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SOLD!

| The Great British
| Antiques Story

Mark Westgarth







SOLD!

Mark Westgarth

with

Rachel Conroy, Howard Coutts, Georgina Gough,
Dominic Jellinek, Adrian Jenkins, Robin Kern, Martin
Levy, Leela Meinertas, Jerome Phillips, Alyson Pollard,
Naomi Speakman, Simon Spier, Jonathan Tavares,
Gareth Williams and Jane Whittaker

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Inside cover: Horace Baxter with 'Antico', 1960. Photograph courtesy of Gary Baxter.

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John Beazor Antiques

TOMASSO BROTHERS
FINE ART

Jonathan Harris

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Acknowledgements

Mark Westgarth

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Foreword

Adrian Jenkins, Director, The Bowes Museum

The exhibition *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*, has emerged from a three year AHRC funded project led by Dr Mark Westgarth at Leeds University. His decision to offer it to The Bowes Museum is the outcome of a longstanding connection between himself and the Museum. When first mooted, it promised an interesting challenge in getting dealers and curators on board for what would bring to the fore the relationship between museums, art, and money.

However, many Museums have acquired some of their most important and iconic objects through dealers. The Bowes Museum is no exception, with its origins in John and Josephine Bowes' decision to use dealers in Paris to acquire objects from paintings to bibelots. From the 1950s, the Museum purchased outstanding items from some of the major British dealers of the twentieth century, curators arguably enjoying a relationship of mutual respect and knowledge perhaps even more so than today.

It is this relationship that the exhibition highlights and explores, as well as the intriguing backstory to objects before becoming part of a museum collection. That relationship is highlighted by the object labels. They are inverted from the usual way in which a museum curator would present information about an object. This is indeed at the bottom of the label; instead the object is introduced to the visitor through the name of the dealer who sold it and the story of how it came into the dealer's hands. Here the dealer is key.

Mark's intention to turn the traditional museum presentation of objects on its head, by foregrounding the roles and practices of the dealers through whose hands the object passed, is deliberately provoking reflection on the relationship between the 'trade' and the museum, between objects as commodities and as historical objects. It makes us think about the ways in which the histories and practices of antique dealing and museums have interwoven since they emerged in the early nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, it results in a visual feast of objects of great quality, significance and beauty and an opportunity to appreciate them in a different way, to experience their 'other life' prior to becoming museum objects. It has been a privilege for the Bowes Museum to host this ground-breaking exhibition and our thanks go to Museums, antique dealers and private collectors alike, who have most generously lent items to it. And to curators and dealers who have taken the time to travel northwards to see it, many unannounced, but drawn as we were, to see how it would turn out!



Fig. 1

SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story

Mark Westgarth

SOLD! is the first exhibition of its kind in a public museum. The exhibition directs renewed attention to the history of museum objects through the fascinating story of the history of antique dealing in Britain. SOLD! brings together some world-renowned and familiar museum objects from leading public museum collections, but presents these iconic objects in new and unfamiliar contexts. It retells intriguing tales of expert discoveries and fortunate finds made by antique dealers and reveals the stories, and some of the myths, about antique dealing. SOLD! highlights the extraordinary role that antique dealers have played in the development of public museums

and in the history of collecting and presents an illuminating story of our 200 year-old fascination with 'antiques'.

One of the dominant themes of SOLD! is the relationship between the art market and museums, perhaps a challenging subject for an exhibition in a public museum. Indeed, as one of the opening sections of the exhibition suggests, the contentious relationship between the art market and museums has often surfaced when the presence of the art market is more explicitly registered in its public spaces. In 1924, as the exhibition highlights, the Victoria & Albert Museum displayed a shop



Fig. 2

front, acquired in the previous year, which had formerly been the business premises of A. Hardingham, 'Dealer in Works of Art'. A short article in response to the acquisition quickly followed in the September 1924 edition of *The Connoisseur* magazine. The anonymous writer could not resist the temptation to critique this rather too obvious manifestation of the 'art trade' in the museum, exclaiming in the opening line of the article - '*An antique shop in the Victoria and Albert Museum!*' The inclusion of an exclamation mark in the headline reveals the acute anxiety that surfaces when art and commerce are drawn together so publicly.

This anxious response is a trope of course, one that exemplifies the often contentious but always ambiguous relationship between the museum and the art market. However, the commercial trade in antiques is no mere

ancillary factor in the evolution of public museums. Indeed, as a culturally-regulated space, the museum is just as much involved in the business of trading art and antiques as the antique shop. The museum, as the art historians Joseph and Lisbet Koerner write, '*supports the value of the commercially marketed object by reverentially displaying its 'priceless' twin, rather like the gold once held in public trust against paper currency*'. In this sense, the objects in the museum veil their explicit status as commodity whilst simultaneously acting as cultural prop in the systems of value of the collecting economy. In a sleight of hand performance, the objects in the museum are de-priced (although never de-valued), their commercial market value erased, as they are presented as the bearers of complex, inter-related historical, cultural, social and political meanings.



Fig. 3

One of the key objectives of the SOLD! exhibition is to reveal the latent, often suppressed, story of the art market and to restore it as a fundamental part of the history of museums. SOLD! directs critical attention to these ideas by highlighting the history of museum objects through the previously untold story of antique dealing. The notion of *Verfremdungseffekt*, from the playwright Bertold Brecht (1898-1956), the alienating and destabilising effect that occurs when the illusory 'fourth wall', which is said to exist between the performers of a play and the audience, is shattered, was a crucial idea that underscores the deliberately provocative interpretation strategy of SOLD! The exhibition unveils the constant presence of the art market in the public museum and explicitly foregrounds critical aspects of its processes. For example, the labels on the

objects throughout the exhibition have been intentionally inverted. The generally accepted object-focused information has been placed at the margins of the labels and the names of the dealers and dates when they sold the objects to the various museums substituted in its place. Equally, and perhaps more contentiously, the prices paid for the objects at the time of acquisition, as well as a conversion of that price to its contemporary value, is presented as a vital aspect of the objects on display and an essential part of the object labels. Here, the art market is drawn more explicitly into the biographies of the museum objects.

The exhibition guides the visitor through 200 years of antique dealing in Britain, beginning in the period around 1800 and ending in the period around 2000. The exhibition space has been designed to evoke a cityscape, with



Fig. 4

historic images of antique shop exteriors, interposed with historic images of antique shop interiors, simulating the experience of shopping for antiques and replicating the processes by which objects often end up as museum objects. The exhibition begins with a small, but pivotal, interpretation theme – *What is an Antique?* (see also SOLD! catalogue pp.27-29) This seemingly obvious and by now familiar notion, is used to draw attention to one of the most intriguing aspects of the relationship between museums and the art market - why do the objects we call 'antiques' outside the museum become 'decorative art' once inside the walls of the museum? There is more to this semantic shift, as the SOLD! exhibition suggests.

A number of key supplementary themes, fundamental to the history of antique dealing, are also incorporated into the narrative of

the exhibition. A section on *Patina* (see SOLD! catalogue pp.30-32) directs attention to the importance of discrete values structures within the market for antique furniture. Other sections, devoted to *Fakes & Forgeries* (See SOLD! catalogue pp.33-35), which has a distinctive and enduring role in the history of antique dealers, and *The Auction Ring* (see SOLD! catalogue pp.36-38), which highlights a controversial, but little studied practice within the antique trade, are included to direct further critical attention to the significance of such aspects in the history of antique dealing.

The history of the modern antique trade began in the 19th century and the exhibition recreates a 'curiosity shop' from about 1850 in order to foreground the significance of this earlier history (see fig. 4 and also SOLD! catalogue pp.39-42). The recreated shop is imagined



Fig. 5

to be that of the dealer John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 1*), whose own 'curiosity shop' was at No. 12 Wardour Street in London from 1829 until 1866. The shop is overflowing with the wide range of 'antiques and curiosities' that a dealer from the period just prior to 1850 would have sold.

The exhibition also displays a selection of catalogues and ephemera produced by antique dealer businesses during the 19th and 20th centuries. In the photograph here (see *fig. 5*), marketing brochures and catalogues of dealer's stock from leading firms such as Mallett & Son (a catalogue from 1936) and F W Phillips (catalogues from the 1920s – see *SOLD! catalogue item 9*) are contrasted with lesser known regional antique dealer catalogues, such as that of the Bristol-based 'dealer in antiquities', F W Little. Little's

catalogue, dating from c.1915, adopts an old-fashioned and more economical practice of using printed line drawings (rather than photographs) of the antiques he offered for sale in his shop.

SOLD! concludes with a small display of examples of the rich range of antique dealer archives donated over the past few years to the Brotherton Library Special Collections at the University of Leeds by several leading antique dealers and their families (see *fig. 6*). The archives, seen in public for the first time, include early stock books and photograph albums of c.1900 from the archive of Phillips of Hitchin Antiques; a stock book from the 1960s from the well-known antique dealers Ronald A Lee; and a stock book, also from the 1960s, from the Fulham Road, London, antique dealer H C Baxter & Sons, who famously sold



Fig. 6

the Renaissance bronze figure of Meleager by Antico to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1960 (see *SOLD! catalogue item 16*).

The quality and range of objects on display in *SOLD!* is a testament to the important role that antique dealers have played in the development of public museums throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. And of course, this is also a story that could be told about almost every object in every public museum.

- Fig. 1 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. Exhibition installation. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.
- Fig. 2 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. Exhibition installation. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.
- Fig. 3 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. Exhibition installation Patina, Fakes & Forgeries and The Ring sections. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.
- Fig. 4 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. The 1850 Old Curiosity Shop. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.
- Fig. 5 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. Antique dealer ephemera. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.
- Fig. 6 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. Antique dealer archives. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.



Fig. 7

200 Years of Antique Dealing

Mark Westgarth

Dealers in 'curiosities' have existed since at least the 1600s, but the antique trade in Britain has its beginnings in the opening decades of the 19th century. In about 1816 the first 'antique furniture dealer' appeared in the *Post Office Directories* (see *SOLD! catalogue item 2*) and 'oldness', as a special quality of objects, was beginning to be assigned to an increasing range of material. A 19th century antique dealer sold 'ancient furniture' and 'ancient armour', alongside 'Old Dresden & Old Sevres Porcelain', as well as an array of other 'old' and 'rare' objects described as 'curiosities'. The first half of the 19th century saw a rapid expansion in the antique and curiosity trade in

Britain and by the 1840s there were hundreds of antique dealers in this increasingly diverse economy (see *fig. 7*). London was the primary location for this expansion, fuelled by the regular importation of 'curiosities' gathered by dealers from all over mainland Europe. By the 1850s Wardour Street in London had the largest concentration of antique dealers in Britain. In this early period antique dealing evolved from a complex mix of overlapping craft and trade practices; many antique dealers emerged from the cabinetmaking, upholstery and woodworking trades, other dealers began trading as general merchants before evolving into antique dealers.



Fig. 8

In the 19th century dealers such as John Swaby (c.1782-1859), John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 1*), Henry Farrer (1798-1866) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 5*), Henry Durlacher (b.1826) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 7*), John Webb (1799-1880) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 6*) and Samuel Pratt (1805-1878) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 3*), were influential personalities and helped to form many important private and public collections. By the 1870s antique dealing had expanded to every county in Britain as antique collecting became a vital part of popular culture. Major cities such as Liverpool, Edinburgh and Birmingham had dozens of antique dealers by the end of the century.

By 1900 leading department stores, such as Debenham & Freebody, and major furniture retailers and manufacturers, such as Gillows and Maples, had opened 'antique departments'

in their stores. The fashion for antiques as part of interior decoration in the opening decades of the 20th century encouraged more people to enter the antique trade. The period also saw the numbers of female antique dealers increase rapidly, with prominent dealers such as the 'Misses Woollan', Helen Arabella Woollan and her sister Isabella, who traded from various smart shops in the West End of London during the early 1900s, and Mrs Amelia Hardingham, of Petty France, London, whose shop front survives at the Victoria & Albert Museum (W.88-1923).

In the 1890s and early 1900s the Transatlantic antique trade developed rapidly, with leading British antique dealers, such as C Charles - Charles Duveen (1871-1940), the brother of the famous Joseph Duveen (1869-1939), opening shops in London and New York (see *fig. 8*). Charles Duveen was allegedly paid £1,000



Fig. 9

a year by his brother Joseph for not using the name 'Duveen'; there could only be one Duveen of course. New magazines devoted to art and antique collecting, *The Connoisseur* (est.1901) and *Apollo* (est.1925), allowed antique dealers to promote their businesses with sleek advertisements.

At the beginning of the 20th century antique dealing started to take on a much more familiar form. Whilst the trade in 'curiosities' lingered on into the opening decades of the 20th century, specialist antique dealers also began to emerge in response to the increasing knowledge of dealers and collectors. Bluett & Sons (est.1884) (see fig. 9 and also *SOLD! catalogue item 14*) for Chinese ceramics, Frederick Rathbone (est. c.1883) a leading specialist in 'Old Wedgwood', and Stoner & Evans (est. c.1890) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 13*) for 18th century English

pottery and porcelain. Major antique dealing firms also flourished, with several continuing as leading dealerships throughout the rest of the 20th century, including Mallett & Sons (est.1865) (see *SOLD! catalogue 22 & 23*), M. Harris & Sons (est. 1868) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 12*), Phillips of Hitchin (est. 1882) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 18*), H Blairman & Sons (est. 1884) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 24*), and Frank Partridge & Sons (est.1904) (See *SOLD! catalogue item 11*). Antique dealers began to stage special exhibitions, such as Stoner & Evans' exhibition of *Old English Porcelain* in 1909 (catalogue on display in the *SOLD!* exhibition), and Bluett & Sons who held their first exhibition, *A Collection of Old Chinese Monochrome Porcelain* in 1924.

By the 1910s the antique trade also began to promote itself using distinctive marketing strategies, keying into the evolving fashions for

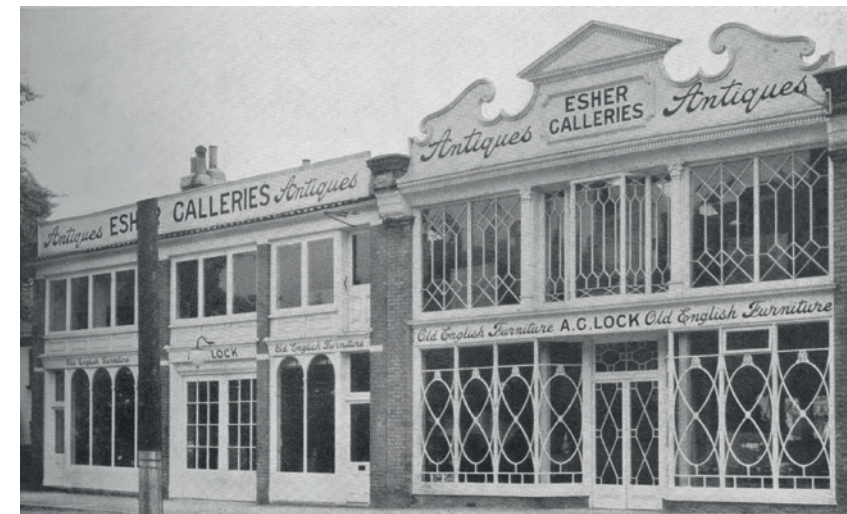


Fig. 10

collecting and furnishing with antiques. In the early 20th century, in response to the fashion for furnishing in 'period style', the 'Old English Furniture' dealer emerged (see fig. 10). Dealers such as F W Phillips (see *SOLD! catalogue item 9*) at the Manor House, Hitchin, and Walter and Ernest Thornton-Smith in Soho Square, London, developed extensive businesses in designing and building reconstructed 'ancient manor' houses using recycled historic building materials, and filling these new-old houses with appropriate antiques. Antique dealers also fuelled the desire for 'period room' furnishings and the taste for 'Medieval' furnishings using 'old oak' and the fashion for 'Queen Anne' and 'Early Georgian' decorations. An expanding range of books on antiques also appeared in the early 20th century, some published by leading antique dealers and decorators such as *The Decoration and Furniture of English Mansions during the*

Seventeenth & Eighteenth Centuries (1909) by Francis Lenygon, of Lenygon's (est. 1904). Such texts fed the evolving markets, encouraging 'period' interior decoration and specialist collecting communities, and increasing the desire for knowledge of antiques.

The antique trade continued to expand during the period after the First World War and by the 1920s the antique trade had become an acknowledged and well-established part of the cultural fabric of Britain. The first British antique trade organisation was founded in 1918 (BADA - The British Antique Dealers' Association), ostensibly in response to the new Labour Government's proposed introduction of a new luxury tax, but also establishing a framework for professional conduct with the antique trade. The development of the BADA shadowed the establishment in 1901 of the



Fig. 11

French antique dealers association, *La Chambre Syndicale des Négociants en Objets D'Art, Tableaux, et Curiosités* (SNA). An international antique dealers association, The International Confederation of Art and Antiques Dealers' Associations (*Confédération Internationale des Négociants en Oeuvres d'Art* (CINOA)) soon followed in 1935. Leading antiques dealers also began to organise high-profile annual antique fairs, the most important of which was The Grosvenor House Antiques Fair in London, which began in 1934. Beyond the upper echelons of the antique trade the popularity of antique collecting continued to expand in the 1930s, stimulated by new magazines directed at a much wider range of antique collectors and furnishers, such as *Antique Collecting* (published from 1930). These new magazines also offered important marketing opportunities for the evolving antiques trade.

The country antique shop, often occupying appropriately 'antique' historic buildings, was beginning to take on a recognisable and familiar form in the 1920 and 1930s - by the late 1960s these archetypal antique shops would become central to the practice of 'antiquing' as locations such as 'The Cotswolds' became intimately associated with the antique trade (see fig. 11). Antique shops also began to appear in increasing numbers in key coastal tourist resorts in the 1920s and 1930s, with Torquay, Bournemouth, Portsmouth and Brighton attracting hundreds of dealers. As the antique shop evolved to become a central aspect of British leisure culture and tourism the antique trade also settled in growing numbers in locations associated with Heritage tourism, such as Bath, which had more than 75 dealers by the early 1940s, and York and Norwich, which each had more than 50 dealers by the same time.



Fig. 12

After the Second World War antique dealing expanded even further, with many former collectors and members of the professional classes entering into the business. Former members of the armed services, often also amateur collectors themselves, opened antique shops and the antique trade settled into regular and familiar patterns of trading activities; the famous 'pyramid' structure, with a flow of high quality objects gathered by hundreds of dealers across Britain gravitating, through dealer-to-dealer trading, to high-end retailers in London. Inter-dealer trading sustained this finely balanced ecology. In the 1950s and 1960s many commuter and satellite towns in the southern counties of England around London, in Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Kent and Hampshire, developed thriving antique businesses (see fig. 12). These businesses serviced the local and the tourist economy and those furnishing second homes,

but were also a central node in the inter-dealer trading that maintained the trade.

However, London still dominated the antique trade with the greatest concentration of dealers. Amongst the dealers who rose to prominence at this time were the Lee family, established by Henry Morton Lee in the 1910s and continued by Ronald A Lee (1913-2000) from 1949 (see *SOLD! catalogue item 20*). Within London the antique trade had been associated with specific locations since its beginnings in the early 19th century, with sites such as Wardour Street and Hanway Street, where the shops of dealers Henry Farrer (see *SOLD! catalogue item 5*) and Edward Baldock (see *SOLD! catalogue item 2*), were situated, becoming sites of pilgrimage for leading collectors in the 1850s and 1860s. By the 1950s and 1960s new locations in London had taken their place, with many major thoroughfares



Fig. 13

becoming the preferred choice of leading antique dealers. These locations often acted as a magnet for many more dealers, with scores of antique shops opening in a single street. Locations such as Brompton Road in Knightsbridge, the King's Road in Chelsea, Church Street in Kensington and Mount Street in Mayfair, became synonymous with antique dealing.

In the 1950s the export trade became an important element in the history of the antique trade. The British antique trade had of course been exporting antiques to the USA since the late 19th century, but in the Post-Second World War consumer boom and the rapidly expanding economy in the USA this trade increased rapidly. John Bell of Aberdeen exemplifies the significance of this aspect of the antique trade. Bell was located in the remote regions of northern Scotland, well

away from the historic centre of the antique trade in London, but developed an extensive business selling to American and international buyers (see figs. 13 & 14).

Many other dealers emerged on the back of this market, building vast export businesses, feeding the international market with regular shipments of antiques. Run-of-the-mill, generally Victorian and Edwardian antique furniture, known 'Shipping Goods', were sold by the container load, shipped to America and Australia, with dealers selling from redundant barns and farmsteads, from warehouses on the edges of towns and on industrial estates.

In the 1960s and 1970s the temporary, open air market locations such as Bermondsey and Portobello in London, which had developed in the late 1940s and early 1950s, propagated new kinds



Fig. 14

of permanent 'antique centres'. Camden Passage in 1960, Chelsea 'Antiques Centre' in 1965, the 'Antique Hypermarket' in Kensington in 1968 (see fig. 15), with a similar 'Antique Hypermarket' in Edinburgh opening in 1972. Regional antique centres followed, with the Woburn Abbey antique centre in 1967 and Bath's 'Guinea Lane' in 1968. In this rapidly changing geography, more than 50 antique centres emerged in the period from 1950 to 1980. As antique dealing became a popular pastime, a further raft of popular publications devoted to antiques also emerged in the Post-Second World War period, with magazines such as *Antique Dealer & Collector's Guide* (from 1947) and *Antique Collecting* (from 1968).

However, by the mid-1990s there was a rapid contraction and decisive transformation in the antique trade. Many leading antique dealer firms closed for business, some that had

been established for more than a generation. The once ubiquitous antique shop began to disappear from the high street. Many kinds of traditional antiques fell out of fashion as result of changes in lifestyle and ways of living. Antique furniture in particular, which had always been a key staple of the antique trade but had risen considerably in value in the overheated markets in the 1980s, was particularly badly hit. Antique furniture was no longer considered fashionable or desirable. Houses in general were smaller, apartments became the fashion for city living, and rooms were unable to accommodate Georgian sideboards and dining tables, which also represented unfashionable formal social practices. Auctioneers, such as Christie's and Sotheby's, which had traditionally been the wholesalers for the antique trade, began to court the private buyer to a much greater extent in the 1980s, taking market share from the traditional



Fig. 15

antique trade. Patterns for collecting antiques also changed and there was a renewed interest in contemporary design; 'retro' and 'vintage' objects became the 'new antiques'. The decline of the traditional antiques trade can also be related to the 'digital turn', driven by new and emerging digital technologies, which have recalibrated our connections to history, fragmented and dismembered established knowledge structures and dissolved the discrete notions of expertise that underpinned the development of the antique trade. But 'Antique Dealing' has continued, new dealers have emerged and many established dealers have adapted their businesses to the challenges of the contemporary world. A process of transformation that ushered in the modern antiques trade 200 years ago has once again given birth to new interests, new modes of selling and a renewed relationship to the objects from the past.

