



# THE WILLIAM SHIPLEY GROUP FOR RSA HISTORY

Bulletin 53 July 2017

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**7th September 2017 at 6pm. Celebrating Lucienne Day's Centenary** by Paula Day, Founder Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation. Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. £15 (includes a complimentary drink and exhibition entry)



Appointed a Royal Designer for Industry in 1962, she used the opportunity when she was appointed Master of the Faculty (1987-89) to raise the visibility of female designers. This talk is part of a nationwide programme of celebrations to mark Lucienne Day's centenary. <https://www.ftmlondon.org/ftm-whats-on/celebrating-lucienne-days-centenary/>

**9th November 2017 9.30-5.00pm. The Society of Arts and the Encouragement of Mineralogy and Geology 1754-1900.** Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly W1J 0BG. WSG and HOGG members £35, non-members £45. Includes lunch and refreshments.

This joint meeting of the History of Geology Group of the Geological Society and the William Shipley Group will look at the influence of the Society of Arts on the new earth sciences. John Henry, John Mather, Cherry Lewis, Frank A.J.L. James, Mike Howgate, Anne Barrett and Jane Insley will consider maps, water supply, agriculture, the British marble industry, mineral collecting, dinosaur models, the Royal School of Mines lectures for working men and making sense of mineralogy in the 19th century. The day will conclude with a discussion chaired by Professor Hugh Torrens. Full programme and booking information can be found here <http://historyofgeologygroup.co.uk/the-society-of-arts-and-the-encouragement-of-mineralogy-and-geology-1754-1900/>

**18th January 2018 at 6.30pm (prompt start). Visit to 1890s house and collections in Clapham.** Tickets £10

Members of the WSG have a rare chance to visit the colourful and atmospheric candlelit interiors of an 1890s house. This is also an opportunity to see a private collection of antique, arts & crafts and contemporary furniture, metalwork and other objects.



## EXHIBITIONS



*The Castle and Other Stories*  
©RSA

### Lucienne Day: Living Design

Museum of Carpet, Stour Vale Mill, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 1AZ – ends 30th September 2017

The Carpet Museum's collection of original hand painted carpet designs by Lucienne Day will be displayed for the first time alongside the special centenary touring exhibition curated by Dr Paula Day and Professor Emma Hunt. As part of the centenary celebrations the RSA has put Lucienne Day's silk mosaic, *The Castle and Other Stories*, on display on the ground floor, near the stairs that lead down to the Durham Street Auditorium in their headquarters building at 8 John Adam Street. For the full programme of events see <http://www.robinandlucienndayfoundation.org/LD100/whats-on>.

**Enlightened Princesses: Caroline, Augusta, Charlotte, and the Shaping of the Modern World.**  
Kensington Palace, Kensington Gardens, London W8 4PX - ends 12 November 2017

This exhibition will explore the instrumental roles the three German Princesses played in the promotion of the arts, sciences, medicine, education, charity, trade and industry in Britain over the long eighteenth century. Caroline and Charlotte became queen consorts to George II and George III respectively, while Princess Augusta never achieved this distinction but held the titles of Princess of Wales and Princess Dowager, and was mother to King George III. Nearly three hundred magnificent objects have been drawn together from numerous public and private collections across Britain, Europe and the United States.



*Detail of Queen Charlotte raising the Genius of the Fine Arts by Thomas Burke (1772) ©Royal Collection Trust*

In 1801 the [Royal] Society of Arts awarded Catherine Andras their Greater Silver Pallet for wax portraits of Lord Nelson and the young Princess Charlotte. The following year Andras was appointed Modeller in Wax to Queen Charlotte.

**Air: Visualising the Invisible in British Art 1768-2017**

Royal West of England Academy, Queen's Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1PX. Tickets £6.95 - ends 3 September 2017

This exhibition looks at the work of artists, spanning four centuries, who found inspiration in the air around us and the skies above. The show includes paintings by Society of Arts prize winners JMW Turner and John Everett Millais. From swirling clouds to low-hanging smog this exhibition illustrates our continuing relationship with this invisible substance. <http://www.rwa.org.uk/whats-on/air-visualising-invisible-british-art-1768-2017>

**Bloomsbury Art & Design.**

The Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House, Strand WC2R 0RN. Tickets £7 - ends 21 September 2017

Drawn from the Courtauld's collections this exhibition explores the artistic and literary creativity of early 20th century London. One member of the Bloomsbury Group, Duncan Grant was appointed a Royal Designer for Industry in 1941 for his work with printed textiles.



