



THE WILLIAM SHIPLEY GROUP

FOR RSA HISTORY

Newsletter 29 September 2011

Forthcoming meetings

Friday and Saturday 9-10 September 2011. The Prince Albert Society in Coburg's 30th conference on *Monarchy and the Art of Presentation* will be held at the Schloss Ehrenburg in Coburg. For the programme and further details email Prinz-Albert-Gesellschaft@uni-bayreuth.de or visit their website <http://www.prinz-albert-gesellschaft.uni-bayreuth.de/de/index.html>.

Thursday 22 September 2011. Following the RSA London Region AGM Susan Bennett will give a talk on *'The Society that pokes its nose into everything'* in the Durham Street Auditorium, RSA, 8 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6EZ. Contact Elinor Pritchard at elinor@thevirtualpartnership.co.uk or phone 0208 546 2613

Thursday 13 October 2011 at 11.00am. Tour of the Garrick Club and their collections by Marcus Risdell, Garrick Club Curator & Librarian. The Garrick Club is located at 15 Garrick Street, London WC2E 9AY

Tuesday 15 November 2011 at 12.30pm. *'The Society that pokes its nose into everything'* highlighting connections with Coventry, by Susan Bennett, Honorary Secretary, WSG. This general overview of the Society's history is being given as part of the lunchtime series at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry and will include references to Coventry.

Thursday 17 November 2011 at 4.30 for 5pm. *"Between these...a great deal of my time is engaged": the contribution of Henry Baker (1698-1774) and the Antiquaries to the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce* by Dr David G. C. Allan, FSA, HonFRSA. This lecture is part of the Society of Antiquaries programme and will be held in the Society's room at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BE (0207 479 7080) Dr Allan has asked the Society of Antiquaries to reserve up to 20 places for WSG members as his guests. Please let Susan Bennett know as soon as possible if you would like to attend

Friday 16 December 2011. Princes Consort in History. To mark the 150th anniversary of the death of Prince Albert, and also the 90th birthday of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the Institute of Historical Research, in collaboration with the Society for Court Studies, is bringing together a range of international historians to look at the influential institution of the male royal consort from Castile to contemporary personalities in western Europe at this all day WSG member and former Director of Prince Albert Society of Saxony Professor Franz Bosbach will be contributing a paper for this event.



Prince Philip,
RSA President
(1952-2011)



RSA Albert medal

Wednesday 25 January 2012 at 6.00pm. Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in Dickens' Journalism by John Drew and Tony Williams, Director and co-Director of the Dickens Journals Online Project. This talk will be held at the St Bride Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EE. Contact Elinor Pritchard at elinor@thevirtualpartnership.co.uk or phone 0208 546 2613

Friday 24 February 2012. Internationality Displayed: The 1862 Exhibition Revisited. This proposed RCA/V&A/WSG meeting is in development.

Exhibitions

Kenneth Grange. *Making Britain Modern*. Design Museum, Shad Thames, London SE1 2YD ends 30 October, 2011

During a long and prolific career product designer Kenneth Grange has been responsible for designing some of the most iconic and familiar products and appliances that shape our daily lives: Kodak cameras, Kenwood food mixers, Parker pens, Inter-city 125, Adshel bus shelter, parking meters, etc. He was a founder member of the world-renowned multi-disciplinary design consultancy Pentagram. Granted unique access to the Grange archive, the Design Museum has put together this first UK retrospective exhibition of over 150 products, sketches, audio, photography and film to celebrate not only his career and but also to illustrate the role he has played in making Britain modern. In 1969 Grange was elected to the RSA's Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry. Listen to Mike Dempsey's interview of Grange at <http://www.thersa.org/data/assets/file/0006/54933/rdinsights120608.mp3>



Parking meter designed by Kenneth Grange

The De Morgans and the sea. Standen, West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4NE, 17 August to 30 October 2011.