- Fig. 7 Fenton's 'Old Curiosity Shop' Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, c.1850 (SROB/K511/1100). Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds branch.
- Fig. 8 C Charles, 27-29 Brook Street, London, shop interior, circa 1900. Photograph *The Connoisseur* September 1903.
- Fig. 9 Bluett & Sons, Davies Street, London, shop interior 1926. Photograph courtesy of Dominic Jellinek.
- Fig. 10 A.C. Lock, 'Old English Furniture' Esher, Surrey c.1936. Photograph *The Connoisseur* April 1936.
- Fig. 11 Christie Antiques (G C Pritchard and S L Coldicott), Yew Tree House, Broadway, Worcestershire, c.1950. Photograph *Antiques Year Book 1953* (Tantivy Press) 1953.
- Fig. 12 G Oliver & Sons, Guildford, Surrey, shop interior circa 1950. Photograph *Antiques Yearbook 1950* (Tantivy Press).
- Figs. 13 & 14 John Bell of Aberdeen, Bridge Street, Aberdeen, shop exterior and interior, c.1957. Photograph *Antiques Year Book 1957* (Tantivy Press) 1957.
- Fig. 15 The Antique Hypermarket, Kensington, London 1971. Photograph ©TrainsandStuff.



Fig. 16

What is an Antique?

Mark Westgarth

Antiques, as a category of objects, is a much more complex and multifaceted term than is generally thought. Objects do not start off as antiques of course, antiques are constantly evolving with the passage of time. The two objects on display in this section of the SOLD! exhibition, one conventionally an antique, the other an example of the current interest in 'retro' and 'vintage' furniture, are a reminder that the category of objects that comprise antiques is constantly shifting and is continuously reframed by contemporary value structures.

But even if we accept that antiques must be of a particular age, varying degrees of oldness

have been used to define antiques at different times. In the 18th century an antique was an object from the Ancient Classical World of Rome and Greece – at least 1500 years old. By the early 19th century the term antique was being associated with a much wider range of objects. For example, at the auction sale of the contents of Wanstead House in 1822, the old furniture and effects were given an extra gloss of cultural significance and economic value by being categorised as 'antique'; 'an *Antique* Parisian Marquetry Rotary Work Table' (lot 63, 3rd day of auction); 'A Curious *Antique* Square Lady's Work Box..' (lot 34, 4th day of auction); 'Two Very Valuable *Antique* Oriental Ebony Panelled Frame



Fig. 17

Chairs..’ (lot 13, 16th day of auction). Over the course of the 19th century there was a gradual drift in the conventional usage of the term ‘antique’ from an adjective to a noun; from, for example, the descriptive ‘antique furniture’ to the general collective noun, ‘antiques’.

Since the early 20th century the accepted definition of antiques has been objects that were at least 100 years old. This definition was established in the USA by the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, which exempted objects made before 1830, and thus defined as at least 100 years old at the time, from importation taxes to the USA. Since that time the ‘100 year rule’ has been generally adopted by the antiques trade in both the USA and in Britain. In 1934 for example, at the very first of the Grosvenor House Antiques Fairs in London, then the premier antique fair in the world, the

catalogue stated that ‘all objects for sale are not less than 100 years old.’

The 100 year rule was reinforced in 1966 when the USA introduced a new tariff law that specifically stipulated that the definition of antiques should be any objects ‘made prior to 100 years before the date of entry’ into the USA. And current UK VAT and Import Tax & Customs Duty legislation define an antique as an object that is ‘in excess of 100 years old’. However, this 100 year rule, whilst a widely accepted definition of an antique, has not always been applied universally. The Grosvenor House Antiques Fair retained the definition of an antique as objects ‘made prior to 1830’ in their antique fairs right up to 1979. The definition of an antique here was proscribed by the context of Industrial production and the general lack of interest in objects from

the Victorian period by leading members of the antique trade at the time. And in the 1950s Export licensing in Britain defined an antique as ‘any article manufactured 75 years ago, or more’ (which then meant objects that were produced prior to 1875). In the same period, the British Antique Dealers’ Association would only issue certificates of authenticity for antiques that were over 100 years old (or objects that were produced prior to 1850).

Notwithstanding these complex and shifting patterns of ‘oldness’, the relationship between antiques and second-hand objects is also highly significant. Dealers in second-hand goods and dealers in antiques have long since operated alongside one another. For example, in late 18th century Venice the registers of the Guild for the second-hand traders began to make distinctions between dealers in ‘anticaglie’ (antique stuff) and dealers in second-hand goods in their records. In the 19th century, as this watercolour (see fig. 17), dated 1847, of the shop of William Schofield, ‘furniture broker’ of 36 Holywell Street, London, illustrates, the relationships between second-hand furniture and antique furniture was complex and fluid. Schofield’s shop illustrates the kinds of objects that a mid-19th century second-hand dealer sold, with a jumble of furniture discarded by its owners, deemed either unfashionable or beyond repair. But among the jumble are objects that, within a decade or so, would be cherished as precious ‘antiques’. Whilst dealers such as Schofield remained at the margins of the more discrete trade in antiques, their practices illustrate the continuing relationships between the second-hand trade and the more specialised practices undertaken by antique dealers.

But antiques are not solely defined by their oldness. Antiques, are signifiers of taste, collecting and changing fashion. They also have associations with wealth, especially hereditary wealth – objects passed down from generation to generation, and are intimately bound up with notions of social identity and

cultural competence. The objects on display here remind us that the category of objects that comprise antiques is much more than a dry legally proscribed term, but is constantly changing and is always situated within broader fields of social and cultural meaning.

Fig. 16 SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story. Exhibition installation. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.

Fig. 17 William Schofield’s shop at 36 Holywell Street, London 1847. *Old Entrance to Lyon’s Inn, Holywell Street, Strand, April 1847*, John Wykeham Archer, watercolour, 1847. On loan from the British Museum. Image © Trustees of the British Museum.

PATINA

The relationship between antique dealers and public museum collections may be a key aspect of the 20th century, but antique dealers also sold objects, and antique furniture in particular, to private collectors and to those furnishing their homes. One of the most important aspects of the market for antique furniture has been the object's 'patina'. Patina is the visual and tactile evidence of oldness; the rich surface, formed by a combination of the natural ageing processes and oxidation of wood, and the rubbing, dusting and waxing of the surfaces.

'Patina' has been seen as one of the main signs of the age and authenticity of objects. The term 'patina' was in use long before its particular associations with antique furniture. One official definition is an 'incrustation, usually green, on the surface of old bronzes' (known as 'verdigris'). The importance of patina within the markets for bronzes and for coins and medals dates back to at least the 18th century. Of course, 'patina' does not have been used in the 19th century. There were several recipes for polishes that would darken and artificially age the wooden surfaces of 'ancient furniture'.

'Patina' only really emerged as an indicator of oldness and as a key aspect of our interest in antique furniture during the 19th century. Dealers such as Norman Adams (1905-1979), who began trading in the 1920s, became famous for specializing in antique furniture with 'patina'. The value assigned to the humblest piece of antique furniture can rise dramatically if the object has 'patina'. The two sheets of drawers here exemplify the rich surface 'patina' that some pieces of antique furniture managed to acquire over time. 'Patina' remains a quality much admired by dealers and collectors alike.



Fig. 18

Patina Mark Westgarth

The relationship between antique dealers and the public museum is a dominant theme of SOLD! Museum acquisitions are driven by the requirement that objects have significance within a museum's collecting policy, whether this is part of a formally agreed document, or through the more informal interests and expertise of individual curators. In this sense, 'museum quality', however that might be framed, is the main criteria for any acquisition, and the objects on display in the SOLD! exhibition reflect those priorities. Historically of course, antique dealers have not only sold antiques to museums. Indeed, the vast majority of antiques sold by dealers have been sold to private collectors

and to those furnishing their homes. In this market one of the most important and desirable qualities of antique furniture has been the object's patina. Patina is the visual and tactile evidence of oldness; the rich surface, formed by a combination of the natural ageing processes and oxidation of wood, and the rubbing, dusting and waxing of the surfaces. The value assigned to the humblest piece of antique furniture can raise dramatically if the object has patina.

Genuine patina is impossible to fake, but antique furniture can be artificially aged of course. Indeed, in the 1820s, when interest in 'antique furniture' was first emerging, there were several



Fig. 19

recipes for polishes that would darken and artificially age the wooden surfaces of 'ancient furniture'. One hundred years later, in the 1920s, the industrialist André Mailfert (1884-1943), well-known for production of reproduction antique furniture, offered boxes of 'patina' ready for use – which he enigmatically called 'antiques dealer patina'. Of course, the term patina was in use long before its particular associations with antique furniture. One official definition is an 'incrustation, usually green, on the surface of old bronzes' (known as 'verdigris'), and the importance of patina within the markets for bronzes and for coins and medals dates back to at least the 18th century. The importance of patina on antique furniture only really emerged as an indicator of oldness, and as a key aspect of our interest in antique furniture, during the 1880s, and in this sense the love of patina is a peculiarly 'modern' phenomena.

Patina is seen as one of the key visual markers for the genuineness of antique furniture and is synonymous with authenticity. Indeed, it is from the 1880s that antique dealers also began to stress the authenticity of antique furniture by drawing attention to the importance of patina. Since the opening decades of the 20th century many antique dealers have cultivated the market for antique furniture with outstanding patina. Several antique dealers became leading specialists for antique furniture with patina and two dealers in particular, Norman Adams and Apter-Fredericks, emerged as leading dealers in antique English furniture with exceptional patina. Norman Adams (1905-1979) began trading in the 1920s and established a shop in Hans Road, Knightsbridge, London which became a mecca for collectors seeking out antique furniture with rich patina.



Fig. 20

Apter-Fredericks was initially established by Alfred C Fredericks in 1946 after the Second World War, before Bernard Apter (1935-2019) joined the current business in the 1960s; it is now run by Guy and Harry Apter, the sons of Bernard Apter (see *fig. 20*). The two 18th century chests of drawers on display in the SOLD! exhibition (see *fig. 18*), on loan from private collectors via Apter-Fredericks, have been part of the stock of Apter-Fredericks on several occasions, and exemplify the rich surface patina that some pieces of antique furniture manage to acquire over time. The walnut chest of drawers, dating from about 1720 (see *fig. 19*), has acquired a golden toffee-textured colour, highly prized by dealers and collectors alike and demonstrates the importance and the desirability of patina on antique furniture.

Fig. 18 SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story. Exhibition installation, 'Patina'. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.

Fig. 19 Walnut Chest of Drawers, c.1720. On loan from a private collection. Photograph © Apter-Fredericks Antiques.

Fig. 20 Apter-Fredericks shop, Fulham Road, London, c.1978. Photograph courtesy of Guy and Harry Apter of Apter-Fredericks.



Fig. 21

Fakes and Forgeries *Mark Westgarth*

The association between antique dealers and fakes and forgeries is part of an enduring legacy in the history of the trade and the biography of antique dealers. Indeed, the 'idea' of the antique dealer has often been dominated by associations with these dubious and problematic practices and historians of collecting have regularly aired a note of caution when the dealer makes an appearance in the biography of an object. In the 19th century these associations were particularly acute. For example, in 1852 the well-known collector and administrator of the British Museum, A W Franks (1826-1897), commented; *the value of objects is frequently lost when they pass*

through a dealer's hands; their authenticity is destroyed and their history mutilated. Or they acquire a pedigree which only misleads the unwary archaeologist. Such negative associations have continued into contemporary culture, exemplified by a comment by the former curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Clive Wainwright (1942-1999), who observed; *It is a curious aspect of objects which have been in the hands of dealers that if they have ever been suspected of being fakes, or of having been in some way altered or improved, then this reputation clings to them however hard scholars try to dispel it.*



Fig. 22

But of course, the association between dealers and fakes and forgeries is also a cultural conceit, one that is perhaps emblematic of our anxiety of the inherently problematic relationship between art and money. The inclusion of the two objects on display in this section of the SOLD! exhibition, both 19th century fakes, is not to confirm, nor to reinforce, the stereotype of the antique dealer as the main source of fakes and forgeries, but rather to act as a critical catalyst and to draw attention to the wider contexts for the continued associations between antique dealers and fakes and forgeries.

The well-known dealer in 'ancient armour' Samuel Pratt (1805-1878) was the source of the fake 12th century 'Great Helm' that is on display (see fig. 22). Pratt sold the helm, together with a similar helm, to the Tower Armouries for £80 in 1851 (see also *SOLD! catalogue item 27*). Pratt,

together with the tinsmith and gunsmith Thomas Grimshaw, propagated many examples of fake arms and armour, particularly large helms such as this, often giving them fictitious provenances. Pratt was one of the most important, influential and knowledgeable dealers in ancient armour of the 19th century, but today objects that have a provenance to Samuel Pratt often automatically place them within the fake category, until it is proven to be otherwise.

The other object on display was considered to be a Renaissance marble relief, attributed to Desiderio da Settignano (c.1428-1464) when it first entered the collections of the South Kensington Museum (V&A Museum) in 1857 (see fig. 23 and also *Sold! catalogue item 28*). The marble relief was acquired in Paris and was formerly owned by the curiosity dealer Giovanni Freppa (1795-1870), who traded in



Fig. 23

Florence between the 1840s and 1860s. It was commissioned by Freppa from the sculptor Giovanni Bastianini (1830-1868) in about 1855 and was one of a number of copies and fakes of Renaissance sculptures that Freppa commissioned and sold to several major collectors and museums in the middle decades of the 19th century.

The two objects – one black, one white – have been deliberately chosen to visually draw attention to the binary nature of the authentic and the fake. That the two objects on display here were created in an attempt to deceive is not in question. But whilst the objects signify the certainty of authenticity, in reality authenticity is a mutable, historically contingent and transient notion, determined as much by social valuation as by any intrinsic properties of historical objects themselves. In this sense

it is a notion that is never so 'black and white'; as the critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) reminds us, 'authenticity always transcends mere genuineness.'

Fig. 21 SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story. Exhibition installation 'Fakes and Forgeries'. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.

Fig. 22 'Ancient Helm' c.1850. On loan from The Royal Armouries, London. Photograph © The Royal Armouries. Sold by Samuel Pratt to the Royal Armouries in 1851.

Fig. 23 Marble Relief, 'Virgin and Child with Cherubs', c.1855, by Giovanni Bastianini (1830-1868). On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photograph © The Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 24

The Auction Ring

Mark Westgarth

The auction ring, also known as the 'knockout', is a contentious but crucial aspect in the history of the antique trade. The practice of the ring dates back to at least the mid-18th century and became an extremely common practice in the expanding art market of the 19th century, where it was also known as 'the combination'. The ring involves a group of dealers agreeing not to bid in competition with each other for an object or number of objects at an auction sale. One dealer is designated by all dealers participating in the ring to bid for the object; the object is then re-auctioned in the 'knockout' by the dealers in a private auction, often outside the auction room after the sale.

The resulting price difference between the object sold at the public auction and the price eventually realised during the private auction is distributed amongst the participants.

The practice of the ring was legal throughout the 19th century, but this did not stop criticism of dealer rings in the 19th century art world. Newspaper reports regularly commented on the activities of dealers and the ring, often with salacious headlines – 'Picture Brokers' Dodges' and 'Tricks of Furniture Brokers'. In January 1864 for example, *The Daily Advertiser* reported on 'the knockout', as they called it, writing that *'the brokers – the habitual*



Fig. 25

attenders and largest, if not indeed, often the only buyers at sales by auction – have a practice of never bidding against each other.' The anonymous writer, continued, complaining, *'there is as much roguery in one shape or other at sales by auction as in any commercial transaction one can name.'* Despite such public criticisms the practice of the ring continued and it was not until the 1920s that the legitimacy of the practice began to be more formally and legally questioned. In 1920 the first court case (Rawlings vs General Trading Company) was heard, following an auction sale organised by the Ministry of Munitions, but the case did not result in a change in the law. However, following further criticism of the practice, participation in the ring was finally made a criminal offence in the Auctions, (Bidding Agreements) Act 1927, following a court case in 1926 (Cohen vs Roche).

Not all antique dealers have participated in the ring of course, and many dealers were publicly and vocally critical of the practice, especially after the establishment of organisations such as the British Antique Dealers' Association (BADA) in 1918 and the criminalisation of participation in the ring in 1927. But the ring continued, and indeed one could say that the practice became endemic in the period after World War II. During the early 1960s journalists were actively seeking incidents of the ring and in 1964 *The Sunday Times* published a report of a 'Chippendale Commode' allegedly sold for £750 at a country auction, being subsequently 'knocked out' for £4,000 in the ring. The incident was very widely reported in several other newspapers at the time, leading to Members of Parliament taking up the matter with Scotland Yard, although there were no criminal prosecutions, not least because

participation in the ring is exceptionally difficult to prove in a court of law.

However, the resulting publicity led to some high profile resignations from the British Antique Dealers' Association in 1965. The BADA had always been a vocal opponent of the practice and responded by strongly contesting the aspersions cast in the sensationalist newspaper reports. The BADA reiterated their long-standing criticism of the ring; the then Secretary of the BADA, Mann Dyson, issued a statement; *'This council is determined to take steps to prevent members of the association taking part in illegal knockouts.'* As a result, the BADA tightened up their formal requirements for membership, making it a stipulation that members must not participate in the ring.

Yet the ring continued as a practice, and public criticism intensified, with the issue coming to a head in the infamous 'Duccio Affair' in 1968. The painting on display (see fig. 25), attributed to Duccio (d.1319) when it was acquired, although it is now reattributed to Ugolino di Nerio (fl. 1317-1329), a follower of Duccio, was at the centre of the most high profile auction ring of the 20th century (See also *SOLD! catalogue item 29*). It was bought by the art dealer Julius Weitzner (1895-1986) at the auction of the contents of Aldwick Court, Somerset, in March 1968. Weitzner paid £2,700 for the painting, which was subsequently 'knocked out' by a group of dealers, who had decamped for lunch at the wonderfully named Paradise Motel, in Wrington, near to Aldwick Court. Weitzner ended up with the painting and eventually sold it to the National Gallery, London, for £151,102.

Reports that the 'Duccio' had only made £2,700 at the auction and yet was subsequently sold by Weitzner to the National Gallery for such an enormous sum of money led to detailed scrutiny of the auction. Journalists Timothy Giles and Nicholas Tomalin exposed the 'Duccio' auction ring and the dealers involved, in a series of sensational articles published in *The Sunday Times* in October and November 1968. The reports led to formal questions

in Parliament and an inquiry by the Director of Public Prosecutions. However, because the ring took place outside of the 3 month limit of the statute of limitations no criminal prosecutions were made. The extraordinary 'Duccio Affair' did have an effect however, ushering in the Auctions (Bidding Agreement Act) 1969, which tightened up the criminal sanctions for participation in the ring.

Fig. 24 *SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story*. Exhibition installation 'The Auction Ring'. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.

Fig. 25 Attributed to Ugolino di Nerio. *The Virgin and Child with Four Angels*. Photograph © The National Gallery, London. Bought with contributions from the Lewis Fund and the National Art Collections Fund (Eugene Cremetti Fund), 1968. Sold by Julius Weitzner to the National Gallery in 1968.



Fig. 26

The 1850 Old Curiosity Shop *Simon Spier*

The sense of abundance and chaos in the archetypal curiosity shop is something that has been reinforced by visual representations of antique shops, and for our recreation of an antique shop of c.1850, John Watkins Chapman's *The Old Curiosity Shop* (c.1885) was a key resource (see fig. 26). The main inspiration for Chapman's painting was Charles Dickens' novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* published in 1840-41; he has included Little Nell, the grand-daughter of the tale's curiosity shop owner (who can be glimpsed in the back room of the shop), perched on an antique X-frame chair in the centre. Prevalent in the image is the huge suit of armour, a desirable object

throughout the first half of the 19th century, and thanks to generous loans of 'ancient arms and armour' from Preston Park Museum this taste could be suitably represented. But an 1880s representation of an 1850 antique shop had some pitfalls we had to be aware of too. For instance, the small portrait painting appears to represent Joshua Reynolds' *Simplicity* of 1789 (now at Waddesdon Manor). This is certainly a red herring as it was not until later in the 1870s that the fashion for 18th century British portraits took off, initiated by high profile picture dealers such as Thomas Agnew & Sons, rather than curiosity dealers. Instead these curiosity shops would have purveyed



Fig. 27

much earlier portraits, or religious works of 'primitive' painters, with subject matter of a more antiquarian interest. A representative sample was selected in this instance from The Bowes Museum's own collection (B.M. 794) and an 'Early English Portrait', borrowed from the collection of the antique dealer and television personality David Harper.

Besides Chapman's painting, there were many textual sources that could be relied upon to get a sense of the stock of the mid-19th century curiosity dealer. For example, Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw's publication *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* of 1836, which illustrates 16th and 17th century pieces of furniture fashionable amongst collectors at the time. For this reason it felt necessary for the curiosity shop to have a number of large pieces of 16th and 17th century oak furniture;

the more ornamental the better. The Society of Art 'Exhibition of Ancient and Medieval Art', which took place in 1850, also gave a good idea of the endurance of the taste for these objects, and others, throughout the 1830s and 40s. It can be said with certainty that the types of objects that appeared at this exhibition, such as Italian maiolica, or 'Raphaelware', Delftware and other Renaissance style ceramics would have appeared in the best antique shops in the 1840s. The old curiosity shop is lucky enough to hold a number of these pieces, such as the dated majolica plaque in the style of Lucca della Robbia, from the collections of The Bowes Museum (X.1559).

Indeed, the obvious starting point for recreating the mid-19th-century curiosity shop was The Bowes Museum's own rich collections. As has been briefly touched upon by Howard



Fig. 28

Coutts and Jane Whittaker in their essay on the historic relationship between the museum and the antique trade (see pp.109-110), we know John and Joséphine Bowes visited London-based antique dealers during 1870-71 when they left Paris to escape the Commune. It is fair to say the Bowes' purchased objects in vast quantities and not always of high value, so the items they accrued would only partially represent the stock of a premier London antique dealer of about 1850. That is not to say that the bulk of the curiosity shop's stock is not drawn from the Bowes Museum's collection, but it was also prudent to look elsewhere for the wide range of objects required for the shop.

Given its strong relationship with the antiques trade, Barnard Castle itself was an obvious place to look for objects. The young Charles Dickens visited the area

researching for his novel *Nicholas Nickleby*. However, Dickens was to take away from the area much more than just 'Dotheboys Hall', the inhuman boarding school in which Nicholas spends an unhappy part of the story. In the market place of Barnard Castle, Dickens visited the workshop of the clockmaker Thomas Humphrey, an event that stayed with the author and inspired the name of his serial *Master Humphrey's Clock*. It was this periodical in which was first printed the serialised version of *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 1840-41, and Master Humphrey himself acted as the novel's narrator for the first three chapters. Considering The Bowes Museum collection holds longcase clocks made by Thomas Humphrey, and it is inside these where he stashed the manuscripts for his stories, the association is all the more poignant.

Besides the fictitious associations between Barnard Castle and antique shops, there is a very concrete relationship between the trade and the town. It appears the antiques trade only properly developed in Barnard Castle in the twentieth century, with one or two antique dealers appearing in the pages of *The Teesdale Mercury* and in the Durham county directories before 1914. The presence of joiners and antique and second-hand furniture dealers on the Bank – now well-known for its antique shops – such as Jeremiah Jackson and John Brown’s commercial premises’ suggests a small hub for the furniture trade before this date, which is a known catalyst for attracting antique dealers. Possibly the first antique dealer proper to set up on the Bank was John Evans, classified as an ‘Antique Furniture Dealer’ in the 1920s. By at least the 1930s the artist and antique dealer Victor Mazzini Walton had set up shop in Blagraves House, the oldest house in Barnard Castle. Walton turned the house into a theatrical showroom which operated under various names such as ‘Cromwell House’, ‘The Cromwell Museum’ and ‘The House of Mystery’, but was replete with period and historicist Elizabethan and Jacobean furniture and objects which were presumably for sale. Blagraves is now a restaurant but the current owner, Ken Marley, is keenly aware of the house’s history and its role in the cultural life of antique dealing on the Bank. Ken was immensely helpful in assembling information and inspiration for the community engagement aspects of the recreation of the old curiosity shop, even if he could not lend a specific object to tell their story. However, several antique dealers and collectors in Barnard Castle and the surrounding area were able to help with assembling the old curiosity shop. Our community of antique dealers and collectors was exceptionally helpful and supportive, and from this community we were able to borrow a rare 17th century enamel candlestick, 16th and 17th century brassware, 18th century glass, ‘ancient furniture’, objects from ancient Rome, and a Chinese Ming

dynasty figure. All of which helped to recreate the effect we wanted, the sense of profusion, eclecticism and wonder, of an old curiosity shop from 1850.