**May Morris. Art and Life**

William Morris Gallery, Lloyd Park, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4PP. 7th October 2017 to 28th January 2018



Crowdfunding has enabled the William Morris Gallery to borrow important works by May Morris from the National Museums of Scotland and Wales, regional museums and galleries, National Trust properties and university collections to complement the examples held in their own collection. This exhibition provides an unprecedented insight into her extraordinary life and career.

On 26th February 1895 May Morris gave a talk at the [Royal] Society of Arts on needlework decoration when it was at its very best and at its most intellectual development. She was awarded the Society's Silver Medal for this paper on 'Medieval Needlework' and she then most generously, at a moment's notice to fill the place of a talk that had been postponed, prepared and gave a paper on 'Pageantry and the Masque' in November 1902. George Bernard Shaw was in the audience and told the gathering that her talk 'had given him great pleasure' although he had no great hopes of any artistic design being produced for the forthcoming Coronation pageantry.

## George Birdwood's bust by Alfred Gilbert: the sculpture within the sculpture

by Julius Bryant, Keeper of Word & Image, V&A Museum and WSG Member



*Sir George Birdwood by Sir Alfred Gilbert*

Visitors to the recent exhibition *John Lockwood Kipling. Arts & Crafts in the Punjab and London* (Victoria and Albert Museum, 14 January – 2 April 2017) met a face familiar to many members of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), for the bronze bust of Sir George Birdwood (1832-1917) by Sir Alfred Gilbert was lent by the RSA. The great Indian scholar was in many ways Kipling's arch rival and foe. Their relationship is well documented in the accompanying book of the same title published by the Bard Graduate Center and Yale (edited by the exhibition's co-curators, Julius Bryant and Susan Weber). An unusual feature of the bust that was not explained in the exhibition and book is the sculpture that Birdwood is shown holding in both hands.

Despite all his scholarship, Birdwood is best known today for an unfortunate remark made at the RSA while chairing a meeting of its Indian Section on 13 January 1910. Following a paper given by E. B. Havell, Birdwood replied, referring to a statue of Buddha, 'A boiled suet pudding would serve equally well as a symbol of passionless purity and serenity of soul'. Some

members were so offended that, a few days later, at Havell's home, the India Society was founded. So it may come as a surprise to find, in Gilbert's portrait, Birdwood contemplating an Asian sculpture, like a connoisseur nursing a Renaissance masterpiece.



*Detail, showing the statuette in his hands*

The sculptor recorded the sitting in his diary for 14 October 1891: 'Sacrificial spoon and winged animal figure suggested by Sir George, but Burmese idol in my own possession ultimately decided upon'. In the catalogue to the Gilbert exhibition held at the Royal Academy in 1986 Richard Dormant described it as an eighteenth century bronze figure of the Bodhisattva Avololchitesva. The loan of the bust to the V&A provided the opportunity to consult Hongxing Zhang, Senior Curator (China), in the Asian Department, who provides the following explanation:



*A Guanyin statuette sold in Beijing, 2012*

Preeti Chopra in *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay* (Minnesota, 2011) said that Birdwood held a small bronze figure of Saraswati. However, the V&A's South Asian section cannot support this proposal. Looking at the statuette through a Chinese eye, it belongs to the Esoteric Buddhist tradition; the thunderbolt and the bell in two hands are the objects typically associated with that tradition. The three faces and the six arms indicate that the figure must be a powerful being, e.g. a Bodhisattva or a Guardian King, but it's not easy to point out which particular Bodhisattva or Guardian it depicts, because they all are capable to manifest themselves in myriad forms. Having said that, his standing on a lotus platform with the palms of two hands pressed together suggests to me that he may be a Bodhisattva Guanyin. This image of a Guanyin statuette dated to Qing dynasty (1644-1911) appeared at the Poly Auction in Beijing in 2012, which shares several features. The statuette may be Chinese; it does have a Chinese style, especially when one looks at the facial expression and the modelling of the drapery and the pendants. It also looks like a real artefact rather than the sculptor's fabrication.