This exhibition presents 40 ceramics by William de Morgan and up to seven major paintings and associated drawings by his wife Evelyn relating to the sea. A centrepiece of the exhibition is the Galleon tile panel commissioned from William de Morgan by P&O cruise liners. The Society of Arts awarded de Morgan a silver medal for his paper on 'Lustre Ware', which he gave to members in 1892.

William Etty: Art and Controversy . York Art Gallery, Exhibition Square, York YO1 7EW. 25 June 2011 to 22 January 2012.

Following significant new research this exhibition takes a fresh look at the work of York-born artist, William Etty RA (1787-1849) to try and uncover the reason for his controversial reputation. Works have been lent from a number of major collections, such as the Tate and the Royal Academy, and the exhibition catalogue, edited by Dr Sarah Burnage, Prof Mark Hallett and Laura Turner, includes over 100 colour illustrations of Etty's work. The story of Etty's response to the Society's request to hold an exhibition of his works as part of a proposed series to raise funds for a National Gallery of British Art can be read in Roger Bell's study, 'The Society's William Etty Exhibition of 1849', published in the *RSA Journal*, vol.138 (1990), p.557-561.

News

Election to the Society of Antiquaries

Dr Kerry Bristol, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Architecture and Material Culture, University of Leeds, WSG member and author of WSG Occasional Paper on the architect James 'Athenian Stuart', has recently been elected to the Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries.

WSG Occasional Papers nos.19 & 20 just published.

Just published by the WSG, and available from the Honorary Secretary at £7.50 each. '*A guide and light to future generations': the RSA and the design of war memorials* by Heather Creaton, 2011 (reviewed on page 6) and *The Capture of an Eagle commemorated: Denis Dighton's prize winning sketch of 1811* by David G.C. Allan, 2011

Denis Dighton, prize winning sketch, RSA archive



Commemorating the Festival of Britain

Harriet Atkinson, Research Fellow at the Design Archives, University of Brighton writes:



AERIAL VIEW FESTIVAL SITE

South Bank Exhibition

Festival of Britain 1951

2011 has seen an extraordinary resurgence in interest in the 1951 Festival of Britain. This was largely due to events mounted at Southbank Centre to mark the sixtieth anniversary of post war Britain's popular nationwide celebration. Held from April to September this year, Southbank Centre packed their programme with shows, gigs and talks that paid homage to 1951. The dancing after dark of 1951 became an outdoor tea dance, a floral bicycle parade was revived. Art installations dotted around the South Bank took up themes of pavilions in the original Festival such as 'The Land', 'People of Britain' and 'Lion & Unicorn'. The 1951 'Lion & Unicorn' designed by Robert Goodden (RDI, 1947), Dick Russell and Dick Guyatt, focused on British character and way of life. This was echoed in 2011 by a contemporary piece of the same name by artist Gitta Gschwendtner who worked with 50 young refugees on poems that reinterpreted the original themes in written and spoken form. The original pavilion was one of the most popular of the Festival, packed with displays showing wit and eccentricity, the 2011 interpretation appeared rather deadpan by comparison. Festival Gardens were created on the roof of Queen Elizabeth Hall, with a nod to the original Festival Pleasure Gardens at Battersea. The new Gardens included a swathe of lush grass nestled on the roof of one of London's best-known Brutalist buildings, with a dramatic view towards St Paul's and Westminster. Brightly coloured beach huts and an artificial Thames-side beach dotted with plastic letters came alive with people young and old, buzzing with a sense of excitement that echoed sixty years ago.