CATALOGUE

Mark Westgarth

Fig. 26 John Watkins Chapman (1832-1903), *The Old Curiosity Shop* c.1885. Private Collection. Photograph © Bridgeman Art Library.

Fig. 27 SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story. Exhibition installation, the 1850 Old Curiosity Shop. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.

Fig. 28 SOLD! The Great British Antiques Story. Interior views of the 1850 Old Curiosity Shop. Photograph © The Bowes Museum 2019.

Note: Value conversions for the contemporary equivalent of the prices paid for objects at the time they were acquired are included for all objects in the SOLD! exhibition if they were acquired in the period before World War II. After that, only the price paid for the object at the time of acquisition is included. All value conversions use measuringworth.com using the ‘income value’ to calculate the equivalent money needed to buy the object at the time of acquisition.

1 John Coleman Isaac c.1820s

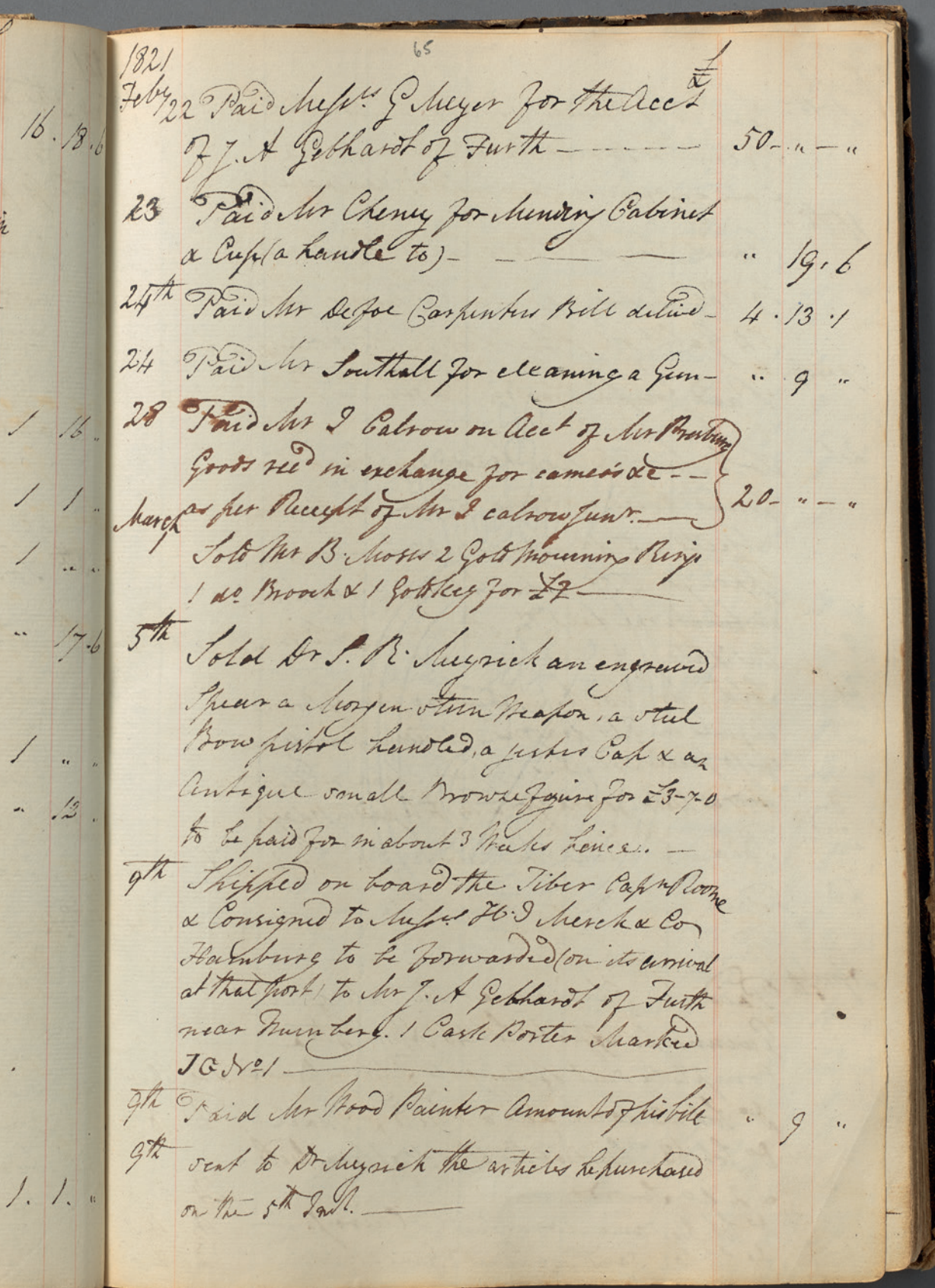


This 'Waste Book' is a very rare survival of an early 19th century curiosity dealer's business records. A waste book was typically a bound volume detailing the daily trading activities of a business and included notices of sales and sometimes notes of events and incidents, as well as recording receipts and expenditure in order of their occurrence. 'Waste Book', 'Day Book' and 'Journal' were often used interchangeably in the 19th century. The Waste Book records the curiosity business of John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887) over the period from c.1825 to 1845, but it begins in 1815 with the business of Isaac's brother-in-law Abraham Davies (d.1822), who with his father Gabriel Davies (c.1760-1838) and his sister Sarah (d.1875) ran the business until c.1825 from 41 Craven Street, London. Isaac married Sarah Davies in 1824/25 and moved the business to No.12 Wardour Street in 1829, where he remained until his retirement in 1868. Wardour Street was one the most important locations in Britain for antiques and curiosities at the time with scores of dealers gravitating there during the 1830s and 1840s. The Waste Book also demonstrates how influential Isaac was in the formation of many of the most important collections in the 19th century; there are hundreds of transactions with many leading collectors of the day, including the ancient armour collector Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1782-1848), the well-known collectors of Medieval and Renaissance works of art, Ralph Bernal (1784-1854), Andrew Fountaine (1808-1873) and Hollingworth Magniac (1786-1867) and high profile and influential individuals, including the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Duke of Rutland, the Earl of Cadogan, and Lord Lowther. But perhaps more importantly for the SOLD! exhibition are the hundreds of transactions recorded with fellow antique dealers, illustrating the extraordinary networks of dealers in the opening decades of early 19th century. (see also the biography of John Coleman Isaac by Martin Levy in Dealer Biographies section of the SOLD! catalogue)

On loan from a private collection.

Above: A Meissen potpourri vase and cover, c.1750, possibly modelled by Johann Gottlieb Ehder (c.1803-1887). From the personal collection of John Coleman Isaac. Private Collection.

Left: Curiosity Dealer's 'Waste Book', early 19th century. Photograph © H. Blairman & Sons, London.



2 Edward Holmes Baldock 1830s



This 18th century French 'antique' table was formerly in the collection of the Dukes of Portland at Welbeck Abbey. The 4th Duke of Portland was a known customer of the antique dealer Edward Holmes Baldock (1777-1845) and he may have supplied the table to the Duke in the 1830s. Baldock was well-known for the retailing 'old' French furniture, which became very fashionable in the opening decades of the 19th century, partly due to its associations with the Ancien Régime following the French Revolution in 1789. Baldock is considered to be one the first 'antique furniture dealers' and is listed as such in Post Office Directories by 1816. He sold antique furniture to many influential customers, including George IV for Windsor Castle in the 1820s and the Duke of Buccleuch in the 1830s and 1840s, to whom Baldock supplied a similar table for £130 in 1830. Baldock's shop in Hanway Street, London was well-known in the 19th century, attracting collectors and celebrities of the day. He was one of the most high profile dealers in the 19th century and retired from dealing in 1843 as a wealthy Gentleman, registering a Coat of Arms with the Royal College of Heralds. In 1864, long after the death of Baldock, his shop was still remembered; 'Aleph' writing, '*Baldock's old china shop, [was] a sort of museum for Chinese horses and dragons, queer-looking green vases, and doll-sized cups..*' The author Byron Webber (1838-1913), wrote in 1903 that Baldock was '*the greatest dealer of the [last] century, and was known in every capital of Europe.*' (see also the biography of Edward Holmes Baldock by Martin Levy in Dealer Biographies section of the SOLD! catalogue)

The table is one of 10 known examples; Baldock supplied a similar table to the Duke of Buccleuch in 1830 charging the Duke £130, which was worth about £156,000 in 1830.

From the collections of The Bowes Museum.

Above: Memorial Stone, Edward Holmes Baldock (1845) St. Pancras New Church, London. *Wikicommons* CC BY-SA.4.0 Edwardx (2015).

Left: Sevres-mounted table, by Martin Carlin (c.1730-1785) circa 1770; tulipwood with ormolu mounts. Photograph © The Bowes Museum.



3 Samuel & Henry Pratt 1840

This suit of 'ancient armour' was sold by the dealers Samuel & Henry Pratt to the Royal Armouries in London in 1840. Samuel Pratt (1805-1878), together with his younger brother Henry, were described as 'Importers of ancient furniture and armour' at their shop in fashionable New Bond Street in London in the 1840s. The Pratt family were better known as manufacturers and retailers of invalid furniture, trunks and luggage, a business established by their father, Samuel Pratt snr. (d.1849) in the opening decades of the 19th century. As dealers in ancient armour Samuel Jnr and Henry were amongst the earliest specialist antique dealers. Samuel Pratt Jnr acquired this suit of armour in Italy from the collections of 'Count Hector Oddi of Padua' whilst on one of his regular buying trips to the Continent. The brothers displayed the armour in 'The Gothic Armoury' at 3 Grosvenor Street in 1838, a temporary exhibition fitted out by the architect Lewis N. Cottingham (1787-1847) and for which they charged 1 shilling admission. The Pratt family were highly entrepreneurial, they were responsible for patents for coil springs for upholstery and for luggage straps; they were also amongst the first antique dealers to issue catalogues of their stock. The Gothic Armoury seems to have been an elaborate marketing exercise, generating income but also allowing Pratt to increase interest in collecting and displaying ancient armour.

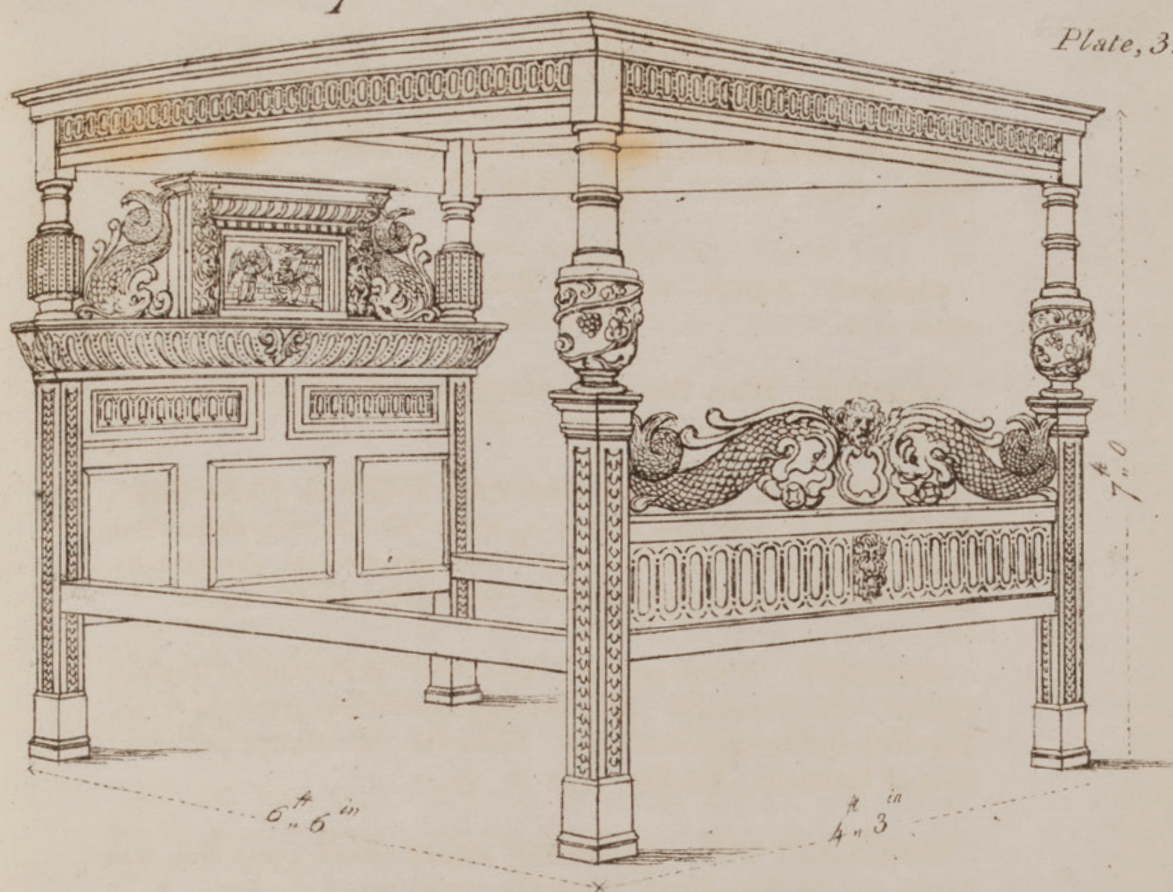
By the 1860s Samuel Pratt Jnr was trading as 'antique furniture dealer'. His brother Henry had left the family business and was working for the 'curiosity dealer' Samuel Clare as manager of his 'Gallery of Antiquities and Ancient Furniture' in Marlborough Street, London. (see also the biography of Samuel Pratt by Jonathan Tavares in *Dealer Biographies* section of the *SOLD!* catalogue)

Pratt sold the suit of armour, together with a horse armour, to the Tower Armouries in 1840 for £300, which was worth about £356,000 in 1840.

On loan from The Royal Armouries, London.

Above: Exhibition Poster for Samuel Pratt's 'The Gothic Armoury', 3 Grosvenor Street, 1838. *On loan from the private collection of Peter Finer.* Photograph courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

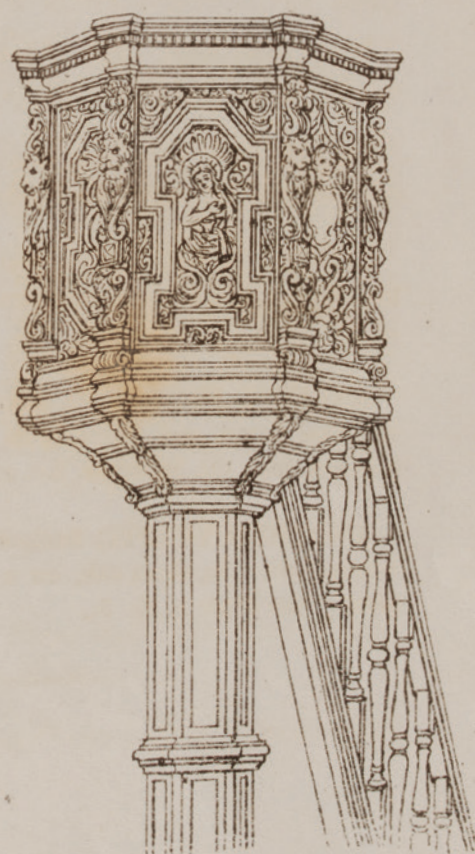
Left: Demilance Armour (c.1620). Photograph © The Royal Armouries. Sold by Samuel & Henry Pratt to The Royal Armouries in 1840.



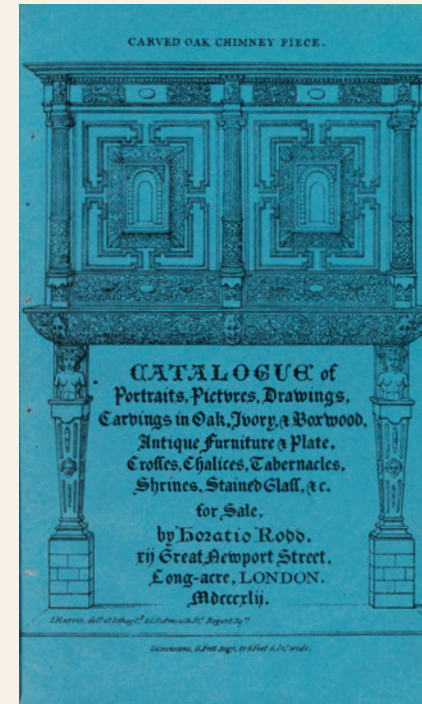
H. Rodd's
Catalogue, 1842.



Harris, del. et lithog.



4 Horatio Rodd 1824 & 1842



This catalogue, published in 1842, together with similar catalogue dated 1824, are rare, if not unique, survivals of an early 19th century curiosity dealer's catalogues of stock. They were produced by Horatio Rodd (1799-1863), an important dealer in curiosities and antiques in the opening decades of the 19th century. The catalogues illustrate the range of stock of a leading curiosity dealer at the time. Rodd supplied many of the most significant antiquarian collectors in the period, including George Weare Braikenridge (1775-1856), the famous Bristol antiquarian. Horatio Rodd developed a specialism for selling historical portraits, exemplified by both of the Rodd catalogues on display in SOLD!, such portraits were extremely popular amongst antiquarian collectors in the 19th century. The Rodd family of dealers were also leading antiquarian book dealers. Horatio's father, the poet and writer Thomas Rodd (1763-1822) and his brother Thomas Rodd Jnr (1796-1849) were both members of the book trade. Horatio Rodd was also the secretary of The Virtuoso Fund, also known as The Dealers in Fine Arts Provident Institution, established in 1842 for the assistance of members and their wives and children, who 'had kept shop, showroom or gallery, principally for the sale of works of art', one of the first societies that recognised 'antique dealing' as a trade. In the 19th century Rodd also gained quite a reputation as a judge of Shakespearian relics; he is recorded as the buyer (on behalf of Lord Ellesmere) of the famous 'Chandos' portrait of Shakespeare at the auction of the contents of Stowe in 1848 for which he bid 355 guineas (it is now at the National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG no.1); and in 1851 Rodd sold one of the tea-caddies (there are several) made from the infamous Mulberry Tree said to have been planted by Shakespeare at New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon. Horatio Rodd moved to America in 1860, living in Philadelphia, where he died on 3rd May 1863.

On loan from The National Art Library, The Victoria and Albert Museum.

Above: Horatio Rodd, A Catalogue of Portraits, Pictures, Drawings, Carvings in Oak, Ivory & Boxwood, Antique Furniture.... (1842). Photograph courtesy of the National Art Library, The Victoria and Albert Museum, © The Victoria and Albert Museum.

Left: Horatio Rodd, A Catalogue of Portraits, Pictures, Drawings, Carvings in Oak, Ivory & Boxwood, Antique Furniture & Plate... (1842), Plate 3. Photograph courtesy of the National Art Library, The Victoria and Albert Museum, © The Victoria and Albert Museum.

5 Henry Farrer 1854



This 15th century Venetian glass goblet was sold to the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A Museum) by the curiosity dealer Henry Farrer (1798-1866) in 1854. Farrer was one of the most important curiosity dealers of the first half of the 19th century. He was a member of the Society of Antiquaries and a keen collector himself; he loaned a set of Venetian glass goblets, similar to the goblet on display here, to the *Exhibition of Ancient and Medieval Art* at the Royal Society of Arts in 1850. Farrer was also well-known as a dealer in paintings. He supplied many Old Master paintings to prominent collectors, including the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Lowther and was a key agent in the assembly of Lord Northwick's picture collections at Northwick Park in the 1840s and 1850s. Farrer is regularly mentioned in 19th century publications on art collections, such as Anna Jameson's *Handbook to the Public Art Galleries of Art in and near London* (1842) and by the German art historian Gustav Waagen (1794-1868). Amongst the paintings Farrer sold to the National Gallery in London are paintings by Rembrandt (NG190) and Velazquez (NG197); perhaps most significantly Farrer sold the famous 'portrait of a man' (1433) by Jan van Eyck (c.1390-1444) to the National Gallery in 1851 for £365.

Farrer was described by the artist William Powell Frith (1819-1909) as '*one who knows so much about old masters that his opinion is constantly asked, paid for, and considered conclusive...*'. He moved his business from Wardour Street to the more fashionable New Bond Street in London in the 1850s. Farrer's own collections which included '300 gallery and cabinet pictures' including artworks ascribed to Giotto and Botticelli, were sold after his death in 1866 at auction held by Christie's.

Farrer sold the glass goblet to the South Kensington Museum (V&A Museum) in 1854 for £30, which was worth about £32,000 in 1854.

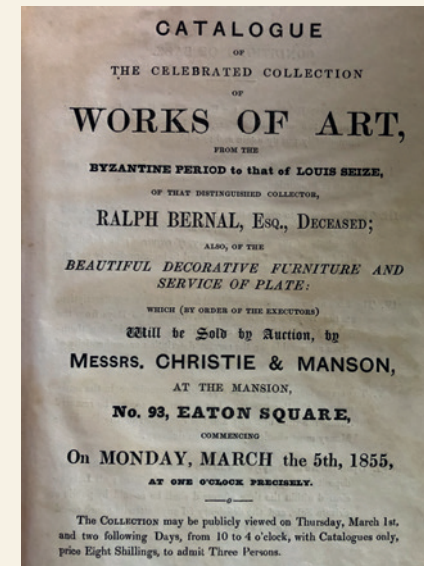
On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Above: Jan van Eyck (c.1390-1444), *Portrait of a Man* (c.1433) sold by Henry Farrer to the National Gallery in 1851. Photograph © The National Gallery, London.

Left: Venetian Glass Goblet c.1475-1500. Photograph © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London. sold by Henry Farrer to the South Kensington Museum in 1854.