Compilers of inventories and valuations for the RSA have speculated that the statuette is an original Asian bronze. However, the RSA owns only a second cast of the bronze, for the commission came not from the RSA but from Birdwood's friends who presented the first cast to the University of Bombay in 1894. Nevertheless,

the statuette in the RSA's bust does indeed look like a real artefact. Only technical analysis and comparison with the first cast will provide that answer. If Gilbert's original statuette survives elsewhere it has yet to be located.

## **RSA's Royal Designers for Industry (RDI) in the news**

Former RSA Student Design Award (SDA) winner Sir **Jony Ive** KBE was recently appointed Chancellor of the Royal College of Art (RCA). Ive said that taking part in the SDA scheme was a formative part of his design education - 'The multi-disciplinary aspects of the scheme left a real mark'. As Chief Designer at Apple he is responsible for the look and feel of all Apple products, which are widely recognised as the world's most innovative and most admired.



Ive has joined the RCA at a critical point in its evolution into a STEAM-focused postgraduate university and the construction of a new building at Battersea. Ive was appointed a Royal Designer for Industry in 2003, awarded a CBE in 2006 and a KBE in 2012. He also holds honorary doctorates from both Oxford and Cambridge Universities and in 2012 D&D named Ive and his team the Best Design Studio of the past 50 years.

The RSA has connections with the RCA dating back to its foundation as the Government School of Design. Students of the college have been recipients of the Society's Owen Jones prizes and winners in the SDA competitions. RDI's can also be found on the RCA's teaching staff and Ive's predecessor as Chancellor, Sir James Dyson, OM, CBE, FRS, FREng was appointed an RDI in 2005.

**Dan Pearson** created a new garden for the re-opening of the Garden Museum at Lambeth. The great plant collector John Tradescant, whose tomb sits in the centre of a courtyard surrounded by the new extension to the museum, was the inspiration for his design. Each plant has a story to tell and this garden includes horsetails - prehistoric plants that are found in fossils, a fig - one of the first things brought back to the UK by the Crusaders and plants that are considered to be auspicious in China.



He was appointed to the RSA's Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry in 2012 in recognition of his leading role in therapeutic garden and landscape design, only the third landscape architect to receive this award since its introduction in 1936.

## **OBITUARY**

### **SIR PAUL JUDGE (1949-2017)**

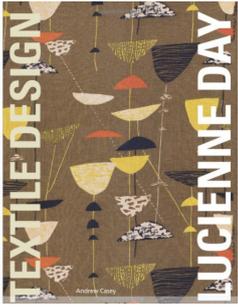
Business leader and philanthropist Sir Paul Judge used his considerable fortune to help political and educational causes over the past 30 years. He donated £8 million to fund the development of the Judge Business School at Cambridge University in 1990.

His early career with Cadbury Schweppes saw him undertake international postings and projects. Later he served as Chairman of the Food from Britain campaign, Director General of the Conservative Party and President of the Chartered Management Institute and a Director of the Standard Bank Group of South Africa. An active RSA Fellow for 46 years Sir Paul served as one of the RSA's Vice-Presidents and as Chairman of the RSA's Council (2003-2006). As WSG Honorary Vice-President he led the commemorative service for James Barry at St Paul's Cathedral in 2006



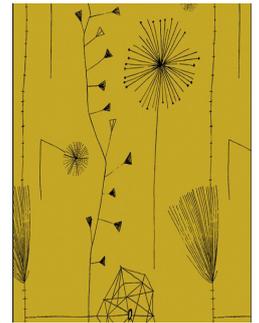
*Dr David Allan, Canon Malcolm Warner and Sir Paul Judge beside Barry's monument in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral*

## BOOK REVIEWS



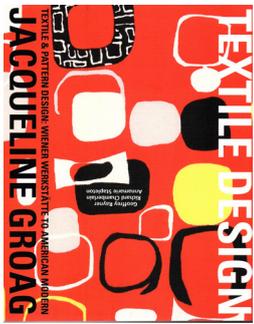
**Lucienne Day. In the Spirit of the Age** by Andrew Casey. Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2014. ISBN 978185147270

This beautifully and comprehensively illustrated book written by design historian Andrew Casey provides an informative account of one of the post-war designers who set a new standard of originality and quality in their designs. Lucienne Day received many accolades for her imaginative vocabulary, her eye for colour and mastery of pattern repeat, particularly for her iconic 'Calyx' textile design, which she produced for the Festival of Britain (1951). With access to previously unpublished material, and with the support of the family, Andrew Casey has provided a detailed and insightful account of Day's life and work from the 1940s through to the 1990s, as he looks at her designs for wallpapers, ceramics, carpets and her later interest in silk mosaics. Generally considered one half of a design partnership with her husband, furniture designer, Robin Day RDI, this monograph, packed with colour images and archive photographs, provides an opportunity to consider Lucienne's work in her own right. The RSA appointed her a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI) in 1962. Twenty-five years later she was elected Master of the RDI Faculty, the first woman to be appointed.