An archival show, the 'Museum of 1951', held in Royal Festival Hall explored further what happened in 1951. Including engaging interviews with Festival survivors and a reconstructed '50s interior, the 'Museum' set out to fill the historical gaps and to explain how the Festival idea originated; a rather ambitious brief for a limited space. Elsewhere, John Piper's striking mural 'The Englishman's Home', painted to stand at the 1951 exhibition outside Homes and Gardens was temporarily re-mounted inside Queen Elizabeth Hall. To try to recreate the original Festival of Britain with its twenty pavilions and elaborate landscaping would have been impossible. The only building remaining from 1951 is Royal Festival Hall and much of the site is now built up. But this was a brave attempt to think again about the origins of what is now one of the greatest cultural hubs in the world. Occasionally the Southbank Centre's homage was ill judged: the Saatchi & Saatchi redesign of Abram Games (RDI, 1959)'s original Festival emblem was unnecessary as the original still holds its own. But this was a symptom of the new world of sixty years on: the original South Bank Exhibition happened without any commercial sponsorship, while this year's Festival was heavily sponsored by Mastercard. The make over of Games's emblem – changes to



Visitors inspecting the beach hut displays in front of the Royal Festival Hall

Britannia's profile and the emblem's colours - allowed for incorporation of the Mastercard logo. But on the whole the 2011 Festival of Britain was gently enjoyable, encouraging visitors to explore the entire site, not just the interiors of these well-used cultural buildings, and allowing for new views and vantage points to the Thames and beyond.

Beyond South Bank 'A Tonic to the Nation' was a small but engaging show held at Pallant House Gallery, Chichester from March to May 2011. It sought to explain the genesis and scope of the Festival while showing a few pieces from the impressive collection of Paul Rennie. At the same time, Pallant House ran a larger show of husband and wife designers Robin & Lucienne Day also including Festival things: fabrics (by Lucienne) and Festival posters and furniture (by Robin).

On radio there has been an endless appetite for analysing what the Festival signified for Britain; a Festival-themed edition of Radio 4's Today Programme broadcast from Royal Festival Hall, a trip down memory lane presented by Barbara Windsor, and an attempt to assess the Festival's legacy by Sir John Tusa. A one-hour Festival documentary directed by Julian Hendy is due to be aired on BBC2 in September. Three significant Festival books have been published in 2011. Henrietta Goodden and Naomi Games's books are covered elsewhere in this newsletter. Barry Turner's *Beacon for Change: How the Festival of Britain Shaped the Modern Age* (Aurum) is an engaging account of how the Festival came about, full of anecdote and incident and repositioning Director-General Gerald Barry as pivotal in organising the events; a role that has increasingly in recent years been attributed to Hugh Casson (RDI, 1961). This attention to the Festival of Britain is part of an increasingly vibrant interest in the work of artists and designers of the 1950s and a renewed belief that perhaps the Festival did change the world after all.

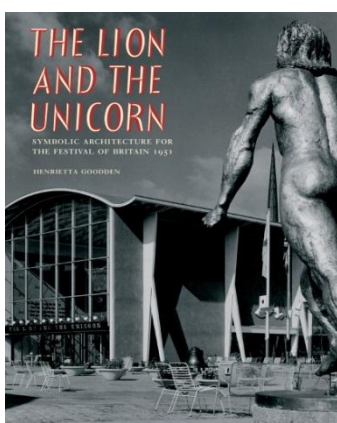


Harriet Atkinson's book *The Festival of Britain: A Land and Its People* will be published by I.B. Tauris in 2012.

Associated event

The 20th Century Society is holding a free event in the Level 5 Function Room, Royal Festival Hall on Sunday 4 September 1.30-6pm reviewing the 'Festival of Britain Celebration'. The line-up of speakers includes Charles Plouviez, Alan Powers, Paul Rennie and Katherine Whitehorn. Kenneth Grange RDI will be joining the round table discussion at the conclusion of the meeting. For further details email coordinator@c20society.org.uk or tel: 020 7250 3857.

Book reviews



Henrietta Goodden, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Symbolic Architecture for the Festival of Britain, 1951*. Unicorn Press, 2011
ISBN: 978 1 906509 15 6

The Lion and Unicorn, Henrietta Goodden's well illustrated book, initially gives the reader an insight into the history of industrial exhibitions from the Great Exhibition held in Hyde Park, London in 1851, through to the Festival of Britain in 1951 one hundred years later.