6 John Webb 1855



This silver-gilt communion chalice was bought by the curiosity dealer John Webb (1799-1880) on behalf of the British Museum at the auction sale of the collection of Ralph Bernal (1783-1854) in 1855. In the auction catalogue it was lot 1321 and described as '*A Gilt Communion Chalice, of gothic period...date presumed to be about 1480*'; Webb bid £21 at the sale. The chalice remains in the collections of the British Museum (BM 1855,1209.9) although it is now thought that the bowl is of a later date than the stem. By the 1850s Medieval and Renaissance objects such as this chalice were becoming much more popular amongst a wider range of collectors than they had been in the opening decades of the 19th century and many dealers, such as Webb, had emerged into the market. In the 1820s John Webb's father traded as a 'gold laceman' in Old Bond Street, London. John established his own business, initially as a cabinetmaker and upholsterer in Old Bond Street by 1825, remaining in the same shop until 1851. When he bought the silver-gilt chalice he had moved his shop to fashionable Grafton Street, London, where he stayed until his retirement to his villa in Cannes, France, in the 1860s. Webb was perhaps the most well-known of all the dealers of the second half of the 19th century and was a key protagonist in the development of the collections at museums such as the British Museum and the South Kensington Museum (the V&A). On his death in 1880, Henry Cole, curator of the South Kensington Museum, composed his obituary for *The Times*; '[...we have] *lost the services of a connoisseur and collector...whose critical judgement the State and many private individuals placed in the highest confidence.*'

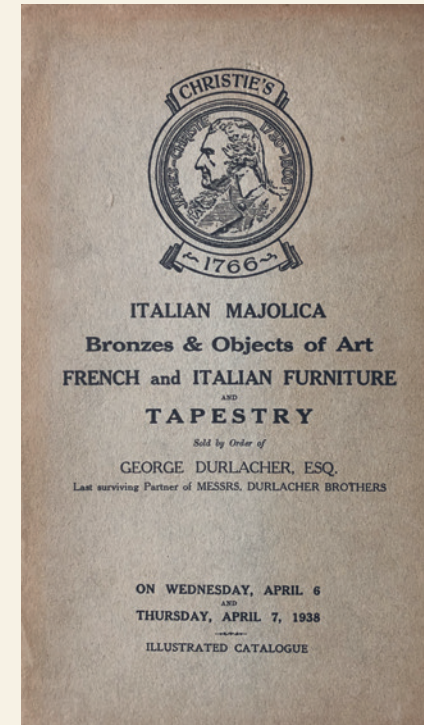
Webb bought the Chalice for £21 in 1855, which was worth about £21,000 in 1855.

On loan from The British Museum.

Above: *Catalogue of the Celebrated Collection of Works of Art...Ralph Bernal Esq., Deceased...March the 5th, 1855, (Title Page). Private Collection.*

Left: Silver Gilt Chalice, 15th century and later. Photograph © Trustees of The British Museum. Purchased by John Webb at the auction of the collection of Ralph Bernal (1783-1854) for the British Museum in 1855.

7 Henry Durlacher 1856



This 16th century maiolica dish (a type of ceramic known in the 19th century as 'Raphaelware' or 'Romanware') was sold to the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A Museum) in 1856 by Henry Durlacher (b.1826). Henry, together with his brother George Durlacher (b.1830), developed an extensive business in New Bond Street, London, selling art and antiques. The Durlacher dynasty of dealers in works of art appears to have begun in the early 19th century with Lewis Durlacher (1792-1864). Henry Durlacher seems to have specialised in Raphaelware and bought and sold several important examples of these dishes in the mid-19th century, including examples acquired at key auction sales such as Stowe (1848) and at the Ralph Bernal auction in 1855. He also had extensive dealings with Sir Richard Wallace, selling him, amongst many other things, the famous 'Londonderry Cabinet' in 1869, which remains at The Wallace Collection in London (F390). Henry and George Durlacher were in partnership with the well-known antique dealer Murray Marks (1840-1918) in the 1870s and 1880s, operating from a shop in Oxford Street, London before the partnership was dissolved in the late 1880s and Durlacher Brothers opened a new shop in New Bond Street, London. Henry's son, George Augustus Durlacher (c.1859-1942) continued the dealing dynasty until his retirement in 1938. The collection of George Durlacher Jnr. 'the last surviving partner of Durlacher Brothers' was sold by Christie's in 1938. However, the business continued for another 30 years under the ownership of R. Kirk Askew (1903-1974) who had joined the firm as manager of their New York branch in the 1920s. Askew bought the firm in 1937, continuing to trade as Durlacher Brothers in New York until about 1969.

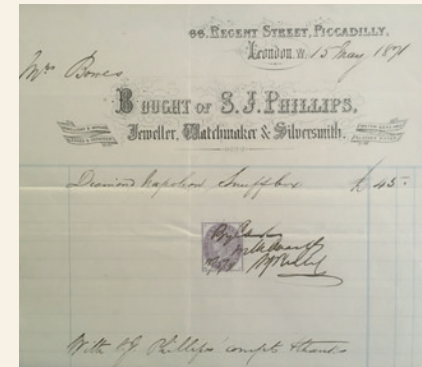
Raphaelware Dish sold to the South Kensington Museum by Henry Durlacher in 1856 for £5.5s.0d, which was worth about £5,000 in 1856.

On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Above: Christie's auction catalogue, the collection of George Durlacher, 'last surviving member of Durlacher Brothers' April 1938. *Private Collection*. Photograph © Antique Dealers Project, University of Leeds.

Left: Dish, Deruta, c.1530. Photograph © The Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Sold by Henry Durlacher to the South Kensington Museum in 1856.

8 S.J. Phillips 1871



This mid-19th century silver-gilt and enamel snuffbox was sold to Joséphine Bowes (1826-1874) by the dealer S.J. Phillips in 1871. The silversmith Solomon Joel Phillips (1842-1908) established the business of S.J. Phillips in the mid-19th century. Dealers in second-hand silver are one of the oldest traditions in the modern antique trade, due to the intrinsic value of silver as a material; many major silversmiths, such as Rundell, Bridge & Rundell (established 1787) and Garrard & Company (established in the 1722), were also dealers in silver and regularly exchanged and sold old silver. When S.J. Phillips sold the 'Diamond Napoleon Snuffbox' to Joséphine Bowes, they were recorded as trading at 86 Regent Street, London as 'Jeweller, Watchmaker & Silversmith'. At the time of its sale the snuffbox would have been considered second-hand as it was only about 20 years old when it was sold to Joséphine. S.J. Phillips moved from Regent Street to 113 New Bond Street, London, in about 1870, which was then heavily populated by major art dealers and was a key location for art and antique collectors and dealers; they remained in New Bond Street for almost 150 years. In the 20th century, under the guidance of Edmund Phillips (d.1934) and his nephews Richard Norton (d.1985) and Martin Norton (1911-2005), the firm counted many of the most important collectors and museums as clients, including Queen Mary (1867-1953) and William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951). The business continues to this day, run by Jonathan, Francis and Nicholas Norton, the fourth generation of the still family-owned business. (See also *SOLD! catalogue item 23*)

Snuffbox sold by S.J. Phillips to 'Mrs Bowes' in 1871 for £45; which was worth about £33,000 in 1871.

From the Collections of The Bowes Museum.



Above: Invoice S J Phillips, 1871 recording the purchase by Joséphine Bowes of the 'Napoleon Snuffbox'. The Bowes Museum Archives MS JB/5/4/5. Photograph courtesy of The Bowes Museum/Simon Spier.

Left: Snuffbox, enamel and silver-gilt with diamonds, French, c.1850. Photograph © The Bowes Museum. Sold by Solomon J Phillips to Joséphine Bowes in 1871.



9 F.W. Phillips 1911



This Gothic oak livery cupboard was bought by the Worcester based antique furniture dealer William Wertheimer from a farmhouse near Burwarton, near to Ludlow, Shropshire in 1911. Wertheimer paid £7.10 shillings for the cupboard and quickly sold it for £100 to the dealers Hugh Phillips (1886-1972) and Amyas Phillips (1891-1962), the sons of the antique dealer Frederick W. Phillips (1856-1910). Phillips sold the cupboard to the collector Robert Mond FSA for £220 in 1912 who immediately donated the cupboard to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Frederick Phillips was a celebrated antiquary and began business as an antique dealer in 1884, trading as F.W. Phillips at the Manor House, Hitchin. In 1900 Phillips advertised that he had 80 rooms of antiques for sale; the firm also produced reproductions of historic wallpapers and textiles and were well-known for producing extensively illustrated catalogues of their stock from the 1890s. The business was a pioneer in the display of antiques in 'period room' settings, which they developed from the 1910s. The business flourished and changed its name in 1935 to Phillips of Hitchin after the retirement of Hugh Phillips.

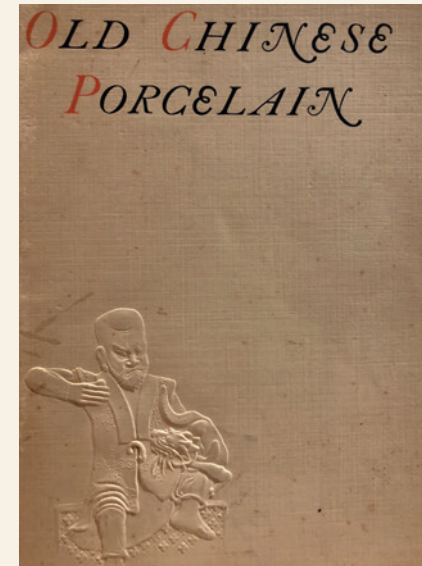
The photograph here, dating from about 1910, shortly before the Gothic cupboard was acquired, shows Hugh and Amyas standing in the entrance to the courtyard at Manor House, Hitchin. 'Ancient Gothic' furniture, such as this cupboard, had been a staple of the antique trade since the 1820s, but rose in popularity in the early 20th century. This example was of particular interest because it is carved with Prince of Wales feathers and a stylised 'A' and was believed at the time to have associations with Arthur, Prince of Wales (1486-1502), the eldest son of Henry VII, who died at Ludlow Castle, near to the village where the cupboard was discovered. (*see also SOLD! catalogue item 18 and the biography of Phillips of Hitchin by Jerome Phillips in the Dealer Biographies section of the SOLD! catalogue*)

Gothic oak Cupboard sold by F.W. Phillips to the collector Robert Mond FSA in 1912 for £220, which was worth about £124,000 in 1912.

On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Above: F.W. Phillips (Phillips of Hitchin), shop exterior, The Manor House, Hitchin, c.1910. Image courtesy of Dr Kate Hay at The Victoria and Albert Museum.

Left: Oak Cupboard, c.1500-1600, England. Presented by Mond to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1912. Photograph © The Victoria and Albert Museum. Acquired by F.W. Phillips antiques in 1911 and sold to Robert Mond FSA in 1912.



This pair of late 17th century or early 18th century Chinese 'Hawthorn' pattern ginger jars are two of a number of similar examples sold by the dealers S. Gorer & Son to the collector Lord Leverhulme (1851-1925) in the early 20th century. Such jars were at the height of fashion in the period, the depth of the colour of the blue was a key feature of their desirability – a single example was bought at auction in 1905 by the dealer Frank Partridge (1875-1953) for the extraordinary sum of £5,900. Solomon Gorer (1842-1907) trained as a silversmith and jeweller, working, first in Brighton, and then by the 1870s in London. His son, Edgar Ezekiel Gorer (1872-1915) entered into business with his father forming S. Gorer & Son in 1899 when they began trading from a new shop in New Bond Street, London. The business was also known as the Indo China Curio Trading Company; Edgar had been trading independently in Oriental works of art since at least the 1890s. Edgar expanded the business which became one of the leading specialist dealers in antique Chinese ceramics in the period. He was also one of the earliest antique dealers to incorporate interior decorating into the practices of the antique trade, advertising as 'high class decorator'. American collectors were dominating the art market in the period and Edgar travelled to New York in 1915, together with a group of fellow antique dealers, including Frank Partridge, on the Cunard ocean liner RMS Lusitania to negotiate sales with wealthy American collectors. Lusitania was sunk on its return journey to England when it was struck by a torpedo fired from a German submarine on 7th May 1915; Frank Partridge survived but Edgar Gorer was lost.

Pair of 'Hawthorn' pattern ginger jars sold by Gorer for £6,500 in 1911 which was worth about £3.8m in 1911.

On loan from the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Above: Edgar Gorer, *Old Chinese Porcelain* (c.1910), published by Gorer, 170 New Bond Street, London. *Private Collection*.

Left: Chinese 'Hawthorn' pattern Ginger Jars, Kangxi (1662-1722). Photograph © The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool. Sold by Edgar Gorer in 1911 to the collector Lord Leverhulme.



11 Moss Harris 1915



This 18th-century chair was one of a set of 6 antique chairs bought by the London-based antique dealer Moss Harris (1859-1941) of M. Harris & Sons in about 1915. Harris started in the trade as a dealer in horsehair, which he supplied to the upholstery trade before working for the antique dealer David Lewis Isaacs (1842-1912), who had established a business in 1868. Harris eventually took over the Isaacs business in about 1915 which was then located in New Oxford Street, London and became M. Harris & Sons. In the 1920s and 1930s the shop had more than 100 rooms of antique furniture at their Oxford Street shop, and opened several other branches in London; they also briefly had a shop in New York during the Second World War. From the early 1920s Moss Harris was appointed 'antique dealer' to both Queen Mary and the Prince of Wales. The business was continued after the death of Moss Harris by his sons George (d.1947) and Sidney (d.1950) and were a leading specialist in antique English furniture.

Harris sold 5 of the chairs in 1915 to Lord Leverhulme (1851-1925) but retained one for his private collection. He retained his 'magnificent Chippendale armchair', in which he was photographed sitting and which he passionately discussed in an article published in *The Bazaar* in June 1929 titled 'Treasures I would not sell'.

Harris never sold his chair, which was eventually sold at the auction sale of the property of the late Moss Harris at Christie's in November 1944, following his death in 1941. It later made it into the collections of Brigadier W.E. Clark, who had acquired it at the dealers Mallett & Sons; Clark gifted the chair to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1956.

18th century chair sold at Christie's auction sale of the private collection of Moss Harris in 1944 for £945, which was about £147,000 in 1944.

On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Top: Moss Harris, c.1925. Film still from the 'Sheraton' film of Moss Harris at a Christie's auction c.1925. Courtesy of The British Film Institute and The Victoria and Albert Museum.

Above: M. Harris & Sons, New Oxford Street, London, c.1935. Photograph courtesy of John Hill.

Left: Armchair, c.1760. Given to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Brigadier W E Clark CMG DSO through Art Fund. Photograph © The Victoria and Albert Museum. Acquired by Moss Harris in c.1915.

12 Frank Partridge 1916



This Chinese porcelain candleholder was bought at auction by the antique dealer Frank Partridge Snr (1875-1953) on behalf of the collector Lord Leverhulme (1851-1925) in 1916; Partridge paid £1,000 for the candleholder. It was believed to date from the 17th century at the time it was bought, but it is now thought that it is possibly dates from the 19th century. Frank Partridge was born in Hertfordshire, one of 5 brothers who all worked in the antique trade. Frank's elder brother Robert W Partridge, together with his wife Doris, had established an antique shop in Great Portland Street, London by the 1880s. Frank joined his brother at the age of 17, before establishing his own business at 4 King Street, St. James's, London in November 1904. The business expanded rapidly, driven by wealthy British and American clients; Frank opened a shop in New York by 1912 and had obtained a Royal Warrant, as 'antique dealer to H.M. Queen Mary' by 1938. Partridge moved to 26 King Street in 1910, a shop that was destroyed by enemy bombing during the Second World War; the business reopened in New Bond Street in 1944, in the former gallery of the well-known art dealers Colnaghi. Frank Partridge & Sons developed into one of the world's leading antique dealers with a client list that included almost every significant collector and decorative art museum in the world. Major customers in the middle decades of the 20th century included the 11th Marquis of Lothian, owner of Blickling Hall, Norfolk, one of the first historic houses to be given to the National Trust, and J. Paul Getty, whose collections are now at The Getty Museum in Los Angeles. The business was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989, but went into liquidation in 2009. Frank Partridge Jnr., the grandson of the founder of Frank Partridge, continues the tradition of antique dealing established by his grandfather.

Chinese Porcelain Candlestick sold by Frank Partridge for £1,000 in 1916, which was worth about £395,000 in 1916.

On loan from the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool.



Above: Frank Partridge, King Street, St. James's, London, shop interior circa 1922. Photograph *The Connoisseur* November 1922.

Left: Chinese porcelain candleholder, (Kangxi, 1662-1722, or perhaps 19th century). Photograph © The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool. Acquired by Frank Partridge for the collector Lord Leverhulme in 1916.

13 Stoner & Evans 1918



This pair of porcelain candlesticks, made by the London-based Chelsea manufactory in 1760-1765, were probably sold by the dealers Stoner & Evans to the ceramics collector Lady Ludlow (1862-1945) in 1918; Lady Ludlow is known to have regularly used Stoner & Evans to assemble her extensive collections of antique ceramics. Stoner & Evans were established in the late 19th century and were one of the leading dealers in 'Old English Pottery & Porcelain' and specialised in antique ceramics from the Chelsea factory in the period. By 1900 they had large galleries in King Street, London and were amongst the first antique dealers to stage specialist exhibitions of 'Old English Pottery & Porcelain', for which they produced lavishly illustrated catalogues during the early 1900s. The firm also made extensive use of the new collector-focused magazines, regularly advertising in *The Connoisseur* which was published from 1901.

Dealers who concentrated exclusively on selling antique ceramics emerged in the 1860s and 1870s with dealers such as Robert Carter, 'antique china dealer' in London and William Edkins in Bristol, and were amongst the first specialist antique dealers in the modern antique trade. From the 1920s Lady Ludlow began to buy more regularly from the antique ceramics dealer Albert Amor (b.1867) who had worked for the well-known antique dealer Frederick Litchfield before opening his own antique shop in St. James's Street, London, shortly after Litchfield had retired, in 1903. George Stoner, the leading partner in Stoner & Evans, died in 1920 and the business was continued after his death by his sons Malcolm and Frank. Malcolm also became a leading specialist dealer in antique ceramics and Frank Stoner was one of the founders of the British Antique Dealers' Association in 1918.

The price paid for the candlesticks is unrecorded, but similar pairs of Chelsea candlesticks were sold in 1918 for about £500 a pair, which was worth about £135,000.

From the Collections of the Bowes Museum.



Above: Stoner & Evans, advertisement from *The Connoisseur* June 1909.

Left: Pair of Chelsea candlesticks, c.1760-1765. Photograph © The Bowes Museum. Possibly sold by Stoner & Evans in 1918 to Lady Ludlow.

14 Bluett & Sons 1934



This 15th century Chinese porcelain 'Dragon Bowl' was sold by Bluett & Sons in 1934 to the collector Percival David (1892-1964) for £55. Bluett & Sons were established in London in about 1884 by the dealer Alfred Ernest Bluett (d.1917) and were one of a number of specialist dealers in Chinese Works of Art, including John Sparks and Samuel Marchant, who emerged in London in the opening decades of the 20th century. As expert dealers in Chinese Works of Art, Bluett exemplify the more scholarly approach to antique dealing that evolved in response to increasingly specialised collecting practices in the period. Alfred's son Edgar joined the firm c.1910 and the firm moved from Oxford Street in London to nearby Davies Street in 1923. From 1924, like many antique dealers in the period, Bluett staged scholarly selling exhibitions. The 'Dragon Bowl' was part of an important exhibition *Old Chinese Pottery and Porcelain recently collected in China by Mr Peter Boode of The Hague*, which took place in June 1934; the bowl was illustrated in the exhibition catalogue, numbered '33'. Boode was an ex-sea captain, turned dealer in Chinese Works of Art and a regular supplier of objects to Bluett & Sons in the 1930s.

Roger Bluett (1925-2000) joined the firm in 1946, widening the range of antique ceramics to include Persian and South East Asian objects. Bluett counted many well-known collectors of Chinese ceramics as their customers; perhaps their most important client was the American Alfred Clark (1873-1950) the chairman of EMI. Bluett closed in 1992, following a buy-out by a group of investors in 1988. (see also the biography of Bluett & Sons by Dominic Jellinek in the Dealer Biographies section of the *SOLD! catalogue*)

Chenghua period (1465-1487) 'Dragon Bowl' sold by Bluett & Sons in 1934 for £55, which was worth about £18,000 in 1934.

On loan from The British Museum, London.



Above: Bluett & Sons exhibition catalogue, *Old Chinese Pottery & Porcelain*, June 6th to June 23rd 1934, illustrating 'Dragon Bowl' as number 33. Photograph courtesy of Dominic Jellinek.

Left: The 'Dragon Bowl', Chenghua, 1465-1487. Photograph © Trustees of the British Museum. Sold by Bluett & Sons in 1934.

15 Wartski 1947



This Miniature Table, made between 1896 and 1903 in the workshop of the Russian Court Jeweller Peter Carl Fabergé (1846-1920), was sold by the dealers in antique jewellery Wartski to Queen Mary (1867-1953) in November 1947. Morris Wartski (1855-1946) opened his first shop selling silver and jewellery in Bangor, North Wales in 1876 before moving to Mostyn Street, Llandudno in 1910, which at the time was very popular with prosperous British holidaymakers; the street was also home to the antique dealers H Blairman & Sons at the time. Charles Wartski (1880-1914) and his brother Harry (1883-1959) joined the business in about 1900, opening a branch of the business in New Bond Street, London in 1913. Wartski's association with the art works from the workshop of Fabergé began in the 1920s when the firm acquired Fabergé objects seized in the 1917 Russian Revolution and disposed of by the Commissariat for Foreign Trade, All Union Company for Export, also known as the 'Antiquariat'. By the 1930s Wartski had become the foremost specialists for the work of Fabergé, a tradition that was continued through Morris Wartski's grandson, A. Kenneth Snowman (d.1970), who joined the business in 1940 and became a leading authority on Fabergé. Dealers in antique jewellery such as Wartski dealt in precious objects that have significant intrinsic value and whilst, strictly speaking, the Fabergé table here would not have been an 'antique' when it was sold in 1947, its status as an objet du vertu would have been unquestionable. Wartski's client list includes leading film stars and celebrities, including Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and Yul Brynner, leading politicians including President John F. Kennedy, Heads of State and the members of various Royal families, including of course Queen Mary. In more recent times *Antiques Roadshow* specialist expert Geoffrey Munn joined the business, having started work at Wartski in 1972; Geoffrey has recently retired from the business.

Fabergé miniature table Sold by Wartski to Queen Mary in November 1947 for £650.

Lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Above: Advertisement, Wartski, *The Connoisseur*, October 1934. Private Collection.

Left: Miniature Table 1896-1903 by Mikhail Evlampievich Perkhin for Peter Carl Fabergé. Gold, mother-of-pearl, guilloché enamel. Photograph Royal Collections Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019. Sold by Wartski to Queen Mary in 1947.





16 H.C. Baxter & Sons 1960

This world-famous Renaissance bronze statuette of Meleager by Jacopo di Antonio Alari-Bonacolsi (c.1460-1528), known as 'Antico', was sold by the antique dealer Horace Baxter (d.1970) to the V&A Museum in 1960. The statuette was made c.1480-1495 for a member of the wealthy and influential Gonzaga family, who ruled Mantua in Northern Italy. Horace Baxter, the son of a property developer from Clapham, South London, began his career as an antique dealer with his sister Maud Chapman (née Baxter) as Chapman & Baxter in Knightsbridge, London in 1927. By the 1930s Horace had opened an antique business in Fulham Road, London, specialising in 18th century English furniture. Horace's sons, Terence (1931-2011) and Roy (1933-2005) joined the business in the 1940s when it became H.C. Baxter & Sons, and his grandson, Gary (b.1961) joined in 1978. H.C. Baxter were well-known known as suppliers to the London antique furniture trade; such inter-dealer trading was an important part of a finely balanced ecology. Horace's acquisition of this extraordinary Renaissance bronze, one of Antico's greatest artworks, was pure serendipity. He bought the bronze 'on a hunch' in Kent, paying just £16 for it. According to some stories the statuette was allegedly painted white and Horace cleaned it using *Tide*, a well-known heavy-duty laundry detergent of the time.