*Dandelion clocks by  
Lucienne Day*

The Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation, established by their daughter Paula Day, is marking the 100th anniversary of Lucienne Day's birth with a country wide series of talks, events and exhibitions. See <http://www.robinandlucienneydayfoundation.org/LD100/about-lucienne-day-100> for details.



**Jacqueline Groag: Textile & Pattern Design: Wiener Werkstatte to American Modern** by Geoff Rayner, Annamarie Stapleton and Richard Chamberlain. Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 2009. ISBN 978-18514-95900

Nearly half of this richly illustrated book is filled with colour plates featuring the post-war designs of Jacqueline Groag. Her training in Vienna under Josef Hoffman and her subsequent designs for the Wiener Werkstatte and some of the Parisian fashion houses demonstrate her influence in the development of modernist design in the early 1920s and 30s. With the Nazi threat moving closer to her home Jacqueline, and her architect husband Jacques Groag, were compelled to emigrate to the UK, where she continued to design for the British market. As well as textiles Groag also produced designs for wallpapers, carpets, greeting cards, laminates and plastics. A list of her many and varied clients, including John Lewis, Edinburgh Weavers, ICI, Chanel, Hallmark, Formica, BOAC, British Rail and Sealink, as well as exhibitions of her work and the awards she received, is provided in the appendix.

The many illustrations prove that she is rightly recognised as one of the most influential 20th century designers of surface pattern in Britain, and one of the small group of talented women designers who influenced design in the second half the twentieth century. Her design talent was recognised by the RSA when they appointed her a Royal Designers for Industry (RDI) in 1984.

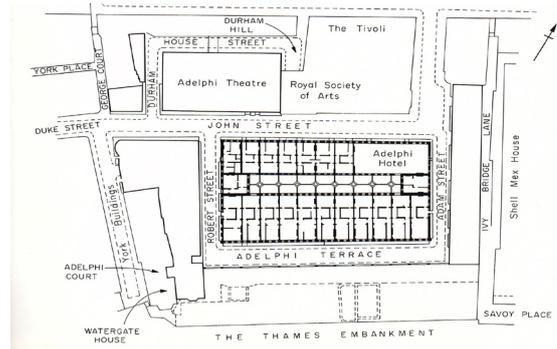


## JUST PUBLISHED: WSG OCCASIONAL PAPER No.32

*The Nursery of a Profession. A survey of architectural practice in the Adelphi Area c.1830-c.1950* by Ian Leith FSA (July 2017)

Drawn from Ian Leith's more detailed database revealing that the Adelphi area was home to members of architectural and associated professions, this publication provides a street by street view of relevant occupancy in the area.

Copies can be ordered from the Honorary Secretary (email: [susan@bennett.as](mailto:susan@bennett.as) or visit website [www.williamshipleypgroup.btck.co.uk](http://www.williamshipleypgroup.btck.co.uk)) at £7.50 each (plus £1.30 p&p)



## PHOTOGRAPHY CENTRE

The V&A Museum has announced that it is creating a new purpose built public space for over 270,000 photographs, 26,000 publications and 6,000 pieces of camera-related equipment from the Royal Photographic Society which will be added to its own vast collection. This new Photography Centre, due to open in 2018, will more than double its current display area. The Society of Arts held the first exhibition of photography in its 'Great Room' in 1852 and then organised a touring version. It also provided the space for the newly founded Royal Photographic Society to hold its meetings. Peter Le Neve Foster served as Secretary for both societies. The RSA continued its interest by holding meetings on every important aspect of photography.