Throughout this period these exhibitions were staged in Europe on a massive scale, and proved immensely popular with the public. Henrietta tells us that in just two years - 1924/5, Wembley exhibition attracted 27 million visitors! As a prelude in the immediate post war years the 'Britain Can Make It' exhibition was staged in 1946 at the V&A. Its purpose was to 'enhance the public's awareness of how design could improve daily life'. All this was a prelude to the Festival of Britain which was held to celebrate British heritage and a new way forward for British design and manufacturing.

Henrietta's succinct account of the aims and objectives of the Festival, the buildings and the major players, conveys the enormous excitement and total commitment of those who contributed to the eventual success of the Festival. After the austerity of the wartime years, the Festival was a revelation for the public who flocked daily in their thousands to the South Bank of the Thames to enjoy this vision of a new Britain.

The book focuses on the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion which was designed by her father Robert Goodden, and R.D."Dick" Russell, who were both architects and professors at the Royal College of Art at the time. They were commissioned by the Festival's Director of Architecture, Hugh Casson to create a pavilion which would celebrate the British character and tradition.

Henrietta lays emphasis on the total concept involving the architecture and exhibits, both under the control and design of Robert and Dick, and the remarkable artists and craftsmen they brought together in creating the exhibits. These ranged from the huge mural depicting rural life by Edward Bawden through to straw figures by the thatcher, Fred Mizen.

For anyone with an interest in the Festival of Britain and postwar British design, this book is an absolute 'must'.
Ray Leigh, Former Chairman, Gordon Russell Ltd

Working with 50 young refugees on poems that reinterpreted the original the pavilion's original themes in written and spoken form, the artist produced this installation for the South Bank celebrations.



The Lion and the Unicorn, 2011
by Gitta Gschwendtner

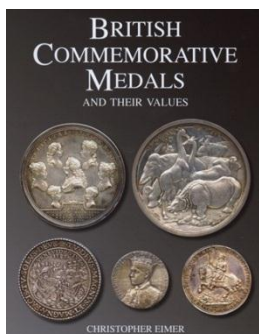


Naomi Games, A symbol for the Festival. Abram Games & the Festival of Britain. Capital Transport, 2011. ISBN: 9781854143457

'Official War Poster Artist', Abram Games, won the competition to design the symbol for the Festival of Britain. This established Games as one of twentieth century Britain's most respected graphic designers.

This book tells the story from the designer's brief and the development of his ideas to print. It includes Festival items drawn from Games's personal collections, as well as the National and British Postal Archives. His

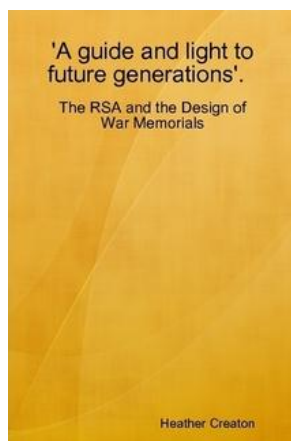
'Britannia' emblem was ubiquitous, versatile and memorable, and provided a colourless post-war Britain with a much deserved 'tonic to the nation'. Eight years after the Festival of Britain Games was awarded the distinction of RDI by the RSA for his graphic work. Games contributed a paper on 'The Festival of Britain Symbol' to the RSA's History Study Group's symposium on 'Exhibition and Celebration': the RSA and the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Festival of Britain of 1951 and plans for the new millennium' in 1995 (*RSA Jnl*, vol.143, pp,55-6)



Christopher Eimer, *British Commemorative Medals and their values*. Spink, 2010. ISBN: 0900652942. £75

This limited edition guide, with over 2000 images, provides a practical guide to medal collectors and those with a broader interest in the arts, sciences, naval and military campaigns, as well as social and political history. WSG member Christopher Eimer has previously written on the Society of Arts' medallic awards, and on the winners, such as *The Pingo Family and Medal-Making in Eighteenth Century Britain* (1998). A number of the Society's medals feature in this current guide to over 2200 medals, which together with the current market value also provides biographical and historical

information, and an introduction to the medal in Britain.