However, in an interview published in *West London Star* in December 1964, some 4 years after the sale of the sculpture, Horace stated that the sculpture was just 'dirty' and he '*cleaned [it] with soap and a toothbrush.*' Horace, who had no expertise in Renaissance bronzes, said that he was '*just struck by it and something told me to buy it.*' He took the sculpture to the V&A Museum, where it was seen by the leading expert John Pope Hennessy, who immediately recognised it as a major Renaissance sculpture. Horace sold it to the V&A for £4,000, which was a little below market value at the time. He wanted the sculpture to stay in Britain and, as he wryly commented, '*They [the V&A] are not very rich anyway.*' The acquisition of 'Antico' is an example of fortunate finds that are a key element of the history of antique dealing.

Bronze statuette of Meleager by 'Antico' sold by H.C. Baxter & Sons to the V&A Museum in 1960 for £4,000.

On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Above: Horace Baxter with 'Antico' 1960. Photograph courtesy of Gary Baxter.

Left: Bronze Statuette, *Meleager*, (c.1484-1490) by Jacopo di Antonio Alari-Bonacolsi, called 'Antico'. Purchased with funds from the Horn and Bryan Bequests and Art Fund support. Photograph © The Victoria and Albert Museum. Sold by Horace Baxter to The Victoria and Albert Museum in 1960.



17 Temple Williams 1961

This 18th century botanical specimen cabinet, made in about 1780 for Lady Mary Eleanor Bowes (1749-1800), the Countess of Strathmore, was sold to the Bowes Museum by the antique furniture dealer Temple Williams (1899-c.1986) in 1961. In a letter dated 1861, John Bowes (1811-1885), founder, with his wife Joséphine (1825-1874), of the Bowes Museum, mentioned the 'old walnut wood cabinet' as he described it, which had belonged to his grandmother; the cabinet remained part of the Bowes family private collections until the 1920s when it was sold at auction. Temple Williams appears to have acquired the cabinet in about 1960 before selling the object to the Bowes Museum. Williams gained expertise in the antique trade whilst working as a Director of the London based antique dealers H Blairman & Sons from 1939 before establishing his own antique dealing business in Haunch of Venison Yard, off New Bond Street, in Mayfair, London in 1955. Temple's wife, Joan, joined the business in the mid-1950s, and their daughter Caroline joined in 1981; Temple Williams appears to have retired in 1985. Temple Williams developed a reputation for trading in high quality English early 19th century Regency period antique furniture, something that he appears to have been introduced to whilst at H Blairman & Sons, who were also well-known for an interest in Regency design. Such specialised practices are an example of how the antique furniture trade began to change from more general antique furniture trading, the ubiquitous 'Old English Furniture' dealers of the first half of the 20th century, evolving into more discrete areas of expertise in the period after the Second World War, creating and responding to changes in fashion for furnishing with antiques. Williams was a leading figure in the British antiques trade and was elected President of the British Antique Dealers' Association (BADA) in the 1960s.

'Lady Mary Eleanor Bowes Cabinet' sold by Temple Williams to The Bowes Museum in 1961 for £1,200.

From the collections of The Bowes Museum.

Left: Cabinet made c.1780 for Mary Eleanor Bowes (1749-1800), The Countess of Strathmore. Photograph © The Bowes Museum. Sold by Temple Williams to The Bowes Museum in 1961.



18 Phillips of Hitchin 1963

This 'Grand Medal Cabinet' was made for George III in 1760/1761 by the cabinetmakers William Vile and John Cobb; it was sold by Phillips of Hitchin to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1963, (see also *SOLD! Catalogue item 9*). The cabinet, one of a pair, had been purchased by Phillips of Hitchin from the antique dealers G. Oliver & Sons of Guildford in 1961, who bought the cabinet from the 7th Duke of Wellington (1885-1972), whose ancestor, the 2nd Duke had acquired the cabinets sometime in the early 19th century following the transfer of George III's medal collection to the British Museum in 1825. Phillips displayed the cabinet at the world-famous Grosvenor House Antiques Fair in 1963; The *Sunday Express*, breathlessly stated that the cabinet was 'the most valuable piece of English furniture to have come to market this century.' It was reportedly offered for sale at the extraordinary price of £30,000, which in the context of the accelerating market for antique English furniture in the 1960s was entirely plausible; an 18th century Chippendale commode had sold at auction in 1961 for £25,000, a world record price for a piece of English antique furniture. The record was surpassed in 1965 when the famous Chippendale library table from Harewood House, Yorkshire, realised £43,050 at auction.

Amyas Phillips, then owner of Phillips of Hitchin, died in 1962 and there were very significant Death Duties on the estate, forcing a sale at well below cost and the cabinet was sold to the American collector Judge Irwin Untermyer in 1963 for £10,000. However, a license to export the cabinet to the USA was refused by the *Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art* and the cabinet was subsequently sold to the Victoria and Albert Museum in September 1963 for the sum agreed with Untermyer. The pair to the cabinet was sold to the Metropolitan Museum in New York the following year, where it remains. (see also the biography of Phillips of Hitchin by Jerome Phillips in the Dealer Biographies section of the *SOLD! catalogue*)

18th century medal cabinet sold by Phillips of Hitchin to the V&A Museum in 1963 for £10,000.

On loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Above: Phillips of Hitchin stand at The Grosvenor House Antiques Fair 1963, showing the medal cabinet. Photograph, Phillips of Hitchin archive (MS1999), The Brotherton Library Special Collections, University of Leeds.

Left: Mahogany coin and medal cabinet 1760/1761, made by William Vile and John Cobb. Photograph © The Victoria and Albert Museum. Sold by Phillips of Hitchin to The Victoria and Albert Museum in 1963.



Left: A late 17th or early 18th century gilt bronze grotesque mask, perhaps from a fountain. Photograph © The Bowes Museum. Sold by David Tremayne Limited to The Bowes Museum in 1966.

19 David Tremayne Limited 1966

This late 17th or early 18th century bronze mask was sold to The Bowes Museum by the dealership David Tremayne Limited for £2,500 in 1966. At the time David Tremayne was a relatively new antique dealer business, having been established in 1963 by David Salmon, R T Field and J B P Dyer at 320 King's Road, Chelsea, London. They occupied the former shop of the antique dealer Donald Angus, who traded from the same shop in the 1940s. The business was a reflection of the increasing number of wealthy collector-dealer businessmen and women that began to emerge into the antique trade in the period after World War II. The name David Tremayne was derived from David Salmon's mother's maiden name of Tremayne; Salmon was a member of the Salmon-Gluckstein family that owned Salmon-Gluckstien Tobacco, founded 1873, and the J. Lyons & Company, established in 1884. By choosing to open their antique shop in the 1960s in ultra-fashionable King's Road in Chelsea, David Tremayne keyed into the culture of the 'Swinging Sixties' in London at the time. Their shop was described in *The Connoisseur* magazine in May 1963; *'the décor is unusually striking; the walls in Japanese silk paper, the facing wall, on entry, in scarlet'*. The stock of David Tremayne was drawn from the taste for eclectic interior decoration in the 1960s, promoted by leading designers such as John Fowler (1906-1977), Michael Inchbald (1920-2013), and especially David Hicks (1929-1988), who was famous for mixing antiques with modern furnishings and contemporary art. The bronze mask, evidently part of a foundation, perhaps from the Château de Saint-Cloud, home of Phillippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674-1723), brother of King Louis XIV, was one of up to 4 similar bronze masks that were circulating on the London art market during the 1960s and 1970s. In April 1966 Tremayne wrote to David Garlick, curator at the Bowes Museum, commending the decision to purchase the bronze mask and apologising that he could not move on the price of the mask, commenting, *'I have no doubt in my own mind that at today's staggering prices it would fetch considerably more in an open competitive market.'*

Late 17th or early 18th century bronze mask sold by David Tremayne to The Bowes Museum in 1966 for £2,500.

From the collections of The Bowes Museum.



Top: Tobacco Box made from the timber of the Boscobel Oak, circa 1660-65. On loan from a private collection. Photograph courtesy of Georgina Gough.

Above: Ronald A Lee at the entrance to his Bruton Street, London shop in the 1980s. Photograph courtesy of Georgina Gough.

Left: 'The Parr Pot', tankard of vetro a fili latticino glass with silver mounts dated 1546/47. Photograph © Museum of London. Sold by R A Lee to the Museum of London in 1967.

This 16th century glass tankard, known as the 'Parr Pot', was sold to the Museum of London by the antique dealer Ronald A Lee (1913-2000) for £18,214 in 1967. Ronald A Lee joined his father's antique dealing business in 1931 before opening his own antique business in 1949 in Richmond, Surrey. Lee exemplifies a long tradition of scholarly, antiquarian antique dealers. He was fascinated by the historical provenance of objects that he bought and sold; the 'Parr Pot' is a typical Ronald Lee object. The silver mounts (dated 1546-47) contain the arms of Sir William Parr, the uncle of Queen Katherine Parr, wife of Henry VIII, and in the 18th century it was in the famous collection of Horace Walpole (1717-1797) at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. Lee bought the tankard from the Dent-Brocklehurst family at Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire, whose ancestors, John and William Dent, had bought the tankard at the auction sale of the contents of Strawberry Hill in 1842, reuniting the tankard with a former home of Katherine Parr as part of their antiquarian restoration of Sudeley Castle.

As well as being a leading antique dealer Ronald A Lee was also an avid collector and the small 17th century oak and silver tobacco box, the lid inlaid with a depiction of the Boscobel Oak, alongside the two further Boscobel Oak relics on display, was part of Lee's private collection. All three objects have been made of timber from the Boscobel Oak in which the future king, Charles II, is recorded to have hidden after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. (*see also the biography of Ronald A Lee by Georgina Gough in the Dealer Biographies section of the SOLD! catalogue*).

'Parr Pot' sold by R.A. Lee to The Museum of London for £18,214 in 1967 (the Sterling equivalent of \$51,000 agreed in an initial sale in 1966 to Boston Museum of Fine Art, which was subject to an Export Stop by the Review Committee for the Export of Works of Art); the glass is now thought to be 18th or 19th century.

On loan from the Museum of London.

22 & 23 Mallett & Sons 1969



This 18th century French armchair, together with the extraordinary late 18th/early 19th century 'Grotto' stool, was sold by the antique dealers Mallett & Son to The Bowes Museum for £5,500 in 1969. John Mallett (1826-1908) established the business as jewellers and silver dealers in Bath in 1865, before Walter Ellis Mallett (1853-1929) began the development of the business into antique dealers during the late 19th century. John Francis Mallett (d.1947) joined the business by the 1910s; he was also a noted collector and left his extensive collection of clocks, ivories and Oriental works of art to The Ashmolean Museum on his death in 1947.

By the late 19th century Mallett's showrooms in Milson Street, Bath were housed in the 18th century Octagon Chapel, which had been designed by the architect Timothy Lightholder in 1767; they remained in the premises until the late 1930s, attracting collectors from all over Britain and the USA. Bath was a very popular location for antique shops at the time, with as many as 40 dealers in the town by the 1930s.

Mallett & Son opened a branch in New Bond Street, London in 1908 and became associated with the finest antique English furniture. In 1961 Mallett & Son opened a separate gallery at Bourdon House, the former home of the Dukes of Westminster in Berkeley Square, London, selling continental furniture and works of art, often of eclectic taste and keying into the preference for extravagant interior design in the 1960s and 1970s. The 'Grotto' stool may have attracted its quirky 'tiger skin' cover at that time. (See also the biography of Mallett & Sons by Gareth Williams in the Dealer Biographies section of the *SOLD!* catalogue).

French armchair 1788-90 by G Jacob and 18th/19th century 'Grotto' stool sold by Mallett & Son to The Bowes Museum in 1969 for £5,500.

From the collections of The Bowes Museum.

Top: A stool, probably made for a Grotto, c.1775-1800. Photograph © The Bowes Museum. Sold by Mallett & Sons to The Bowes Museum in 1969.

Above: Mallett & Sons, showrooms at The Octagon Chapel, Milson Street, Bath, c.1900. Photograph The Connoisseur October 1905.

Left: Armchair designed by Georges Jacob, c.1790. Photograph © The Bowes Museum. Sold by Mallett & Sons to The Bowes Museum in 1969.



24 H. Blairman & Sons 1970



This 18th century red lacquer chair, one of a set of 6 chairs (2 armchairs and 4 side chairs), was sold to Temple Newsam, Leeds, by the antique dealers H. Blairman & Sons for £15,000 in 1970. H. Blairman was established in Llanduno, Wales in 1884 by Harris Blairman, a Polish émigré. The firm had advertised a set of 4 chairs from the same set in *The Connoisseur* in June 1964 and in the same month they displayed the chairs on their stand at the Grosvenor House Antiques Fair, the premier antiques fair in the art market calendar.

The chairs are from a very large suite of furniture (some 144 pieces) commissioned by the Duke of Infantado, Lazcano, Spain in the 1730s from the London furniture maker and retailer, Giles Grendey (1693-1780). Pieces of the large suite have appeared and reappeared on the art market many times over the years. In 1930 a large part of the suite was acquired by the German Jewish antique dealer Adolph Loewi (1888-1977), who established a business in Venice in 1911. In 1933, when the Nazi Party seized power Loewi moved his business to New York, opening a branch in Beverley Hills, Los Angeles, USA in 1939. The Blairman business was developed further the 1920s and 1930s, through Harris's sons, Philip (1896/7-1972) and David, who expanded the business, opening shops in Harrogate and in King Street, St. James's in London and in New York, during World War II. George Levy (d.1996) joined the firm in 1949, marrying Wendy Blairman (d.2006) in 1951. H. Blairman & Sons continues under the directorship of Martin Levy. (See also the biography of H. Blairman & Sons by Martin Levy in the Dealer Biographies section of the *SOLD!* catalogue).

18th century chair, one of a set of 6 chairs sold by H. Blairman & Sons to Temple Newsam in 1970 for £15,000.

On loan from Leeds Museums & Galleries.

Above: H. Blairman & Sons, stand at The Grosvenor Antiques Fair 1950. Photograph courtesy of Martin Levy.

Left: Armchair c.1735-40 by Giles Grendey. Photograph © Leeds Museums & Galleries. One of a set of six chairs sold by H Blairman & Sons to Temple Newsam in 1970.

This early 18th century silver centrepiece was sold to Temple Newsam by the leading antique silver dealers S.J. Phillips in 1987 for £750,000, a world record price for a piece of British silver sold to a UK museum at the time. Solomon Joel Phillips (1842-1908) established the business as silversmiths in London in the mid-19th century; they were located in fashionable New Bond Street, London from c.1870. The silver expert Arthur Grimwade (1913-2002), a former director of the silver department at Christie's from 1954 to 1979, described S.J. Phillips as *'the greatest treasure house of acquirable possessions for limitless pockets of the world.'* Indeed, many of the world's most important pieces of antique silver and jewellery have passed through the hands of the firm, whose customers have included major collectors such as Sir William Burrell (1861-1958), William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951), the leading silver collector Sir Arthur Gilbert (1913-2001), and members of the Royal family, as well as a host of celebrities and rock stars in more recent times. S.J. Phillips are also famous for their role in 'Operation Mincemeat' during the Second World War. In this initiative of 1943, made popular through the subsequent film 'The Man Who Never Was' (1956), the Allies deceived the Nazi's by planting fake invasion documents on the body of a fictional British officer. In order to add extra authenticity to the fictional life of the officer, an invoice from S.J. Phillips for a £53 engagement ring was stuffed into the pockets of the officer. The Kirkleatham centrepiece was sold by S.J. Phillips during the directorship of the firm by Martin Norton (1911-2005), and the business continues, run by the great-grandsons of S.J. Phillips, Jonathan and Nicholas Norton and their cousin Francis. (See also *SOLD! catalogue item 8*).

18th century silver centrepiece, sold by S.J. Phillips to Temple Newsam, part of Leeds Museums and Galleries, in 1987 for £750,000.

On loan from Leeds Museums & Galleries.

Left: The Kirkleatham silver centrepiece 1731-32 by David Willaume and Anne Tanquary. Photograph © Leeds Museums & Galleries. Sold by S J Phillips to Temple Newsam in 1987.



Top: Hotspur Limited, showrooms at Streatham Lodge, Surrey, circa 1943. Photograph *Apollo* February 1943.

Above: J.M. Botibol Antiques, Hanway Street, London, showing the Chippendale secretaire in stock 1947. Photograph *Antique Collector* 1947.

Left: Secrétaire 1773 by Thomas Chippendale. Photograph © Leeds Museums & Galleries. Sold by Hotspur Limited to Temple Newsam in 1999.

This secretaire (writing desk), formerly from Thomas Chippendale's commission for Harewood House in the 1770s, was sold to Temple Newsam for £650,000 in 1999 by the antique furniture dealers Hotspur Limited. The secretaire had been acquired at auction in London in 1997 by consortium of dealers led by Hotspur with the dealers Mallett & Son and Partridge & Sons. Percentage shares in the acquisition of high value antiques had been a common practice in the antique trade since at least the early decades of the 20th century and is indicative of the closely integrated network and shared levels of expertise and clients among some members of the trade. Hotspur Limited was established in London in 1924 by Frederick Kern (1868-1958) and his son Rob (1907-1977), and had opened a shop in Frith Street, London by the late 1920s. In 1939, in order to avoid bombing during the Second World War, the business moved to Streatham Lodge, Twickenham, Surrey, returning to central London in 1951.

Rob's sons, Robin and Brian Kern joined the firm in 1956 and 1963 respectively and developed the business to become leading specialist dealers in antique English furniture. The secretaire had initially been sold at auction in 1946 by the Trustees of the Harewood House Estate, where it was acquired by the well-known antique dealer Jessie M Botibol (1880-1953), known in the trade as 'Jippie'. Botibol had been trading from a shop in Hanway Street, London since the 1920s, the same street in which Edward Holmes Baldock, one of the first 'antique furniture dealers', had his antique shop 100 years earlier. Such an observation demonstrates the importance of key locations such as Hanway Street, and their lingering associations, in the cultural biography of the antique trade. (See also the *biography of Hotspur Limited* by Robin Kern in the *Dealer Biographies* section of the *SOLD!* catalogue).

Secrétaire sold by Hotspur to Temple Newsam, part of Leeds Museums and Galleries in 1999 for £650,000.

On loan from Leeds Museums & Galleries.



27 Samuel Pratt 1851

This 'Great Helm', together with another similar 'ancient helm', was sold by the well-known dealer in 'ancient armour' Samuel Pratt (1805-1878) to the Tower Armouries in 1851 for £80. Samuel Pratt and his brother Henry were the most high profile dealers in ancient arms and armour in the 19th century. Their shop in New Bond Street, London, was a key location for many of the most influential collectors and antiquaries of the period. Pratt described the helm as a '*very rare helmet with vizor of the period of Richard First*' when it was sold to the Tower Armouries, and it was believed to date from the 12th century at the time. Both helms are now known to have been fabricated by Pratt shortly before their sale to the Tower Armouries, although the discovery of this helm as a 'fake' was not made until the 1880s, after the death of Pratt. Pratt engaged the tinsmith and gunsmith Thomas Grimshaw to construct the helm, which appears to have been made from the remains of a large tin lantern; the interior of the helm has been artificially blackened to simulate age. Pratt and Grimshaw propagated a large amount of fake pieces of armour, particularly large helms such as this, often giving them fictitious provenances and basing their designs on medieval tomb sculptures and illuminated manuscripts. The market for 'ancient armour' was expanding rapidly in the middle decades of the 19th century as collectors and those furnishing their Gothic Revival style houses sought appropriate furnishings. Ancient armour, and a 'Great Helm' in particular, were among the most desirable commodities in the market, creating the ideal conditions for the production of forgeries. (See also *Jonathan Tavares' essays on Antique Dealers and The Tower Armouries, and his essay on Samuel Pratt in the Dealer Biographies section in the SOLD! catalogue*).

The 'Ancient Helm', together with another example, was purchased from Samuel Pratt for £80 in 1851, which was worth about £98,000 in 1851.

On loan from The Royal Armouries, London.



Left: Marble Relief, 'Virgin and Child with Cherubs', c.1855, by Giovanni Bastianini (1830-1868). Photograph © The Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

This marble relief, in the style of Antonio Rossellino (1427-1479), was acquired by the Victoria & Albert Museum (then called the South Kensington Museum) in Paris in 1857 as a Renaissance artwork attributed to Desiderio da Settignano (c.1428-1464). It was formerly owned by the curiosity dealer Giovanni Freppa (1795-1870), who traded in Florence between the 1840s and 1860s. The relief was commissioned by Freppa from the sculptor Giovanni Bastianini (1830-1868) in about 1855 and was one of a number of copies and fakes of Renaissance sculptures that Freppa sold to several major collectors and museums in the middle decades of the 19th century. In 1886 Freppa was negatively described as an *'antiquarian and ex-charcoal-seller...who made his living by the selling of old bas-reliefs, busts or fragments, genuine or otherwise.'* and his association with fake Renaissance antiques was one of the cause célèbre of the 19th century. Both Henry Cole (1808-1882) and John Charles Robinson (1824-1913) of the South Kensington Museum regularly cautioned the museum authorities about objects that had a provenance to Freppa; Robinson commented in 1891 that Freppa had *'caused a number of spurious Giorgios [examples of 16th century maiolica] to be manufactured..'* which he had *'dexterously 'planted' for sale to local dealers, farmers, peasants and other unsuspecting agents, in the towns and villages in Pesaro and Urbino districts.'* In the 19th century Bastianini's reputation, by contrast, survived the negative associations that became fixed to Freppa. The President of the Royal Academy, Sir Frederic Leighton (1830-1896), no less, in a letter of 1888, commented; *'Bastianini was a man of impressive talent – a Tuscan worthy to stand by the side of his predecessors of the quattrocento; it is no concern of ours that poverty drove him to use his rare gifts in the service of vendors of spurious works.'* However, far from being a victim of the ruthless dealer Freppa, it is now known that Bastianini was much more complicit in the production of these Renaissance fakes. (See also *'Fakes & Forgeries section in the SOLD! catalogue*).

Marble relief acquired by the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A Museum) in 1857 for £80, which was worth about £78,000 in 1857.

On loan from The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



29 Julius Weitzner, 1968

This painting, dating from about 1305, was sold by the art dealer Julius Weitzner (1895-1986) to the National Gallery, London in 1968, when it was ascribed Duccio di Buoninsegna (d.1319); it has subsequently been reattributed to Ugolino di Nerio (fl.1317-1329), a follower of Duccio. Weitzner began as an art dealer in New York, USA in the 1920s and became a leading international art dealer, with galleries in New York and London in the 1960s. He bought the painting for £2,700 at the auction sale of the contents of Aldwick Court, near Bruton in Somerset in March 1968 before the painting was 'knocked out' in one of the most infamous auction rings of the 20th century. It is said that the painting made at least £28,000 in the knockout, monies that were distributed among the dealers participating in the ring. The painting was subsequently sold by Weitzner to the Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio, USA, but an export certificate was not granted and the painting was ultimately bought by the National Gallery, London in 1968 for £151,102, (the Sterling equivalent of the price offered by Cleveland Museum of Art). The practice of the ring had been made a criminal offence in 1927 (Auctions, (Bidding Agreements) Act 1927) but the practice continued and public criticism intensified in the 1960s. In 1964 newspapers reported an auction ring involving a 'Chippendale Commode', which was allegedly sold for £750 at an auction but was quickly 'knocked out' for £4,000 in the ring. Public concern came to a head in the infamous 'Duccio Affair' in 1968 when The Sunday Times exposed the 'Duccio' auction ring in a series of articles in October and November 1968. The reports led to a formal public debate in Parliament and the tightening up of criminal sanctions in the (Auctions (Bidding Agreement) Act) 1969. (See also 'The Ring' section in the *SOLD! catalogue*, pp.36-38).