*Exhibition of photography at [Royal] Society of Arts 1852*

In 1901 the directors of Kodak Ltd announced to their employees that they would grant additional pay, to the extent of five shillings a week, to any of their number who obtained a certificate for Proficiency in Commercial Knowledge from the Society of Arts, or a certificate in the Commercial Examinations of the London Chamber of Commerce, and a further five shillings for technical knowledge shown by the acquisition of a certificate in the examinations for Photography of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

Robert Lassam who worked as exhibitions manager at Kodak and then as founding curator of the Fox Talbot Museum was elected a Fellow of the RSA in 1981. Lassam also arranged the first exhibition of Anthony Armstrong-Jones' work at Kodak in 1957. Armstrong-Jones (as Lord Snowdon) was elected a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI) in 1978.

## RSA MEDAL WINNER KILLED IN FIRST WORLD WAR

Lehmann Oppenheimer (1868-1916), a student at the Manchester School of Art, was awarded the [R]SA's Owen Jones medal in 1886 for his design to decorate a mineral spring well room. The oldest of six sons, Lehmann became the main designer for his father's mosaic firm based in Old Trafford, Manchester. Lehmann enlisted with the Artists Rifles to serve in the First World War and died on 8th November 1916 after being gassed by the Germans. Lehmann's son Eric also served in France and after the war he returned to the family firm, changed his surname to Newton and continued to design mosaics until the 1920s when he left and became an art critic and author. In this capacity he gave several lectures to the RSA including 'The Future of the Arts in the Welfare State' and 'Modern Architectural Sculpture', and wrote many reviews for the *RSA Journal*

## ANNIVERSARIES

**2017** marks the **175th** anniversary of the birth of Howard Henry Room (1842-1900). He first joined the Society's staff as a junior clerk in 1861, was appointed chief clerk in 1869 and Accountant in 1875, following the death of his predecessor. Painstaking care, considerable powers of organisation and unswerving sense of purpose, saw him given additional responsibility for the Society's Examinations, and also gained him the respect of all those he worked with, while his amiable and kindly nature secured their affection. Room came from a family of artists and his mother, as Miss Louisa Derby, had obtained a Silver Isis medal from the Society in 1828 for her pencil drawing of a landscape by Claude.



**2017** marks the **centenary** of the death of Sir George Christopher Molesworth Birdwood (1832-1917). Birdwood worked as an assistant surgeon with the Bombay Medical Service but his interests extended beyond the medical field. Although he was appointed Registrar of the newly founded University of Bombay his most lasting impact was as Curator of the Government Art Museum, Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and one of the founders of the Victoria & Albert Museum in Bombay. On his return to England in 1868, due to ill health, Birdwood entered the India Office (1871-1902). His intimate knowledge of the country came from his long friendships with Indian princes and the leading educated native Indians, and he was put in charge of the Indian collections for a series of special exhibitions. He wrote on all manner of Indian topics and *The Industrial Arts of India* (1880) influenced many British designers and craftsmen, including Owen Jones and William Morris.

Birdwood was elected a member of the [Royal] Society of Arts in 1875 and gave four talks with particular reference to India, including 'The Native Press'. A frequent contributor to the Society's *Journal* he also presided at numerous meetings. From his election in 1878 to his death Birdwood continuously served on the [R]SA's Council in one capacity or another, including as Chairman of the Applied Arts Section from 1887 to 1908. On the day before he died he wrote to a friend to say that he was 'greatly worried' because he could not attend the Society's Annual General Meeting that was being held on that day.

Quaint, crotchety, generous and liberal to a fault was how his friends described his character. He was always ready to help a friend - even if they did not want it - with his influence, by his pen or out of his purse. With the natives of India he had a marvellous influence, and to those who came to England he was a staunch and valuable friend. It was said that nothing gave him more pleasure than that, year by year, on his birthday his Indian friends used to decorate the bust of him, by Albert Gilbert, which had been presented in 1900 to the University of Bombay. The RSA's copy of this bust, recently seen on at the Kipling exhibiton at the V&A Museum, gave Julius Bryant the opportunity to identify the bronze held by Birdwood - for this story see page 3 of this Bulletin.

Honorary President: [vacancy]; Honorary Vice-Presidents: Professor Franz Bosbach, Director, University of Duisburg-Essen.  
Committee: Dr Nicholas Cambridge FRSA (Chair); Prof John Davis FRSA (Deputy Chair); Anthony Burton; Paul Leonard, FLS;  
Jonathan Rollason, FRSA; Philip Emery FRSA, Susan Bennett, MA, FRSA (Honorary Secretary, Editor and Treasurer)