the incising of the seat rail (see Hamerton, *op. cit.*, pl. 158, centre right).

The fabric is *Evenlode* designed by William Morris and registered 2 September 1883.
C h a r g e r

Designed and manufactured by John Pearson
(1859–1930)

Copper
27¾ in (69.4 cm) diameter
English (probably Newlyn), 1895

Inscribed:
‘J. Pearson 1895’ and ‘2241’ (within an oval), in script on the reverse.

This charger (wall plaque), which retains its original ‘chocolate brown’ patina, is the largest example identified to date.

One of four founding members of the Guild of Handicraft, initiated in 1888 by Charles Robert Ashbee (1863–1942), John Pearson was the Guild’s leading metalworker, responsible for creating repoussé work, some of which was shown at the 1888 Arts and Crafts Exhibition. Following his departure from the Guild in 1892, Pearson taught at the Newlyn Industrial Class for about seven years, where his creative talent was a significant factor in the success of the Newlyn School. Like his metalwork, Pearson’s lustre-decorated ceramics are often designed with naturalistic ornament, birds, fish and grotesque creatures, suggesting the influence of William De Morgan (1839–1917), for whom he is thought to have worked. Little biographical information survives for John Pearson, but his dates are given in Daryl Bennet & Colin Pill, Newlyn Copper – Arts & Crafts Copper Work in Newlyn, Bristol, 2008.

More than 25 contemporary images of Pearson’s copper chargers, and other forms, are preserved in one of the four photograph albums known as ‘The Ashbee Collection’ in the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (see below for an example).
A r m c h a i r

Designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh
(1868–1928)

Oak, with rush seat
38 in (96.5 cm) × 22½ in (57.2 cm) × 17 in (43.2 cm)
Scottish (Glasgow), circa 1897

Provenance:
Presumably Argyle Tea Rooms; [ ... ]; Dan Klein Ltd, 1984; private collection.

Literature:

The present armchair retains a naturally worn patination, and an old, if not original, rush seat.

According to Billcliffe (loc. cit.), an armchair of this pattern appears in contemporary photographs of the Luncheon Room of the Argyle Tea Rooms, created for Mackintosh’s great patron Miss Cranston. Other examples, ‘possibly used in the ground floor apartments’ have survived. In addition to one belonging to Glasgow University and two in the collection of the Glasgow School of Art, another is in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. Further examples are in private collections.

The crescent cut-out in the arms echoes that on the backs of Mackintosh’s famous high-back chair created for the Argyle Tea Rooms (see, for example, H. Blairman & Sons, Furniture and Works of Art, 2006, no. 17; a chair now in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Art).
‘Sideboard’

Designed by W.A.S. Benson (1854–1924)
Manufactured by Morris & Co. (1875–1940)

Oak, with patinated brass hardware
79\(\frac{1}{2}\) in (202 cm) × 68 in (172.7 cm) × 19 in (48.3 cm)

English (London), *circa* 1900

Marked:
‘MORRIS & C° / 449 OXFORD ST W / 1649’ stamped onto top edge of central drawer.

Provenance:
[ ... ]; N. Asherson, 1946; thence by descent.

The present sideboard (described, perhaps more correctly, as a dresser) was sold on 10 September 1946 by Heal & Son to N. Asherson, 21, Harley Street, London; a photocopy of the bill of sale survives.

A drawing by Benson for this model exists (present location unknown; reproduced below). It is thought that he first created the design for his own use in a house at Manorbier, Pembrokeshire, where he had enjoyed staying since 1898. His own version, the surface stripped of all its patination, was sold at Christie’s South Kensington, 1 July 2004, lot 83. The pattern was available from Morris & Co. as a ‘Carved Oak Sideboard, Designed by Mr. W.A.S. Benson.’, priced £35 (*Specimens of Furniture Upholstery & Interior Decoration*, trade cat., London, *circa* 1900–10, p. 30).

Like so much British Arts & Crafts furniture this dark oak sideboard combines tradition (in its form) with modernity (in its detail). Benson’s design is clearly based on a traditional oak dresser (see, for example, Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards, *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, revised ed’n, London, 1954, II, p. 224, fig. 13). The handles, strap hinges and carving, on the other hand, are in the English version of the *art nouveau* taste then flowering on both sides of the Channel.