Painting ascribed to Duccio (c.1305) when sold to the National Gallery by Julius Weitzner for £151,102 in 1968.

On loan from the National Gallery, London.

Left: Attributed to Ugolino di Nerio.
The Virgin and Child with Four Angels.
Photograph © The National Gallery,
London. Bought with contributions
from the Lewis Fund and the National
Art Collections Fund (Eugene Cremetti
Fund), 1968. Sold by Julius Weitzner to
The National Gallery in 1968.

Also in the SOLD! Exhibition

Queen Anne walnut bureau-bookcase, c.1710, bought by Haughey Antiques in 1970 for £5,000. *On loan from Haughey Antiques, Kirkby Stephen.*

‘Antique’ open armchair. Walnut, c.1700. Sold to The Bowes Museum by Augill Castle Antiques, Cumbria for £4,500 in 1986. *From the Collections of The Bowes Museum.*

Robert Mouseman ‘Vintage’ armchair. Oak, c.1980. *On loan from Ingnet Limited, Newgate, Barnard Castle.*

Meissen pot-pourri, mid-18th century, formerly in the private collection of the 19th century curiosity dealer John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887). *On loan from a private collection.*

William Schofield’s shop at 36 Holywell Street, London 1847. Old Entrance to Lyon’s Inn, Holywell Street, Strand, April 1847, John Wykeham Archer, watercolour, 1847. *On loan from the British Museum.*

Hanging sign from Wylton Antiques, Melton Mowbray. Iron, c.1960. *On loan from the Antique Dealers archive at The Brotherton Special Collections, University of Leeds. Courtesy of Christopher Payne.*

Exhibition Poster for Samuel Pratt’s ‘The Gothic Armoury’, 3 Grosvenor Street, 1838. *On loan from the private collection of Peter Finer.*

Dealer Ephemera

Stoner & Evans Old English Porcelain Exhibition Catalogue, 1909. *On loan from a private collection.*

A Copper Token issued by Robert Heslop, ‘Curiosity Dealer’ 1820s. *On loan from a private collection.*

Catalogue, *The Dresden Gallery* issued by Samuel Litchfield, London c.1880. *On loan from a private collection.*

Catalogue issued by Samuel Richards, Nottingham, 1892. *On loan from a private collection.*

Catalogue issued by A.W. Little, Bristol, c.1915. *On loan from a private collection.*

Catalogue, *Old English Furniture* issued by F.W. Phillips, Hitchin, c.1920. *On loan from a private collection.*

Catalogue, *Elizabethan Furniture* issued by Phillips of Hitchin c.1920. *On loan from a private collection.*

Catalogue issued by Mallett & Son, London, 1936. *On loan from a private collection.*

Playbill for the premiere of Quinneys, Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, (1914). *On loan from a private collection.*

Playbill for Quinneys, New Theatre, St. Martin’s Lane, London c.1925. *On loan from a private collection.*

Playbill for Quinneys, Guildford Theatre (1951). *On loan from a private collection.*

Sweetmeat Glass, c.1770-1780, with antique dealer label of A. Rohan c.1915. *On loan from a private collection.*

Partial manuscript titled ‘People I have met’, for the book *Confessions of a Dealer* (1924) by Thomas Rohan. 1920s. *On loan from a private collection.*

Dealer Archives

F.W. Phillips, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, sales book, c.1900. MS1999/1/3/9 *On loan from The Brotherton Library Special Collections, University of Leeds.*

F.W. Phillips, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, photograph album of antique dealer’s stock, c.1900. MS1999/4/2/14 *On loan from The Brotherton Library Special Collections, University of Leeds.*

F.W. Phillips, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, photograph album of antique dealer’s stock, c.1900. MS1999/4/1/51 *On loan from The Brotherton Library Special Collections, University of Leeds.*

R.A. Lee, London, sales book, 1960s. MS2088/2/2/1 *On loan from The Brotherton Library Special Collections, University of Leeds.*

H.C. Baxter & Sons, London, sales book, 1960s. MS2000/2/1 *On loan from The Brotherton Library Special Collections, University of Leeds.*

‘Scrapbook’ c.1911 composed by the antique dealers Stair & Andrew, London. *On loan from a private collection.*

Dealer photograph album stock book of antique ceramics composed by antique dealers W.F. Greenwood & Sons, York, 1940s-1950s. *On loan from a private collection.*

THE ANTIQUE TRADE AND
PUBLIC MUSEUMS

Introduction

Mark Westgarth

The relationship between antique dealers and public museums is one of the key themes of the SOLD! exhibition. The following 6 short essays, commissioned from leading curators of some of the museums that generously loaned objects to the exhibition, highlight these remarkable relationships. From the very beginning of the 'decorative art' museum in Europe, exemplified by the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria & Albert Museum) in the 1850s, the history of museum collections has been intimately interwoven with the history of the antique trade. As Leela Meinertas of the V&A Museum outlines, 19th century dealers such as John Webb and Henry Durlacher were critical actors in the history of the V&A Museum at the moment of the museum's foundation. This theme is picked up by Naomi Speakman, of the British Museum, where we again see the significance of a dealer such as John Webb in development of one of the most important public museum collections in the world. At the Royal Armouries, as Jonathan Tavares, curator of arms and armour at Chicago Art Institute, suggests, 19th century dealers Samuel and Henry Pratt played a critical role in the growth of the collections at a time when notions of authenticity were much different than they are today.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries some highly important private collections were being transitioned into public museums. Alyson Pollard, of the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool, summarises the part played by high profile dealers such as Edgar Gorer and Frank Partridge in the extraordinary collections of Lord Leverhulme in the period before the First World War. Another great private collection, now forming the nucleus of the Bowes Museum, was that of John and Joséphine Bowes, assembled in the middle decades of the 19th century. As Howard Coutts and Jane Whittaker of the Bowes Museum indicate, the Bowes' relied on many 19th century dealers to assemble their collections and the museum has continued to add to these collections throughout the 20th century, buying objects from many well-known regional antique dealers, including W F Greenwood & Sons of York, during the 1960s. Indeed, the Post-Second World War period was a highly significant moment in the history of antique dealing and the development of the exceptional range of decorative art Temple Newsam, Leeds during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, as Rachel Conroy suggests, would not have been possible without the help of an outstanding number of local, regional and national antique dealers.

Antique Dealers and the Victoria & Albert Museum

Leela Meinertas

The history of the V&A is inextricably bound with a parallel history of its relationships with antique dealers. Ever since the foundation of the Museum of Manufactures at Marlborough House in 1852, the V&A has enjoyed a fruitful partnership with some of the greatest names in the antiques trade.

The hidden dealer histories that exist in the back-stories of so many of our objects are notoriously difficult to trace. Poor records prior to the 1870s and the unfortunate practice of weeding acquisition files in the early 20th century, has sadly destroyed a great deal of vital evidence. Finding files for objects directly acquired from a known dealer is relatively easy. However, many of our world-famous objects have been filtered through multiple hands having often been sold several times to different dealers and collectors before being acquired by the Museum.

Typically, maker, material and technique, date and recent object history form the key information undertaken by museum cataloguers. Only recently has there been an attempt to delve further into pre-acquisition information. Recent interest in collectors and the history of collecting has expanded our knowledge – though the sources that supplied the collectors is still largely undiscovered territory.

The early decades of the V&A's collecting, (in the 1850s, when it was known as The South Kensington Museum) are dominated by two great 19th century dealers, John Webb and the Durlacher Brothers. Both played an important role in an age when the demise of great collectors provided sales and auctions of extraordinary quality. Webb's relationship with the Museum was a multifaceted one. He acted as dealer, agent and advisor to Henry Cole, the first Director of the Museum. Webb was charged with bidding on behalf of the Museum at several high-profile sales, notably of the Ralph Bernal, Jules Soulages and Prince Soltykoff collections. Webb negotiated with lenders to exhibitions and accompanied Cole to visit collections, also selecting 'modern' items for the Museum at the Paris 1867 exhibition. He even put up cash for Museum purchases and waited until it could repay the enormous sums; Webb placed his own large collection of ivories, some of which had been bought at the Soltykoff auction, on loan to the Museum until purchase funds could be found. Among the Webb acquisitions are some of the most celebrated objects in the V&A's collections, such as Pisano's 'Crucified Christ' (V&A No. 212:1867) bought for £15 in 1867, when it was described as French 14th century, and the Egyptian Rock Crystal Ewer, c.1000-1050 (V&A No.7904-1862) acquired by the Museum in 1862. When John Webb died in 1880 he left the Museum money with which to set up a purchase fund which is still in operation today.

The Durlacher Brothers dealership was a competitor in the same field as Webb and offered similar services. They negotiated similar loan terms to those of Webb, with payments on account and then at 5% of the value as 'rental', payable if the Museum did not purchase the items offered.

Not all transactions were driven by offers to purchase. Some of our most prized objects were gifts. In 1881 Henry Durlacher presented the magnificent marble bust of Charles II by the French sculptor Honoré Pelle (1641-1718) (V&A No.239-1881). In 1934, just prior to the final retirement of George Durlacher, the last member of the Durlacher dynasty, George Durlacher gave a 15th century Paduan terracotta relief of a Virgin and Child to the V&A. (V&A No.A34-1934).

By 1900 the rise of the influential art dealers like Duveen, Wertheimer and Colnaghi, introduced a competitive atmosphere into the international museum world with many dealers having offices both in London and New York. Large national museums like the Bode Museum in Berlin and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York with large purchase grants entered the field as serious rivals in a narrowing market and chasing the same collectors, objects and the dealers with access to them. Through the early decades of the 20th century London's Bond Street grew to become the supreme centre for the art and antiques trade. Many Galleries who became established there and in nearby St James' formed relationships with Keepers and specialist curators. The well-known dealers Mallett & Son made their first sale to the V&A in 1911 when they sold two pieces of Swansea porcelain and an 18th century Worcester tea bowl to the Circulation Department (V&A No.11-13-1911); and Frank Partridge & Son sold the famous 'Great Bed of Ware' to the Museum in 1931 (W.47-1931).

Some of the Museum's most celebrated objects came from firms operating beyond the heady atmosphere of Bond Street. From 1919 to 1947 Moss Harris and Sons in New Oxford Street, regularly sold English furniture to the Museum, including the Badminton Bed in 1921 for £400 (W.143.1921). Premises nearer the Museum in South Kensington were also a source of acquisitions. J.A. Lewis & Son in Brompton Road gave an 18th century rolled paper tea-caddy in 1922 (V&A No. W.409-1922) and later, in 1960, they sold the door-case designed by G.B. Borra (1713-1770) from Norfolk House. (V&A No. W.4:1-1960). Nor were purchases confined to the London dealers, a substantial amount of business was done with amongst others, Phillips of Hitchin, a long-established firm of antique dealers based in Hitchin, Hertfordshire (*see SOLD! catalogue entries numbers 9 and 18*).

Antique Dealers and the British Museum

Naomi Speakman

Over the course of the last 260 years the British Museum and dealers have had a close working relationship, with the latter frequently representing the Museum at auctions. These individuals were more than just passive middle-men but were active contributors to the institution. This short piece will look at the relationship between the dealer John Webb (1799-1880) and Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897), a curator at the British Museum, focusing on their activities in just a single year, 1855.

Webb first worked with Franks at the sale of the MP and collector Ralph Bernal (1784-1854), held by Christie & Manson from March to April 1855. For private collectors and public museums this presented a rare opportunity to acquire objects from an expansive collection which included decorative arts, medieval and Renaissance works of art, portraiture, and arms and armour. At the time of the Bernal auction both Marlborough House, the precursor to the South Kensington Museum, and the British Museum were looking to augment their collections in these areas. Franks was just four years into his appointment in the Department of Antiquities at the Museum and along with his counterparts at Marlborough House, he was conscious of the need to collaborate over the Bernal sale to ensure that both museums were able to acquire the lots they wished to secure. Prior to the auction, Franks had visited Bernal's widow at the family home in Eaton Square to survey the pieces which '*would enable us to improve our existing collections.*' Henry Cole, of Marlborough House, had already visited and studied the collection with Webb. Soon, however, these two institutions came together, something which was not publicly known at the time. Luckily, Franks explained this process for us in a later account he presented to the Board of Trustees in May 1884. At this time he was Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and his report concerned the possibility of rival bidding at the auction of the Andrew Fountaine collection at Narford Hall, Norfolk, which was to take place that year:

Should a special grant be obtained Mr. Franks will undertake that there shall be no difficulty or collision with the South Kensington Museum. The popular delusion that such a collision took place at the Bernal Sale is a ridiculous mistake as the two institutions were employing the same agent, Mr John Webb, and the Trustees had given special directions that the person who on this occasion was supposed to be bidding for the Museum should never be so employed. Since that sale Mr Franks has tried as far as possible to employ, for purchases of this nature, the same agent as the South Kensington Museum, and he may add that he is frequently consulted by the South Kensington Museum in connection with purchases, whether at sales or otherwise.

Here, Franks, writing in the third person, makes clear his frustration with the public perception of how both institutions behaved at the sale. Evidently, it was an irritation he still keenly felt nearly thirty years after the event. His report also suggests that this policy of museums engaging the same agent began with the Bernal auction. Staff at Marlborough House were equally concerned by the view that they were

bidding against each other. These sentiments were expressed in an internal report from 1855:

The British Museum, being at the same time authorised to make purchases [at the Bernal sale], it was arranged that the action of the two institutions [Marlborough House and the British Museum] should be in common, and Mr. Franks, of the Department of Antiquities of the British Museum, and the curator of this collection, were instructed to concert together with that view, whilst Mr. John Webb was commissioned to bid for both institutions... It appears desirable to specify these arrangements, as an answer to the reports circulated to the effect that Marlborough House and the British Museum had competed with each other at the sale. It is scarcely necessary to say, that no such opposition did or could take place, and that on the contrary, the officers deputed, and their agent, acted throughout in perfect concert.

Webb purchased many items for both institutions, including a silver-gilt chalice for the British Museum (Lot 1321, £21.0.0.) (see *SOLD! catalogue item 6*). Evidently the press was unaware of this cooperation as Webb's name appears frequently in newspaper reports listed either as an independent bidder or acting as an agent for Marlborough House, but not alongside the British Museum. When the subsequent list of purchasers and prices was released, Webb's name was again omitted in favour of the two museums. Franks' participation in these events also seems to have gone unnoticed at the time; his personal copies of the Bernal catalogue, filled with comments, prices and doodles, prove that he too attended the sale.

Franks was savvy. He was well-aware of the mutual benefit of maintaining a friendly relationship with individuals in the antiques trade. A few months after the Bernal sale Webb and Franks made a series of trips to France. On 28th May 1855, Webb visited Amiens in the company of the English antiquarian William Maskell to see the collector Amedée Bouvier. Webb and Maskell were impressed with Bouvier's collection, made several purchases and Maskell wrote to Franks recommending him to visit to see what could be secured for the British Museum. This Franks eagerly did whilst on holiday the following month. His report to the Trustees shows that he lodged in Paris and travelled back and forth to Amiens to negotiate with Bouvier. Once Franks had finalised his purchases in Amiens he turned to Webb to help him acquire '*various objects... all desirable... for the museum and very reasonable in price*' from the Parisian dealer M. Jacob. Franks has been hailed as the 'second founder of the British Museum' but, as his work in this one year demonstrates, he needed dealers like Webb to help fashion the collection.

Antique Dealers and the Royal Armouries

Jonathan Tavares

The Armouries at the Tower of London has been open to public visitors since the late 17th century forming one of the oldest public museums in England. From the beginning, the Tower Armouries was committed to telling a history of the nation and its association with arms. One of the highlights of the early displays was the Line of Kings, a hall devoted to over a dozen carved wooden horses mounted by effigies of historical monarchs. At this date historical accuracy seemed to be of little concern. For example the figure of the 11th century King, William the Conqueror, was displayed in full late 16th-century plate armour, holding a firearm.

This would all change in the 19th century under the protests of antiquarians at the height of the gothic revival. Chief amongst them was the antiquary Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783-1848) who would publish his three volumes of *A Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour* in 1824. Meyrick was so impassioned to present greater accuracy that he volunteered to reorganize the Tower Armouries' anachronistic display. By 1826 he completed the task and received a knighthood for his services. With Meyrick's work it became clear that as a repository of military munitions (common arms) and royal pieces of historical importance there were massive gaps in the collections if it was to present the history of the development of arms in England. This was particularly evident to Robert Porrett, the Chief Clerk and Principle Store Keeper at the Tower Armouries who, in 1825, petitioned the Board of Ordinance, the then governing body of the Armouries, to use funds from admission to make strategic purchases toward this initiative. This decision would also begin the Armouries long association with the antiques trade, both buying and selling, to create greater depth to the collections.

One of the earliest instances of the Royal Armoury becoming more involved in the market for arms and armour is reported in Board of Ordnance in-letters, which record the transactions with an 'amateur' collector of 'ancient arms and armour' Mr. Edward Leslie in 1829. Leslie offered the Tower Armouries a crossbow with a request that they either purchase the crossbow or exchange it for two 'knobbed lances'. One of the more involved instances of this practice of sales, acquisitions and exchanges concerned a 'crusader armour' said to be from Tong Castle. The Board of Ordnance had lost out on acquiring this armour at auction in 1833, where it was purchased by the collector Mr. Sebright. Sebright was approached by the Royal Armouries soon after the auction to broker an exchange of duplicate material for this coveted armour, which would, as the Chief Clerk stated, 'enrich the National Collection'. The Board approved the exchange of 2 lances, 1 horse shaffron (head defense), two gauntlets, one gun-shield, several pole arms and two black cavalier's armours for Sebright's 'crusader armour', virtually an entire collection for an armour which is now known to be an 17th-18th century Indo-Persian armour rather than from the period of the Crusaders.

Nevertheless, the door of the Tower Armouries was open and it did not take long for London's emanate antiques and curiosity dealers to take note. Among them

was Samuel Luke Pratt, the principal antique arms dealer in Britain from the mid-1830s till his death in 1878. At Pratt's special exhibition hall in 1838, *The Gothic Armoury*, arranged at the Grosvenor Street annex to his New Bond Street shop, a space decked out like a baronial hall for the public's viewing pleasure, numerous objects had been procured by Pratt from the Tower Armouries. These included similar objects to the duplicate material exchanged to Mr. Sebright such as six black cuirassier harnesses and several gun-shields — very curious equipment known now to have been ordered by Henry VIII in 1544 from an Italian Merchant of which 60 once survived in the Tower. Pratt, however did not only make these purchases from the Tower but also made some very strategic sales of armour to the Tower Armouries. In October of 1840, Pratt offered some of the finest pieces that he had imported from a noble armoury in Padua, Italy, the Capodilista and later Oddi Family. These formed centerpieces in his Gothic Armoury exhibition together with arms said to be from the 'Regal armoury of Ferrara'. The armour, mounted on a fully armoured horse was purchased for the considerable sum of £300 and represented a major acquisition that are still today highly important additions to the Royal Armouries (see *SOLD! catalogue item 3*).

Further information regarding the Tower Armouries dealings with Pratt and other dealers are found in a volume in their archives known as the 'Armoury Issues' book. In April of 1860 Pratt is recorded to have been issued 'one morion helmet of the 16th century' and in May 1860 he was given 'one barred helmet of the 17th century' as part of an exchange. Other dealers are also found in the Tower Armouries archives; in October 1846 the Tower bought from the tinsmith/gunsmith turned armourer and dealer Thomas Grimshaw a 'waist belt of early date and an ancient prick spur'. Grimshaw would come to light in the 1880s as a notorious faker, working with Samuel Pratt, and selling numerous fake medieval helms and other pieces of armour to the Tower Armouries. Among the most famous is a massive flat-topped helm with hinged visor thought to be from the 12th century constructed much like an oversized tin lantern with vision slits. This too was sold to the Armouries by Pratt in 1851, together with another fake helm for £80 (see *SOLD! catalogue 'Fakes & Forgeries' and item 27*). These sales and many others helped Pratt to expand his clientele and build an international reputation. Pratt sold several pieces of fraudulent 'ancient armour' to the French national museum, the Musée d'Artillerie, much to the dismay of some British antiquarians who lamented that the national collection should have purchased them to keep them in England.

Antique Dealers and the Lady Lever Art Gallery

Alyson Pollard

William Hesketh Lever (1851-1922), a wholesale grocer's son from Bolton, made a fortune by the manufacturing and marketing of soap. As his business grew he built a factory and a village for his workers on the banks of the River Mersey, near Bebington, on the Wirral. He named the village 'Port Sunlight' after Sunlight soap, his most successful brand. As his fortune increased so did his interest in collecting works of art, which initially he purchased to decorate his houses. As Lever's collection began to outgrow the space in his homes the idea of creating a gallery of British art took shape. After about 1910, Lever began to turn his attention to collecting for a purpose built art gallery. In this gallery the finest examples of British art could be displayed alongside examples of art from other cultures which had been important in shaping national taste.

Both his interest in art and collecting were shaped by the knowledge and instincts of the many dealers he purchased from. Lever was known to visit sale rooms to draw up lists of items he was interested in purchasing and then annotate the lists with maximum bids. Selected dealers would act on Lever's behalf in the salerooms and more generally, actively seek out works of art which they thought would be of interest to him. Perhaps the most influential of Lever's early forays into the art market was with the collector-dealer James Orrock (1829-1913), whom he met in 1896. Orrock was a watercolourist and was himself an enthusiastic collector of art and Oriental ceramics. Like Lever, Orrock was also a keen promoter of British art, which he thought had been overlooked by the art world. Other leading antique dealers, such as Frank Partridge (1875-1953), who was building a reputation for antique furniture and Chinese ceramics, and Edgar Ezekiel Gorer (1872-1915) who was one of the most important dealers in antique Chinese works of art, became two of Lever's most important contacts in this field. It is believed that Partridge first met Lever in about 1900 at his new shop in King Street, London. Partridge was keen for Lever to support his new venture by becoming a sleeping partner in the business. However, whilst Lever refused he did provide Partridge with some capital and recommended the business to his friends. Partridge's business and his network of collectors grew as he expanded into the American market. By 1910 the fashion for Chinese porcelain, especially for the decorated jars known as 'Hawthorn Jars' and the black famille noire porcelain ensured that only the very wealthy, like Lever, could afford to collect it.

Lever's relationship with Gorer was shorter in length and more volatile than his relationship with Partridge. Gorer first contacted Lever in 1906 but the relationship only really developed from 1909. Lever purchased his first piece from Gorer, a blue and white beaker for £350 in 1910 and in 1911 Lever bought a pair of 'Hawthorn Jars' from Gorer, paying the extraordinary sum of £6,500 (see *SOLD! catalogue item 10*). However, not all their transactions went as smoothly. In 1911 Gorer acquired the Richard Bennett collection which Lever agreed to buy in its entirety, offering to pay £275,000 over a five year period with an option to return the collection, should he change his mind. This was a huge sum of money at the time. Lever started to make

plans to display the collection in Hulme Hall in Port Sunlight Village whilst Gorer used his skills in interior decoration to design the display cases. Lever had wished that his purchase of the collection be kept confidential, but this was not to be the case and as the news leaked out Lever initially denied the purchase. By this time Gorer was becoming increasingly concerned as rumours of fakes in the collection were circulating and he feared that Lever would withdraw from the arrangement. Lever was indeed having second thoughts regarding the purchase. There were angry exchanges and legal proceedings were initiated by Gorer which were later withdrawn. The parties eventually came to an agreement whereby Lever kept 51 items from the collection at a cost of £55,000.