Heather Creaton, 'A guide and light to future generations': the RSA and the Design of War Memorials. WSG Occasional Paper no.19, 2011. £7.50

This occasional paper by Heather Creaton is rather like a good short television documentary where the interest of the material is enhanced by a presenter who insists on a lively pace, keeps to the point, sustains our attention with engaging examples, and includes the wry aside where appropriate. Creaton's introduction to the role of the RSA-led War Memorial Advisory Council in debating the issue of what kind of war memorials might be appropriate to commemorate the Second World War is a helpful summary of archival sources, but it is more interesting than a mere description of what is to be found in the files. Creaton places the work of the Council in a broader historical context and while sharing some

fine detail she presents a clear overview of the main points. In short, the RSA took it upon itself to convene a conference to debate the war memorial issue in 1944. It then co-ordinated a committee of expertise, the membership of which represented a fascinating cross-section of bodies who might be expected to have an opinion, from the British Legion and the Royal Institute of British Architects to the Playing Fields Association and the Women's Group on Public Welfare. The membership list itself is indicative of the shifts between pre and post-war Britain with the organisations of an emergent post-war society around the same table with the old guard. In his role as Chair, Lord Chatfield appears to have steered a relatively steady course between these different cultures.

The Council produced a set of principles with the aim of diverting communities away from memorials in poor taste. Creaton rightly refers to the initiative of the Royal Academy and V&A in this respect after the First World War, and advice to the public also came from other organisations who saw themselves as arbiters of taste, such as the Civic Arts Association and various Diocesan Advisory Committees. All were keen to dissuade First World War memorial committees from erecting monuments like those that were built to commemorate the Boer War, urging them to engage professional architects and artists at all costs. In 1944, the concerns of the War Memorial Advisory Council were similar but this time the memorials of the First World War were the cited as the kind of thing to be avoided or at least, not repeated. In the main, the Council appears to have

acted as a clearing-house, passing enquiries from local councils and individuals to the most relevant organisation within their membership. As well as dispensing opinion and being helpful, they continued to press the case for a national war memorial long after it had been made clear to them by government and indeed the public that there was no will for such a thing. It was Harold Nicholson who, typically, put the whole debate in perspective by pointing out that whatever sum might be raised for a memorial it would only represent a fraction of the funds that were ploughed into the perpetration of conflict.

Catherine Moriarty (University of Brighton)

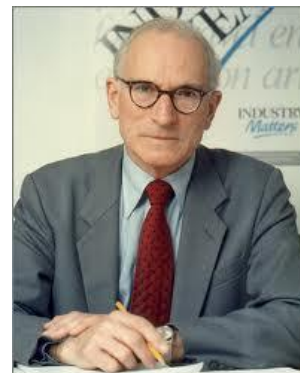
Architectural Collections in the National Monuments Record

Ian Leith, NMR Acquisition Officer, has compiled this useful guide to NMR holdings for significant architects, architectural historians, engineers, designers, landscape and garden architects, antiquaries and architectural photographers. Although necessarily selective this list aims to highlight material of interest where the records are rare, early or substantial, and all items purely relate to archives held within the NMR. This 48 page document is available online as a PDF. <http://services.english-heritage.org.uk/cmscontentv3/downloads/EhArchives/PDFs/Guide%20to%20the%20Archive.pdf>

Obituaries

Sir Geoffrey Chandler (1922-2011)

One of the earliest mainstream business figures to champion corporate social responsibility and a pioneer in the field of human rights, Sir Geoffrey Chandler, who became an FRSA in 1981, led the RSA's 'Industry Year' and subsequent 'Industry Matters' campaign. Following Geoffrey's death at the age of 88, in April this year, Chris Marsden, Chair of the Business Group of Amnesty UK, recalled that he first met Geoffrey in 1986 when he was leading Industry Year 'with a passion to get across, especially to the world of education, the importance of industry as a creator of the nation's wealth. From that initiative many fertile and long lasting links between education and industry have grown'. Nearly a decade later Sir Geoffrey considered the loss of momentum that led to 'The forgotten campaign: Industry Year 1986' (*RSA Journal*, 1988 2/4)