For an overview of furniture designed by Benson, ranging from simple cottage bedroom chests, through neo-Georgian ‘escritoires’, to grand sideboards in an English interpretation of the *art nouveau* style, see Ian Hamerton, ed., *W.A.S. Benson: Arts and Crafts Luminary and Pioneer of Modern Design*, Woodbridge, 2005, ch. 5.
Wall Plate

By Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat

(1844–1910)

Stoneware
10\(\frac{3}{4}\) in (32 cm) diameter
French (Bourg-la-Reine), circa 1900

Provenance:
The Haviland family, Limoges; by descent.

Literature:

Marked:
[Grenade] impressed; see Makus, op. cit., p. 202, no. 3 (left).

Of all the forms designed by Dalpayrat, this simple shape allows the greatest freedom for the decoration. The spectacular explosion of colours creates a spontaneous and timeless image. It may not be fanciful to suggest that Dalpayrat could have been influenced by Chinese stonewares, such as those made at the Lushan kilns during the Tang dynasty, themselves precursors of the much finer and more subtle Jun wares that first appeared during the Song dynasty.

A similar plate, with the same provenance, is in the collection of the Carnegie Museum of Art (gift in memory of Iris Millard). Two further examples are in the collection at the Petit Palais, Paris.

Alexis Boissonnet (1879–1956) was another French céramiste who made effective use of glazes on a simple stoneware background. There is a stunning dish (15.9 cm diameter) in the collection of the Danish Museum of Art and Design (see Charlotte Christiansen, 1900: The Year of Art Nouveau: the Danish Museum of Art & Design and the Paris World Exhibition, ex’n cat., Copenhagen, 2008, pp. 48–49).
Stationery Box
Designed by Ernest Gimson
(1864–1919)

Macassar ebony, inlaid with mother of pearl and abalone shell, and mounted with pearl blisters; the interior lined with cedar, and the base with leather
7 in (17.8 cm) × 12 in (30.5 cm) × 7½ in (19 cm)
English (Sapperton), probably 1904

Provenance:
Lord Bathurst (1864–1943), Cirencester Park, Cirencester; thence by descent.

In 1894, the year after Gimson and the Barnsley brothers, moved from London, they were offered economical accommodation on the edge of Lord Bathurst’s Pinbury Park estate. The three remained there until 1902, when Gimson moved to Daneway House, which also belonged to Bathurst.

In addition to being Gimson’s landlord, Bathurst was also an important patron. The present box, which comes from a group of furniture sold recently by a descendant, was not known to exist. A drawing initialled by Gimson and dated 23 August 1904, and inscribed ‘Stationery Box / in Macassar Ebony inlaid Mother of Pearl / lined with Cedar of Lebanon’, is probably for the present object (see Mary Greensted and Sophia Wilson, eds, Originality and Initiative: The Arts and Crafts archives at Cheltenham, Cheltenham, 2003, fig. 92). The design varies in the position of the inlays and the addition of spherical lapis lazuli feet. A drawing for the top, also in the collection of the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, is signed ‘Ernest W. Gimson – Daneway House / 1904 –’ (see below).

A box of closely-related design is illustrated in Ernest Gimson His Life & Work, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1924, 2006 ed’n, pl. 39. This plate shows a total of six boxes, two of which are in the collection of the Leicestershire Museums (see Annette Carruthers, Ernest Gimson and the Cotswold Group of Craftsmen, ex’n cat., Leicester, 1978, nos F1 & F2). Gimson’s inspiration for boxes of this type may have been Indian boxes, such as one he owned at Daneway House (see Mary Greensted, The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Cotswolds, Stroud, 1993, pl. 3.5).

Another grand example of furniture designed by Gimson for Lord Bathurst is the walnut cabinet with gilt-gesso decoration, on an ebony stand, now in the collection of the V&A (see Mary Comino, Gimson and the Barnsleys: ‘Wonderful furniture of a commonplace kind’, London, 1980, fig. 65).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Frances Collard, Catherine Futter, Ian Gow,
Anne Gros, Angela Howard, Tessa Murdoch,
Susan Weber and Lucy Wood

Seventeenth-century-style cabinet by Gillow.
English, circa 1893

Photography: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd
Designed & Printed by Henry Ling Ltd, at the Dorset Press, Dorchester, DT1 1HD