Gorer had business relations with America since at least 1911 and it was here where the returned items from the Bennett collection were ultimately sold. Partridge likewise had business interests in New York. In May 1915 Gorer and Partridge were both travelling home from New York, with a group of British antique dealers on the *Lusitania* when it was sunk by a German submarine. Frank Partridge survived the sinking but Edgar Gorer did not. However, Partridge continued to supply Lever with Chinese works of art right up until Lever's death in 1925. By then their business relationship had become a trusted friendship.

Lever realised his ambition to build an art gallery in 1922 when he opened the Lady Lever Art Gallery. He named the gallery after his wife Elizabeth, who had passed away in 1913. The Chinese ceramics and other works of art purchased from Partridge and Gorer, which had once graced the tops of cabinets and tables in Lever's houses, are now displayed in the gallery for visitors to enjoy. The collection is considered to be one of the finest 18th and 19th century collections of Chinese porcelains in the world. Its popularity with visitors supports Lever's vision that '*Art can be to everyone an inspiration*'.

Many thanks to Professor Nick Pearce, Department of History of Art, University of Glasgow and Dr Yupin Chung, department of the History of Art, University of Glasgow for their research into the Chinese collection and their essays which can be found at:

www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/collections/chinese/essays.aspx

Antique Dealers and The Bowes Museum

Howard Coutts and Jane Whittaker

John and Joséphine Bowes were great collectors, but not necessarily great connoisseurs. Joséphine had a sharp eye, and John was a good judge of human character, but in the end they relied heavily on a succession of dealers to furnish their new museum. This also had the effect of turning the museum project into something of a shopping spree! Whilst in Paris they used their time there to visit a number of antique shops, including T Jarry, trading from *Rue d'Amsterdam*, from whom they purchased '*rare cake moulds from the time of Bernard Palissy*', the 16th century potter, in 1862, and A C Lamer, a merchant in curios, *objets d'art* and paintings, whose shop was near the auction house, Drouot. The Bowes moved from Paris to London during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and one notable purchase at this time was the silver-gilt, enamelled and diamond snuff box, bought by Joséphine Bowes from the dealers S J Phillips of Regent Street in 1871 (see *SOLD! catalogue item 8*).

Little was bought for the museum after John's death in 1885. The museum had little money during the first half of the 20th century and only few purchases were made. In the period after World War II, encouraged by the newly-formed Friends of The Bowes Museum whose patron was Queen Elizabeth, later the Queen Mother, new trustees set about revitalizing the Museum, rehanging the picture galleries and instigating a series of English and French 'period rooms'. The French origins of the Bowes Museum meant that it was weak in the field of English decorative art, but Durham County Council provided funds for a judicious policy of acquisition. We do not know the exact process, but the Museum now subscribed to the art periodicals *Apollo* and *The Connoisseur* which was heavily illustrated with advertisement for choice objects held by London dealers; in addition auction catalogues came from the London auction houses. Antique dealers inevitably played an important role in the development of the collections of the museum in this period. In 1959, for example, an '*Elizabethan Court Cupboard*' was acquired from the London dealer and leading specialist in antique oak furniture and 'period rooms', Murray Adams Acton, then at Palace Gate, Kensington, for the princely sum of £350. The 18th century 'Period Room' panelling from Gilling Castle was acquired from the local, York-based dealers W F Greenwood & Sons in 1962 for £1,000; it was allegedly still crated up for its dispatch to the collector William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951) in the USA. Supplementing the already rich collections of French furniture was not neglected in the period however, and in 1956 the museum bought an 18th century table, formerly from the Trianon at Versailles, for £2,700 from the top London dealer Frank Partridge & Sons. And the extraordinary bronze fountain mask, possibly from the royal palace of St Cloud, was acquired from the London dealers David Tremayne Limited for £2,500 in 1966 (see *SOLD! catalogue item 19*).

Personal relationships were often formed between antique dealers and the curators of the museum. In the 1960s, the curator of decorative arts David Garlick made a long series of acquisitions from the antique silver dealers S J Shrubsole,

then trading from Museum Street in London. Sometimes these relationships went astray; when a large sum of money was raised from a flower show in 1969, Garlick 'claimed' two fine pieces of French furniture for £5,500 from the Bourdon House branch of the antique dealers Mallett & Sons, only to find that he was not allowed to change his mind in the matter and choose only one! Fortunately the 18th century French armchair, together with the extraordinary late 18th/early 19th century 'Grotto' stool, are now regarded as exceptional and rare (*see SOLD! catalogue items 21 & 22*). The 1960s also saw the return of the 18th century botanical specimen cabinet, originally made for John Bowes' grandmother, Mary Eleanor Bowes, to the Bowes collections once more. This was acquired through the dealer Temple Williams, whose shop in Haunch of Venison Yard, London, was a magnet for museum curators looking for unusual 18th and early 19th century furniture (*see SOLD! catalogue item 18*).

The choice of furniture became perhaps somewhat less discriminating in the 1970s, led by a hurried desire to finish the sequence of period rooms, and also perhaps the recognition that a lot of gaps in the collection had been filled in the 1950s and 60s. There were still some notable acquisitions however. Some fine pieces of Regency furniture were bought, such as the 'Athene' cabinet from the antique furniture dealers and specialists in Regency furniture, Glaisher & Nash in 1973; a Regency revolving bookcase from the Aberdeen based antique dealer John Bell in 1962. The large bookcase made for the art collector, writer and designer Thomas Hope (1769-1831), was bought at auction against international competition by the Museum in 1972.

From the late 1970s the policy was refined to concentrate on the core collections of European fine and decorative art, not least because it was not well represented in museums outside London, and the museum could make a difference to national holdings in this field. Important pieces of Sèvres porcelain, such as the plate from the Charlotte Louise service, were acquired from the leading antique ceramics specialist dealers Winnifred Williams in 1978. Williams supplied a wide range of other 18th century porcelain from various factories during the 1970s. There were also 'export stop' pieces – such as the cabinet from Warwick Castle, which was acquired in 1979 having been sold to a private collector by the high-class luxury goods department store Asprey & Co in 1969.

Given the richness of its holding and the limitations of space, the Museum in the late 20th century took a very selective attitude to acquisitions, regarding them as things that must 'stand out' and not simply duplicate items in store. This has led to a concentration on high status objects bought occasionally rather than 'good' objects bought continuously. Recent prizes include the 19th century gilt-bronze and silver-gilt mirror by Barbedienne (1867), acquired through the London dealers H Blairman & Sons in 1992. The background to this collecting is a sympathetic board that feels that The Bowes Museum can 'make a difference' to the local community and national collecting; and above all, the generous support from the National Art Collections Fund (now the Art Fund) and the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund, without which a pro-active acquisition policy would not be possible.

Antique Dealers and Temple Newsam

Rachel Conroy

Temple Newsam and the antiques trade have a long and close history. Antique dealers have helped to shape both the house and its collections over time and the trade continues to play an important role. Temple Newsam House and its grounds came into public ownership in 1922, when it was sold by Hon Edward Wood, later Earl of Halifax. Some 917 acres of parkland and the magnificent mansion were purchased by Leeds Corporation (now Leeds City Council) for the nominal sum of £35,000. The contents of the house were offered to Leeds for a further £10,000, but this was declined and the contents subsequently dispersed. Key pieces were retained by the family and the remainder was sold by the auctioneers Robinson, Fisher and Harding over seven separate days in July 1922. Thus, in a rather cruel twist of fate, the very first pieces to be purchased for Temple Newsam as a public museum, albeit relatively modest ones, came via the sale of its own contents.

When Temple Newsam opened its doors to the public in 1923, there was very little left to see. Over the coming years, it would be steadily developed as a museum for fine and decorative arts within a splendid country house setting. In 1938 the Director, Philip Hendy, described how Temple Newsam, 'a great treasure...will remain largely buried treasure until furniture worthy of it has been acquired.' Forty years on, Christopher Gilbert, Principal Keeper of Temple Newsam, expressed the importance of the trade to the continuing development of what had, by then, become a nationally important collection. In the introduction to his seminal furniture catalogue, published in 1978, he wrote:

Following the decline of country house sales Leeds has come to rely increasingly on the co-operation of leading antique dealers, several of whom regularly offer Temple Newsam first refusal of outstanding objects at specially low prices.

The fine and decorative art collections at Temple Newsam have been enriched by the remarkable generosity of many donors, particularly the Earl of Halifax and his descendants, who have given pieces that are of fundamental significance to the house and its broader collections. The trade, however, has supplied some of its most important and cherished objects – both original items repatriated to the house, such as a pair of early 19th century papier-maché ormolu-mounted vases re-acquired for the house through Frank Partridge (Fine Art) Limited in 2002 and back in their original location in the Chinese Room, and those collected as superb examples of fine and decorative art in their own right such as the red lacquer armchair by Giles Grendey (sold to Temple Newsam by H Blairman & Sons, 1970), the Kirkleatham silver centrepiece (sold to Temple Newsam by S J Phillips in 1987) and the Chippendale secretaire from Harewood House, (sold to Temple Newsam by Hotspur Limited in 1999) (*see SOLD! catalogue items 24, 25 and 26*).

During the period from the Second World War to the 1980s, itself a boom period for the antique trade, the furniture collections at Temple Newsam in particular were significantly expanded through key sales by antique dealers. The curators

at Temple Newsam at the time fostered fruitful relationships with several major London-based dealers such as Mallett & Sons, who sold several objects to the house, including a pair of side-tables formerly at Ditchley Park to Temple Newsam in 1954, and Hotspur Limited, who, amongst other things, sold an important pair of 18th century ormolu candelabra by Matthew Boulton in 1975. Local antique dealers also played a significant role in the development of the collections – Harrogate-based dealers such as Charles Lumb & Sons (an 18th century Dutch giltwood chandelier in 1950) and Walter Waddingham (an 18th century ‘Gothick’ library table from ‘Pomfret Castle’ in 1951); and York-based dealers such as Charles Thornton (a late 17th century lime and oak bench in 1939) and W F Greenwood & Sons, who sold an 18th century bookcase formerly at Benningborough Hall in 1943. One of the closest relationships between the curators at Temple Newsam and antiques dealers was with the Burford-based dealer Roger Warner (1913-2008). Warner was especially interested in the social history and rather than the grand furniture from former important country houses that dealers such as Mallett & Sons and Frank Partridge & Sons might offer, Warner’s objects were generally more domestic in scale, often from the back-stairs and servants quarters of grand country houses. A typical Warner object is the early 19th century straw ‘beehive’ chair, sold to Temple Newsam in 1986.

The relationship between Temple Newsam and the trade has been one of mutual cooperation and benefit. As well as acting as vendors, dealers have contributed financially towards the purchase of major works, such as the Chippendale Library Writing Table from Harewood House (acquired in 1965, including a contribution from H Blairman & Sons) and the stunning lacquer fall-front secretaire from Lady Hertford’s ‘Blue Drawing Room’, acquired in 2005 from Parisian dealer, J Kugel. Elsewhere, for example, contributions were given towards the publication of Gilbert’s furniture catalogue by H. Blairman & Sons, The British Antique Dealers’ Association Ltd, Godden of Worthing Ltd, Hotspur Ltd, Charles Lumb & Sons Ltd, Partridge (Fine Arts) Ltd and Phillips of Hitchin (Antiques) Ltd. Since I arrived as curator in 2015, we have made a number of purchases from antique dealers. Dealers have also generously assisted us with acquisitions in a number of ways, undertaken specialist conservation on new acquisitions without charge and offered gifts to the collection. I hope to be able to continue Christopher Gilbert’s policy of acquiring ‘outstanding objects at specially low prices’ as my tenure at Temple Newsam continues.

SELECTED ANTIQUE DEALER BIOGRAPHIES

Introduction

Mark Westgarth

A focus on the biography of antique dealers is a relatively new theme in the growing literature on the history of the art market. Some notable dealers, such as Duveen Brothers, have been the subject of several biographies, autobiographies and, more recently academic study, but for the most part antique dealers have been marginal figures in art history. Indeed, my own *Biographical Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Antique & Curiosity Dealers* (2009 & 2011) was an attempt to recalibrate the focus on these marginalised figures and to direct sustained attention to the biographies of dealers.

The numbers of dealers involved in the antique trade over the past 200 years would be counted in the tens of thousands. But of course in terms of the relationships between the antique trade and public museums, the main focus of the SOLD! exhibition, only a tiny fraction of dealers have played a role in the development of public museum collections. The small number of antique dealer biographies below is by necessity directly related to the objects in the exhibition; the 9 dealer biographies here, 6 composed by family members of well-established dealerships, provide brief summaries of some of the most important antique dealer businesses of the last 200 years.

John Coleman Isaac (business c.1824-1866)

Martin Levy

John Coleman Isaac, the youngest child of Joseph and Mary Isaac, began his life as a second-hand clothes salesman before embarking on a career as a curiosity dealer. He is first recorded working as a dealer with Gabriel Davies and his children Abraham and Sarah, at 41 Craven Street, London. John married Sarah Davies in 1824 or 1825, and in 1829 set up premises at 12, Wardour Street (having briefly held premises at 93, The Quadrant, Regent Street). Isaac and Sarah were a devoted couple and enjoyed a successful career before their retirement in 1866 to 30 Gordon Street, London. The Isaacs did not have children and their Estate passed to nieces and nephews, members of the Simmons family. It is through the Simmons family that rare and valuable papers relating to Isaac's career survive, some with Martin Levy of H Blairman & Sons, the great-great grandson of Fanny Simmons, John Coleman Isaac's niece. In addition to the firm's 'Waste Book' (see *SOLD! catalogue item 1*) recording daily activities between 1815 and 1845 (see Martin Levy and Elaine Moss, 'John Coleman Isaac, 'Importer of Curiosities': an Outline of his life, and the 1846 Continental Diary', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 14: 1 (2002), pp. 97-114), other personal papers are divided between two private collections, and the Hartley Library, University of Southampton.

The 'Waste Book' provides a rare and valuable insight into the trade in curiosities at the height of the period when antiquaries were creating 'romantic interiors'. Details recorded in the 'Waste Book' provide a rich range of information about armour restorers, picture-framers and other practices on whom the trade depended; on banking arrangements; on domestic matters; on travel, and on specific purchases and sales. It is intended that an annotated edition of the 'Waste Book' will be published in due course.

Isaac's stock comprised a wide range of antiquarian artefacts, and more: armour (in which he appears to have specialised), silver-mounted objects such as ostrich eggs, European porcelain and maiolica, furniture, clocks pictures, stained glass, mirrors, toys, telescopes and knives. That Isaac was successful may be ascertained from the fact that from 1831 until 1845 he was able to invest £500-£1000 per annum in Government Funds. Whilst his greatest source of income was from dealing, Isaac also received some rental income from the property in Craven Street. The 'Waste Book' also indicates that he made money by occasionally trading in rice and hops and that Isaac was also not averse to receiving proceeds from the 'knockout' which was endemic in the 19th century (see *SOLD! catalogue section on 'The Auction Ring' pp.36-38*).

Isaac made regular trips to the Continent, beginning in 1822; from 1829 he made one and sometimes two trips most years until 1845. Much of this activity is outlined in Levy & Moss (*op. cit.*) and in Mark Westgarth, 'A Biographical Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Antique and Curiosity Dealers', *Regional Furniture Society Journal*, 2009, pp. 121-22. Isaac bought at auction and traded with fellow brokers in London, including many well-known dealers such as Edward Holmes Baldock,

Edward Hull, John Swaby Samuel Pratt and John Webb. Collectors with whom Isaac dealt included the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Duke of Rutland, Lord Brougham, Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, Lady Charlotte Bury, Hollingworth Magniac and members of the Rothschild family. Isaac enjoyed a particularly close bond with the collector Ralph Bernal (see Martin Levy, 'Ralph Bernal and John Coleman Isaac: Some Correspondence', *Furniture History Society Journal*, 2007, pp. 293-302), the source of the 16th century silver-gilt chalice on loan from the British Museum in the SOLD! exhibition (see *SOLD! catalogue item 6*).

Edward Holmes Baldock (business c.1800-1843)

Martin Levy

Geoffrey de Bellaigue summed up Baldock as 'an antique dealer who ended his days as an armigerous gentleman, who numbered among his clients George IV and William Beckford, and became 'Purveyor of China' to William IV and Queen Victoria...' ('Edward Holmes Baldock Part I', *Connoisseur*, 189, August 1975, p. 290). It was de Bellaigue, in his two-part article for *Connoisseur*, who put this dealer, turned cabinet-maker and improver of older objects, into perspective. Not least, in the second article (190, September 1975), he identified the initials 'EHB' found on both authentic and improved furniture with Baldock. He also identified some of Baldock's modern furniture. Mark Westgarth, 'A Biographical Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Antique and Curiosity Dealers', *Regional Furniture Society Journal*, 2009, pp. 66-68 gives a detailed account of his life which forms the majority of the basis of what follows, while Diana Davis has continued to work on Baldock, much yet to be published. But as an example see her 'A Triumph of Anglo-Gallic Taste: Two Porcelain-Mounted China Cabinets Made by Edward Holmes Baldock', *Furniture History Society Newsletter*, 205 (February 2017), pp. 2-6.

By 1805 Baldock was a dealer in china and glass, listed the following year at 7 Hanway Street, London. In 1816 he opened a separate shop at 13 Hanway Street as 'Antique Furniture Dealer' (the first reference in a trade directory to an antique furniture dealer). Later descriptions of Baldock's activities mention that he sold Sèvres and Dresden china; that he is has a 'Foreign China and Antique Warehouse', and is 'a dealer in French goods'.

In addition to Royal patrons, Baldock's clientele included Sir Walter Scott, George Byng, George Lucy, Lord Lowther and the Duke of Buccleuch, to whom, in 1830, Baldock sold an 18th century French Sevres-mounted table, similar to the table in the SOLD! exhibition (see *SOLD! catalogue item 2*). Like most dealers at the period, for example John Coleman Isaac, Baldock bought on the Continent as well as from more local colleagues in the trade; he was also active at London auctions. Baldock's 'improvements' to existing furniture and works of art, particularly ceramics, was part of a tradition, seen for example in the interventions of eighteenth-century Parisian *marchands-merciers*. And while many of his contemporaries were equally cavalier with objects that passed through their hands, it is Baldock's original designs that make him stand out. It was de Bellaigue (September 1975) who drew attention to the group of octagonal library tables with elaborate floral and figural marquetry, supplied to such patrons as the Duke of Buccleuch and the Duke of Norfolk. Examples of these tables can now be found at Lotherton Hall, Leeds, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. A series of modern writing tables, based on Louis XV prototypes includes one at Goodwood (see Martin Levy, 'E H Baldock and the Blake Family: Further Evidence', *Furniture History Society Newsletter*, 158 (May 2005), pp. 1-3).

By the time Baldock retired in 1843, two years before his death, he was living comfortably as a gentleman at 5, Hyde Park Gate, London. De Bellaigue, again,

identified a sale held by Foster & Son of Pall Mall, 19 November 1841 as being Baldock's stock. Later sales offered the 'Extensive & Beautiful Stock of China & Decorative Objects of Mr Baldock, who has retired from Business' (Foster and Son, on the premises at Hanway Street, 25-27 May 1843) and 'The Remainder of Mr Baldock's Stock' (Foster and Son, 'On the Premises, The Workshops, Hanway St.', 21 July 1843). The May sale included such telling lots as 'Forty-five pieces of carvings, chair backs and scrolls' and 'Six Boule legs for a commode'.

Samuel Pratt (business c.1820s-1878)

Jonathan Tavares

Samuel Luke Pratt (1805-1878) was one the most influential antique dealers in London during the gothic revival. In his youth he was apprenticed as an upholsterer to his father, Samuel Pratt Sr., a prosperous trunk maker who was the first to patent coil spring upholstery and mattresses. Samuel Luke and his younger brother Henry pivoted the family into the allied trade of interiors and developed their own burgeoning partnership in antiques. By about 1832 the Pratt brothers were dealing in antiques on fashionable New Bond Street, at number 47 on the corner of Maddox Street. The partnership would continue until about 1842 when Henry would go back into upholstery and trunk making and later becoming a manager for another antiques firm.

Though Samuel Luke Pratt imported and sold vast quantities of interior panelling, furnishings, altarpieces and decorative arts of all periods, he was best known as the principle British dealer of antique arms and armour throughout his career from the mid-1830s till his death in 1878. Pratt himself expressed the wish to create a 'repository from whence the splendour' of Britain's baronial halls could be revived. In this initiative he worked alongside such architects as L N Cottingham and A W N Pugin, to facilitate the formation of 'Romantic' interiors for Britain's wealthiest collectors and aristocrats, helping them to restore old baronial armories as well as produce new ones.

Above all, Pratt should be remembered as a showman. On the chivalric whims of Archibald William Montgomerie, the Earl of Eglinton, Pratt fitted out an entire jousting tournament at the Earl's castle in Ayrshire, Scotland in August 1839. Over 80,000 spectators are estimated to have viewed the event as knightly participants dressed in restored 16th -century armours using historic lances and blunted swords. Pratt was responsible for all facets of the rained-out tournament from the pavilions to the costumes, armour and even organizing prior training events in London. After the tournament Pratt exhibited much of the armour and equipment in his annex on Grosvenor Street, dubbed 'The Gothic Armoury' (see *SOLD! catalogue item 3a*). Pratt established this showroom in 1838 charging a shilling admission to see imported arms and armour arranged in an artificial baronial hall complete with craggy stone floor, beamed ceiling, trophies of arms and full horse manikins. One of the more important armours in the first display and used at the Eglinton tournament was the Demilance armour, c.1620 (see *SOLD! catalogue item 3*), which was purchased from Pratt in 1840 by the Royal Armouries. The source for this and several other fine 17th -century pieces was an ancestral armoury of the Capodilista and later Oddi family of Padua, Italy, from whom Pratt acquired it directly. The Eglinton Tournament and exhibitions at the Gothic Armoury set Pratt as the leading dealer and an authority on arms and armour in England.

During the 1840s Pratt provided the material for at least twenty-three sales of imported arms and armour at the auction houses of Oxenham & Son's and Deacon's in London; he also arranged at least one auction sale of 'ancient armour' in America.

Many of the composed armours he produced for these sales can be found in such collections as the Royal Armouries, the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, Warwick Castle and Eastnor Castle to name a few. His major clients also included connoisseur-collectors like Ralph Bernal (1783-1854) to whom he sold the 9th-century Lothair Crystal, now in the British Museum (BM number 1855, 1201.5)

Like many dealers in his field, Pratt faced the problems of supply and demand for rare medieval objects and succumbed to nefarious exploitation. From about 1851 till his death in 1878, Pratt was in collaboration with a notorious faker of 'medieval' armour, the tinsmith/gunsmith Thomas Grimshaw. Together they propagated several hundred fake pieces of armour, particularly large helms giving them fictitious provenances to churches and tombs and basing their design on period sculpture, wax seals and manuscript illuminations (see *SOLD! catalogue 'Fakes & Forgeries* pp.33-35). Many of these fakes, some purchased for national collections including the Royal Armouries and Musée d'Artillerie in Paris, were endorsed by eminent antiquarians and remained unquestioned until the decade after Pratt's death. In many ways Pratt encapsulated the Romantic spirit of his age, and in the end became a catalyst for new methods of connoisseurship in arms and armour study that expose these fakes and fostered critical scholarship that remains the basis for object based analysis today.