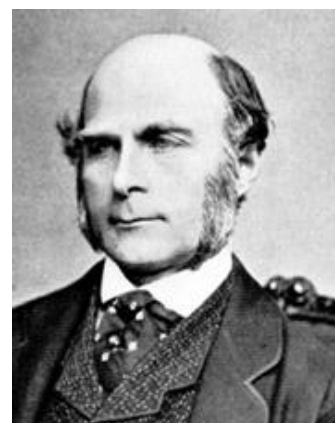
Sir Peter Baldwin (1922-2010)

A civil servant Sir Peter rose to the rank of Permanent Secretary for the Department of Transport in 1976. He campaigned to help people with disabilities such as helping to redesign London taxis to accommodate wheelchairs. He also chaired a number of bodies including Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Pets as Therapy and PHAB (Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied). Committed to public service he took an active role in the RSA's affairs serving on the Council from 1982, two years after his election as an FRSA, and then as its Chairman 1985-6. In his first inaugural address he said that 'the RSA defies classification'. His second address, 'Beyond the Ends of our Noses' stated that, 'the RSA has a purpose beyond its own capacity'. He added that, 'we are, in fact, but not in name, a society for the encouragement of accomplishment without specification'. As Chairman of the RSA's History, Records and Collections Panel he chaired the 1994 History Study Group symposium on 'Liberal and generous concerns'.

ANNIVERSARIES

2011 marks the **250th** anniversary of the opening of the Bridgewater canal, Named after the Duke of Bridgewater, and opened on 17th July 1761, it was the first canal in Britain to be built without following an existing watercourse. An instant commercial success it was used as a model for those that followed, provoking 'canal mania' in the 18th century. In 1800 the Society of Arts awarded the Duke of Bridgewater its gold medal 'for his great exertions in inland navigations'.

2011 marks the **centenary** of the death of Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911). A cousin of Charles Darwin it was perhaps not surprising that he pursued a scientific career. He took a considerable part in devising the early weather charts which appeared in *The Times*. It was, however, in connection with anthropological science and national eugenics that his name is most widely known. In 1869 he undertook a statistical study of 180 men prominent in the English scientific world to support his theory that genius is a mainly a matter of ancestry. The Home Office adopted Galton's scheme for finger print directories to help identify criminals. Elected FRS in 1860, he received their Royal Medal (1886) and Darwin and Copley Medals (1902). As well as taking the chair at several RSA meetings, Galton also gave a paper on 'Physical Tests in Competitive Examinations'. Galton was elected a member of the Society in 1876.



Two free exhibitions relating to Galton are currently on display:

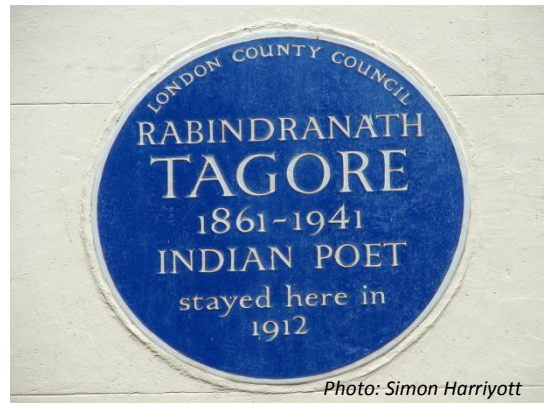
Typecast: Flinders Petrie and Francis Galton. The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL, Malet Place, London WC1E 7JG. 29 March to 22 December 2011. As part of his project of skull measurements and research into racial differences Galton commissioned Petrie to take photographs of different racial types connected with ancient Egyptian civilization. This led to a lifelong friendship between the two men. Petrie gave a paper to the Society of Arts on 'The Rise and Development of Egyptian Art' in 1901.