Mallett & Son (business since 1865)

Gareth Williams

Mallett is one of the most established and well-respected antique dealers in the world. John Mallett opened his jewellery and silver business at 36 Milsom Street, Bath in 1865 but under the leadership of his son Walter the firm specialised in fine English antiques and expanded into larger premises, the largest of which was the Octagon Chapel in Milsom Street, a fine building of 1767 designed by Timothy Lightholder. The Octagon was spacious and Mallett made the most of it. The Drapers' Record on 26 December 1908 described it as '*...the most sumptuous shop in Europe, the wares of which include practically priceless curios and treasures of historic association. Probably not under one roof may be found more millionaires in the course of a year than at Mallett's, in Bath, in the whole of the Kingdom.*'

Mallett opened its first London showroom at 40 New Bond Street in 1908 (moving to 141 New Bond Street in 1991) and by the 1930s the firm's summer exhibitions were gaining attention from the national press and royal patronage. In the 1950s Francis Egerton, Chairman of Mallett, developed the notion of displaying antiques in room settings to recreate the atmosphere of a private house, mixing furniture, mirrors, textiles and decorative objects in harmonious groups. The showroom included two dining rooms, drawing rooms and other general reception rooms. There was a pine-panelled library and period panelling also adorned other rooms. In 1961 Mallett opened further premises at Bourdon House, a former home of the Dukes of Westminster near Berkeley Square in London. Somewhat surprisingly Mallett did not choose to display rooms of fine eighteenth-century English furniture in the fine eighteenth-century rooms of Bourdon House, preferring to use them to showcase French and other Continental furniture and decorative objects. This could have been where, in 1969, the Bowes Museum curators saw the Georges Jacob armchair and 'grotto' stool in the *SOLD!* exhibition (see *SOLD! catalogue items 22 & 23*).

Critics and observers have frequently compared the wealth of art and antiques at Mallett with the riches of the Victoria and Albert Museum; the firm's former Chief Executive Lanto Syngé even said, '*The shop is like a museum (with finer things than many museums have)*'. Alongside the Bowes Museum, the firm counts the V&A and numerous North American museums as clients, notwithstanding one-time Managing Director Peter Maitland's tongue-in-cheek complaint, '*We're not terribly keen on selling to museums because we know we'll never be able to buy back and resell those objects.*' Queen Mary and many other members of the royal family were also clients and patrons and in 1968 Mallett even furnished a yacht for Hollywood royalty Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. By the 1980s Mallett boasted 76 clients from the list of Forbes 400 Richest Americans. It gave the directors the confidence to publicly list on the London Stock Exchange in 1987; the first major antiques house to do so. It also opened showrooms in New York and (briefly) in Geneva. Buyouts in this century took Mallett from Bond Street into Ely House, Dover Street, and now, as part of Dreweatts 1759 Ltd, the firm has relocated to Donnington Priory, Berkshire.

Phillips of Hitchin (business 1884-2015)

Jerome Phillips

Frederick William Phillips (1856-1910) was born in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, the son of a pawnbroker from Broxbourne. He was one of 14 children and founded the antique dealing business in 1884, first renting and subsequently buying the Manor House, a Georgian townhouse in Bancroft, one of the main streets of Hitchin. Frederick described himself as 'antique dealer and complete house furnisher', covering not just furniture but most branches of collecting, such as ceramics, tapestry, silver and even armour. In the early 20th century it was easier for a general antique dealer to cover a much wider range of collecting than in the present market, which is dominated by specialists. Some of the early catalogues produced by F W Phillips show the enormous variety of objects stocked. As well as furniture F W Phillips was interested in 18th century English chintzes, buying historic samples which he had copied. He produced catalogues of these copies for sale, even sending some for export.

Like many tradesmen in various fields at this time he produced a list of 'distinguished clients', indicating a much wider range of customers than the immediate Hertfordshire area. He also appears to have been one of the first dealers to have displayed antique furniture in room settings. In the opening decade of the 20th century Phillips extended buildings behind the Georgian frontage of the Manor House, one wing with a half-timbered exterior and another built in a rather Lutyensque style, designed by Jonathan Simpson, a close friend of the first Lord Leverhulme and a designer of three cottages on the Port Sunlight Estate. Frederick W Phillips died in 1910 at the age of 55, and the business was then continued by his sons, Hugh (retired in 1935) and Amyas (died in 1962). It would have been Hugh and Amyas who sold the 'Gothic hutch' to the antiquarian collector Robert Mond in 1911; Mond gifted it to the V&A Museum the next year (see *SOLD! catalogue item 9*). Over the years the business, which became Phillips of Hitchin in 1935, gradually became more concentrated on furniture than on the other branches of collecting.

In the 1920s and 1930s the firm also undertook architectural projects, both conservation and the building of new houses in an earlier style; they produced a catalogue in the 1920s called 'The Georgian House' which promoted 'period rooms' and the reuse of historic materials such as panelling and door-cases. The firm must have been very well known for such projects, as in the 1920s Amyas was asked by an American socialite, Mrs Samuel P Rotan, from Philadelphia, to build her an English stately home in Philadelphia. Amyas took Mrs Rotan on a tour of the stately homes of England and asked her to choose which one she would like copied! She settled on Sutton Place, Guildford (owned in the 1960s by the oil magnate J. Paul Getty) and so historical building materials, largely from houses which had been condemned for demolition, were sent out to Philadelphia, where the house still stands as part of the University of Philadelphia. Amyas also designed Bailiffscourt in West Sussex, in the 1930s (now a hotel) for Lord and Lady Moyne, as a replica of a mediaeval house. Again all materials were assembled from old stone houses, so that many visitors today do not believe that it is only eighty years old!

After the Second World War Amyas concentrated much more on walnut and mahogany furniture, circa 1690 to 1790, selling to major museums such as Temple Newsam, Leeds, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Sales were also made to many major collect collectors both in this country such as Samuel Messer, and abroad such as Judge Untermyer in New York.

Amyas Phillips died in 1962 and the business was continued by his son Jerome, who had joined the firm in the previous year after university. One of Jerome's first transactions was to conclude the sale in 1963 of the George III medal cabinet to the Victoria and Albert Museum (see *SOLD! catalogue item 18*). The furniture stocked gradually developed to extend to a later period, circa 1730 to 1850, reflecting the greater interest in the early 19th century. The firm continued to sell to a wide range of museums both at home and abroad such as the Cecil Higgins Museum in Bedford, Bolling Hall, Bradford, the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin, the C L David collection in Copenhagen, the State Museum of Tasmania and the Fehr collection in Cape Town. The firm appears to have been the first furniture dealer to hold specialist exhibitions (familiar in the world of picture dealers) starting with 'Patent Metamorphic Furniture' in the 1970s, followed by other exhibitions on specific areas such as library furniture, bedroom furniture, dining room furniture, travelling furniture and campaign furniture. The business closed finally with Jerome Phillips's retirement on his 75th birthday. The very extensive business and pictorial archive, together with catalogues produced by the firm, have been preserved at the Brotherton Library, part of the University of Leeds.

H Blairman & Sons (business since 1884)

Martin Levy

Harris Blairmann was an émigré from Poland at a time of Jewish persecution and is thought to have arrived in the UK, probably during the 1870s; he dropped the second 'n' in his surname sometime before World War I. Blairman is said to have settled in Birmingham where he worked for an antique dealer. The firm of H Blairman & Sons was established in 1884 in Llandudno on the North Wales coast, a location which at the time was popular with well-heeled British tourists. In those earliest days Harris Blairman dealt in contemporary, as well as antique and decorative objects. He imported modern Dresden china, Noritake tea and coffee services, and sold 'Grosvenor China' supplied by Jackson & Gosling; there were also nineteenth-century Japanese ivories and other decorative oriental items. In addition to being a retailer, Harris Blairman held auctions during the summer season, from premises at the end of the pier.

The Llandudno shop was located on Mostyn Street at the corner of Lloyd Street. Harris was joined by his sons Philip (1896/7-1972) and David in the period before the First World War. It is to Philip Blairman that Blairman's owes its development. At some point, probably during the late 1920s, having somewhat recovered from the traumas of active service in the Royal Flying Corp in the First World War, Philip Blairman began to concentrate exclusively on what today would, in the main, pass as 'genuine antique furniture and works of art'. By this stage not only had Philip set up premises in the northern spa town of Harrogate, but he had also established a showroom in London, first in Regent Street and by the mid-1920s at King Street, St. James's, near to Christie's the auctioneers; the business also briefly opened a gallery in New York during the Second World War.

Among Philip Blairman's most notable characteristics were his foresight and innovatory spirit. During the early decades of the twentieth century, considered wisdom had it that 'proper' antique furniture (as colloquially defined) more or less ceased to exist after about 1800. But then individuals such as the playwright and collector Edward Knoblock (1874-1945), and the architects Gerald Wellesley, 7th Duke of Wellington (1885-1972) and Albert Richardson (1880-1964), began to take seriously objects from the Regency period. In some way Philip Blairman must have picked up on this trend and became perhaps the first dealer to focus on this area. Temple Williams, (see *SOLD! catalogue item 17*) worked at Blairman's and later became a well-known antique dealer in his own right in the period after the Second World War; he too had a much respected eye for Regency design.

In 1949 George Levy (who developed a passion for creating comfortable and elegant interiors) decided to give up his burgeoning career as a cameraman with Ealing Studios and joined Philip Blairman, who was a family friend. In 1951 George Levy married Wendy Blairman, Phillip's daughter, and their son Martin continues the family tradition of antique dealing. Indeed, the Levy family's involvement in 'antique dealing', actually predates that of Blairman; Martin Levy's paternal grandmother, born Maude Simmons, was a descendent of the curiosity dealer John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887).

In addition to an involvement with many distinguished private collections around the world, scores of objects have been acquired from Blairman's by museums in the United Kingdom, across Europe and the United States and in Australia and New Zealand. The rare scarlet lacquer armchair by Giles Grendey (c.1735-40) was one of a set of 6 chairs acquired for the collections at Temple Newsam from Blairman's in 1970, while the museum was under the inspired directorship of Robert Rowe (see *SOLD! catalogue item 24*).

Having spent a couple of years as a 'student porter' at the auctioneers Christie's and working for Hugh Moss, the dealer in Asian art and a grandson of Sydney L. Moss, Martin Levy joined his father and mother in the mid-70s. The third and fourth generations of the family enjoyed more than twenty years working together until George's untimely death in 1996; Wendy died in 2006. Blairman's, which celebrated its 135th anniversary in 2019, is currently run by Martin Levy and his wife Patricia.

Bluett & Sons (business 1884-1992)

Dominic Jellinek

Bluett & Sons is believed to have been founded by Alfred Ernest Bluett (d.1917) in 1884, but it was not until 1907, when Alfred's son Leonard (d.1963) joined the firm, that proper accounts survive. Leonard's brother Edgar (d.1964) entered the firm in about 1910. By 1907 Bluett was established in a small shop at 377 Oxford Street, London. As with many dealers in Oriental Art in the late 19th century and early 20th century, Bluett sold mostly Japanese Art, but by 1910 Chinese ceramics had come to make up the major part of the firm's business.

Leonard Bluett saw active service during the First World War, where he was quite severely injured and was left partially deaf and disabled. During World War I Edgar Bluett was left to run the business largely on his own. By the 1920s Bluett had a supplier based in China, the Japanese dealer Ogawa Tanosuke, who had lived in London before 1914. Tanosuke was able to source the Song Dynasty ceramics which were beginning to be of interest to a growing number of English collectors. The Bluett business was growing in this period and the brothers were taking a more academic approach to dealing in Chinese ceramics.

In 1923 the brothers decided to move to a larger shop at 48 Davies Street, London, near to Claridge's Hotel, where they would remain for 70 years. The new spaces allowed for exhibitions, the first of which was held in April 1924. This was followed in June 1925 with *A Collection of Old Chinese Monochrome Porcelain*, part of the F C Harrison Collection. Many pieces in the exhibition had been acquired in the very early 1900s, some evidently looted from the Forbidden City in Peking (Beijing) during the Boxer Rebellion; several of the exhibits had previously been on loan to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Many further exhibitions followed, including, in 1934, *An Exhibition of Old Chinese Pottery & Porcelain* which included the famous Chenghua period (1465-1487) 'Dragon' bowl now in the British Museum, sold by Bluett to the collector Percival David in 1934 for £55 (*see SOLD! catalogue item 14*).

From 1925 to 1929 Bluett had an interesting supplier based in Peking (Beijing), a somewhat colourful character called Captain W.F. Collins. Collins also supplied another major London dealer in Chinese ceramics at the time, John Sparks. Collins prepared typed lists of the consignments he sent to London via Siberia; more than 50 of these have been preserved in the Bluett archive. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Bluett brothers also made regular trips to Paris, where they bought many ceramics recently imported from China, particularly from the dealers C.T. Loo and Chinois Tonying. Tonying also had a London office just off Piccadilly, managed since about 1920 by K.K. Chow. They closed their London office in 1929, and Bluett were engaged to sell off all the remaining stock. At this stage Bluett were helping to build the collections of many important collectors of Chinese works of art, including Henry Oppenheimer (d.1946), whose collection was bequeathed to the British Museum in 1947, Henry Knight (d.1971), who ran the insurance company Nieuw Rotterdam Co. and was a major collector of Chinese porcelain, and the Right Hon. Rolf, 2nd Baron Cunliffe of Headley (1899-1963), who

was a customer of Bluett for more than 20 years. In the 1950s Bluett were also appointed Antiquaries of Chinese Art to Gustav VI, King of Sweden.

During the Second World War the ground floor of Bluett's shop suffered bomb damage, and the brothers could only operate from the basement of the shop. Turnover fell from £21,000 in 1936, to just £4,000 in 1940. After the War Bluett continued with their ambitious exhibition programme. Roger Bluett (1925-2000), Leonard's son, joined the firm in 1946 and Brian Morgan (1930-2018) joined in 1954 on a salary of £3 per week. In the late 1960s the ground floor gallery at 48 Davies Street was completely redesigned with custom built display cases. H J "Dries" Blitz, from Holland, whose father was a collector of Chinese ceramics, joined the firm in 1967, leaving ten years later to establish a business in Amsterdam, which flourished for the next 30 years. Anthony Carter joined the firm in 1977 and I was the last recruit in December 1978.

The 1980s saw a further series of exhibitions, the first being 'Dr Newton's Zoo' in July 1981. This was billed as 'A Study of Post-Archaic Small Jade Carvings', which came from the collection of Dr Isaac Newton of Edinburgh, whose relationship with Bluett dated to the early 1950s when he had been Director of Medical & Health Services in Hong Kong. The last exhibition held at 48 Davies Street was *Chinese Jades from the Mu-Fei Collection* in December 1990. The collection was one of a number of collections formed by Professor Cheng Te-k'un with the Hall name 'Mu-Fei'; the resultant catalogue was hard-bound with a slip case and proved to be the best selling of all the Bluett catalogues.

In 1988 Roger Bluett and Brian Morgan sold the firm to a group of investors, with Anthony Carter as Managing Director. Roger Bluett ceased to have any connection with the business, but Brian Morgan was retained as a consultant. In 1991 the firm moved to 60 Brook Street, opposite Claridge's Hotel, but the unfavourable financial climate was not conducive to success and the firm of Bluett, which began in 1884, ceased trading at the end of 1992.

Hotspur Limited (business 1924-c.2009)

Robin Kern

Hotspur Limited, our family business was started in 1924 by Frederick Kern (known as F.E.L.K.) (1868-1958), my grandfather, and Rob Kern (1907-1977), my father. The family originally came from Germany, and Frederick became a director of the Paris based firm Carlheim & Beaumartz, famous for period rooms and interior decoration, which at the time had a branch in London. He remained with Carlheim until 1914, when he became a director of Monday, Kern and Herbert, 27 Soho Square, London, which made reproduction antique furniture. Hotspur was initially established in 1924 at 16 Buckingham Palace Road, but within a few years had moved to the former 18th century house of the writer William Hazlitt (1778-1830), at 6 Frith Street, Soho, London. Hazlitt's House lent itself well to the display of 17th and 18th century English furniture that became so synonymous with Hotspur. The business was just beginning to thrive when the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent slump arrived. I remember being told that my father employed 'sandwich board' people to walk up and down Oxford Street to attract American visitors. Major clients at the time included the American collector William Randolph Hearst. At this time Rob was also one of the founders of the Grosvenor House Antiques Fair in 1934.

No sooner had business started to improve than the Second World War started. To avoid the bombing, Hotspur moved in 1939 to a 17th century house in Richmond, Surrey – Streatham Lodge. This was a handsome building with large rooms and tall ceilings which permitted the display of much larger pieces of antique furniture, such as pillar dining tables and breakfront bookcases. The journey from Hampstead, where we lived, to Richmond was conducted in a large black car with a gas bag on the roof, which needed filling up at home before departure, stopping to re-fill in King's Road and then had to be re-filled again before leaving in the evening. Business was few and far between during the War years; to encourage business it was decided to try to attract dealers from New York by selling sofa tables (at the time, £7 each for plain ones and £12 for cross-banded examples; butler's trays were sold by the dozen!).

On 17th February 1940 an exhibition was held at Streatham Lodge in aid of Norwegian refugees, which was attended by Her Majesty Queen Mary. In the years following the Second World War, in the days of petrol rationing, Rob Kern pooled his petrol coupons with the well-known specialist dealer in 'Old Oak' furniture, Sam Wolsey, who at that date was trading from a shop in Buckingham Gate, London. Rob and Sam would travel the country in search of stock, Sam buying oak antique furniture and Rob buying mahogany and satinwood antique furniture; they would purchase half-shares in walnut antique furniture which over-lapped both their interests.

In 1951 Hotspur moved to 14 Lowndes Street, London; Robin Kern joined the firm in 1956, followed by his brother, Brian, in 1963. From the early 1960s the firm began purchasing stock in America, principally in New York, and established strong commercial ties with many of the dealers there. Hotspur flourished in the 1970s

and 1980s, with the firm selling to a wide range of customers, based on the three main buyers; private clients, museums, both national and international and the antique trade. Several important collectors of English furniture became key clients of Hotspur in the post-Second World War period, including Samuel Messer and Noel Terry, whose collections now reside at Fairfax House in York.

In June 1977 both Rob and his wife Betty died in a car accident, but not before both Robin and Brian had been well-weaned in the matters of business and trading in the finest antiques they could find. The firm has sold antique furniture and objects to many public museums, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The Huntington in California, and The Victoria and Albert Museum in London. A particularly fruitful relationship was build up with Temple Newsam, Leeds. One piece sold to Temple Newsam was the 'Lady's Secretary' made by Thomas Chippendale for the State Bedroom at Harewood House in 1773. This was purchased at auction by Hotspur, Mallett & Sons and Frank Partridge & Sons, acting in consortium. The secretaire was sold in 1999 to Temple Newsam in memory of the curator Christopher Gilbert (1936-1998) (*see SOLD! catalogue item 26*). The acquisition of the Harewood secretaire was preceded by an almost identical secretaire that Hotspur sold to Osterley Park House in Middlesex. A truly amazing co-incidence.

Ronald A. Lee (business 1947-c.2000)

Georgina Gough

Ronald Alfred Lee (1913-2000) came to prominence after the Second World War as one of London's most respected antique dealers. His maxim was "The best is not too good for you" and that if one always bought the best, even though it might prove a financial strain at the time, a good object would remain a good friend for life.

Ronald's father, Henry Morton Lee was trained as a barber, gaining a Royal Warrant in c.1909; H M Lee travelled with King George V to India in 1911 for the Delhi Durbar. Prior to the First World War Henry M Lee sold his business to his apprentice, George Trumper and began trading as an antique dealer, from a half-timbered building in Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey. In 1931 Ronald joined his father Henry Morton Lee and elder brother Morton (Mo) when the business became H M Lee & Sons. During the Second World War Ronald joined the Army Air Corps, flying Austers as a spotter pilot directing field artillery and naval gunfire onto enemy positions. In 1945 he was awarded the DFC, his citation approved by Field Marshal Montgomery.

After the War, the brothers Morton Henry Lee and Ronald started their own independent antique dealing businesses; Morton in Chichester, specialising in French antique furniture and works of art, and Ronald in Richmond, Surrey, beginning in 1949. Ronald initially worked from home, living in a series of beautiful period houses, the first being No 1 the Terrace, Richmond with that iconic view of the River Thames. As the family grew in size he moved to Ormeley Lodge on Ham Common which was, in the early 18th century, a former home of the Duchess of Argyll. It was here, in 1954, that Ronald held a loan exhibition, *Masterpieces of British Art and Craftsmanship*, which was opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Ronald next became custodian of The Old Court House, Hampton Court, the house that Sir Christopher Wren lived in whilst re-designing Hampton Court Palace. Ultimately the late 17th century Manor House in Byfleet, which he purchased over dinner one night from Tom Starling, who ran Harrods' antiques department, became the home where Ronald and his wife, Betty lived for the rest of their lives.

The R.A. Lee business in the meantime moved in 1965 to Bruton Place, a quirky former coaching stop in London's Mayfair, off New Bond Street, where he was joined by his son Charlie (d.1998) and business partner R T (Peter) Gwynn (1905-1999), the former Managing Director of Woolworth's, and a keen collector. Ronald Lee's name was synonymous with that of early English clockmakers and in 1964 he published *The Knibb Family – Clockmakers* still regarded today as the definitive work. His loan exhibition *The First Twelve Years of the English Pendulum Clock* brought together 36 of the finest English clocks to be made during the reign of King Charles II. The business grew with his daughter Georgina joining him in 1976 and it continued to welcome great museum curators and private collectors over the next 25 years. In the 1990s the R A Lee (Fine Art) Limited business eventually merged into Asprey & Company.

The range of Lee's stock, be it a longcase clock by Fromanteel, a 14th century bascinet, the Tudor royal clock salt, a William Vile cabinet or a drawing by Willem van de Velde, demonstrated his wide ranging knowledge which he was always happy to share with other enthusiasts. Many of the world's most important museums were customers of R A Lee, and many historically significant objects passed through the business and into private and public collections. Ronald's deep respect for history and provenance is exemplified by the sale in 1975 (in collaboration with the antique silver dealers S J Phillips of New Bond Street) of the 12th century 'Savernake Horn' to the British Museum (BM No. 1975,0401,1); and in the *SOLD!* exhibition, the 'Parr Pot', a 16th century vessel that bears the arms of Sir William Parr, uncle of Catherine Parr, one of King Henry VIII's wives (see *SOLD! catalogue item 20*). His delight in handling objects of great beauty and craftsmanship is demonstrated by the wonderfully evocative 17th century snuff boxes made from the timber of the Boscobel Oak (see *SOLD! catalogue item 21*). Such objects made him one of the finest antique dealers of the 20th century.

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SOLD! is the first exhibition of its kind in a public museum. The exhibition directs renewed attention to the history of museum objects through the fascinating story of the history of antique dealing in Britain. SOLD! brings together some world-renowned and familiar museum objects from leading public museum collections, but presents these iconic objects in new and unfamiliar contexts. It retells intriguing tales of expert discoveries and fortunate finds made by antique dealers and reveals the stories, and some of the myths, about antique dealing. SOLD! highlights the extraordinary role that antique dealers have played in the development of public museums and in the history of collecting and presents an illuminating story of our 200 year-old fascination with 'antiques'.