An Enquiring Mind: Francis Galton 1822-1911. UCL Main Library, Wilkins Building, University College London WC1E 6BT. 29 March to 22 December 2011. This exhibition features items from the UCL Special Collections and the Galton Collection to illustrate Galton's many and diverse interests, to provide a timeline of his life.

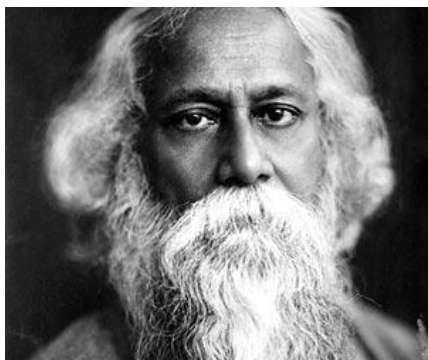
2011 marks the **70th** anniversary of the first flight of a British jet-powered plane on 15 May 1941. The man who made this possible was Coventry-born engineer Sir Frank Whittle (1907-1996). The United States took a great interest in Whittle's invention and asked to see the plans as well as take a look at an engine. These were duly shipped over and enabled General Electric to develop their XP-59A Airacomet which was airborne in 1942, two years before the British Meteor became operational. Eleven years later Sir Frank Whittle was awarded the Society's most prestigious award, the Albert Medal for 1952, 'for the development of the continuous-combustion gas turbine and jet propulsion'. The presentation of this medal was the first official act of HRH Prince Philip as President of the RSA and at the presentation the Prince praised Whittle for his invention which 'not only made a vital contribution to the country in war but have enabled it since the war to become supreme in the field of high-speed flight'. In 1985 Whittle received the further distinction from the RSA of RDI for engineering design.



2011 marks not only the **150th** anniversary of the birth and **70th** anniversary of the death of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), but it also marks the **50th** anniversary of the erection of a memorial plaque to Tagore at no.3 Villas-on-the-Heath, Hampstead, following a joint request made to the London County Council by the Royal India, Pakistan and Ceylon Society, the East India Association, the Royal Commonwealth Society and the RSA. The Society was happy to renew its association with the custom of fixing commemorative plaques to London houses as it had been the originator of the scheme in 1867. As part of these celebrations the RSA asked the author of *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*, George E.G.



Catlin to give the 1961 Sir George Birdwood Memorial Lecture on Tagore. This meeting was chaired by His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Commonwealth Relations Office. The RSA's Honorary Corresponding Member for Madras, G.W.C. Garrould, represented the Society at the celebrations taking place in Bombay. He was asked to broadcast his inaugural address on Tagore's paintings on All-India Radio.



Tagore reshaped Bengali literature and music. He visited more than 30 countries on five continents familiarising non-Indian audiences with his works. Translations of his works impressed many poets including Ezra Pound and William Butler Yeats, who wrote the preface to the English translation of *Gitanjali*. Awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 Tagore became the first Asian Nobel Laureate. He was also an inspiration in the establishment of the Dartington Hall Trust in Devon, set up as a pioneering institution for education, culture, crafts, arts, sustainability and social justice. Dartington Hall has been the venue for the series of summer schools for young designers run by the RSA's Faculty of RDIs since the year 2000.

Honorary Patron: Lord Asa Briggs of Lewes FRSA. *Honorary President:* Dr David Allan, FRSA; *Honorary Vice-Presidents:* Gerry Acher, CBE, LVO, FRSA; Sir Paul Judge, FRSA; Professor Franz Bosbach, Director, University of Duisburg-Essen. *Honorary Benefactor:* Ronald Gerard OBE, KStJ, FRSA. *Honorary Member:* Hermione Hobhouse MBE; *Committee:* Dr Nicholas Cambridge FRSA (Chair); Dr David Allan FRSA (Director of Studies); Prof John Davis FRSA (Deputy Chair); Anthony Burton, FRSA; Mrs Susan Bennett, MA, FRSA (Honorary Secretary and Treasurer); Observer; Rob Baker, RSA Head of Archives and Library