



# THE WILLIAM SHIPLEY GROUP FOR RSA HISTORY

Bulletin 49: July 2016

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **5 September 2016 from 9.15am to 6.00pm. Annihilating Space and Time: 150 years of Transatlantic Telecommunication.**

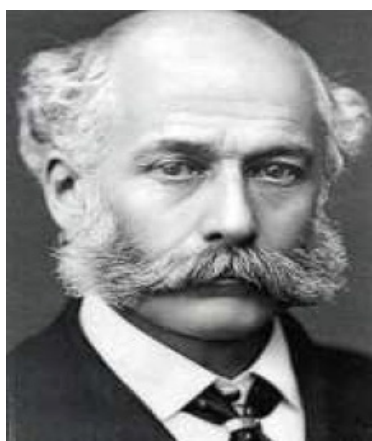
The Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albermarle Street, London W1S 4BS. Ticket: £65 (includes coffee and lunch).

150 years ago the first successful working transatlantic telegraph cable began transmitting. This symposium will look at the history of this remarkable achievement and explore the developments which sprang from it. See <http://www.newcomen.com/event/annihilating-space-and-time-150-years-of-continuous-electrical-communications-across-the-atlantic/> and book through Eventbrite. Readers may be interested to know that the RSA, History Study Group, with the help of The British Society for the History of Science and The Newcomen Society, organised a conference in 1996 to discuss the technology and impact of early telecommunications. The papers were published in *Semaphores to Shortwaves*.

### **16 September 2016 from 10.00am to 5.00pm. A many sided crystal: the many facets of physicist and electrical engineer Silvanus Phillips Thompson (1851-1916).**

Westminster Quaker Meeting House, 52 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4EA. Ticket £25 (AfL members £10). Book tickets via [tinyurl.com/AfLevents](http://tinyurl.com/AfLevents)

This unique workshop is being held to mark the centenary of the death of the scientist Silvanus Phillips Thompson FRS. He is a recognised authority on electricity, magnetism and acoustics. Thompson, elected a member of the Society of Arts in 1883, took an active interest in the Society's activities and spoke on many occasions about scientific matters and technical education. He was awarded several of the Society's silver medals for his contributions.



### **22 September 2016 from 10.30am to 1.30pm. Sewerage and Health.**

Symposium to mark the 125th anniversary of the death of Sir Joseph Bazalgette. The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ. Free and open to all.

This meeting will consider the Society's work to encourage the introduction of sewers that lead to improvements in the health of all inhabitants in the greater London area, from the introduction of public conveniences to the development of modern water engineering. To book a place email the WSG Honorary Secretary or book through Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sewerage-and-health-marking-125-years-since-sir-joseph-bazalgettes-death-tickets-25708976240>

**7 October 2016 from 9.50am to 5.30pm. Internationalising Design History: Facing the World Differently. Seventy years on from the Britain Can Make It exhibition symposium** at Brighton University.

In 1946 an exhibition held at London's Victoria & Albert Museum sought to reaffirm Britain's global position in design and manufacturing after World War II. This symposium will ask if Britain could make it as the world realigned and reconfigured politically, economically and culturally. Many Royal Designers for Industry (RDI) were represented at this exhibition. See <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/research/research-events/internationalising-design-history-events/britain-can-make-it> for full programme and booking details.

### **14 and 15 October 2016. Lunarticks, Linnaeus and Lichfield**

Erasmus Darwin House, Beacon Street, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 7AD. Tickets £75 per person. Booking essential

This conference will provide an opportunity for an in-depth look at the Lunar Society and its significance. Speakers include Dr Patricia Fara, Jenny Uglow and Dr Martin Priestman. For more details or to book places go to [www.erasmusdarwin.org](http://www.erasmusdarwin.org) or telephone 01543 306260.



### **CALL FOR PAPERS – The Society of Arts and the Encouragement of Mineralogy and Geology 1754-1900. A joint conference with the History of Geology Group of the Geological Society of London will be held on 9th November 2017.**

Prizes awarded by the Society of Arts for chemistry, cartography and land reclamation encouraged the emerging science and field practice of mineralogy and geology. These awards set the scene for the exploitation of minerals, hydrological and coastal defence work and improved surveys of the land. Contact the Honorary Secretary for full details. To be considered please send 250-500 word abstracts to the convenors by 31st October 2016 for consideration. Convenors: John Henry ([john@geolmaps.com](mailto:john@geolmaps.com)) of HOGG or Susan Bennett ([susan@bennett.as](mailto:susan@bennett.as)) of the WSG. See Hugh Torrens, *The Practice of Geology 1750-1850* (Ashgate Variorum, 2002) for background information.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

### **Tibor Reich.**

The Whitworth, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6ER. 29 January to August 2016. Free Entry <http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whatson/exhibitions/currentexhibitions/tibor-reich/>

This retrospective exhibition celebrating the centenary of the birth of the Hungarian born designer Tibor Reich explores the ideas behind his innovative textiles, photography, ceramics and drawings. Reich introduced bright new colours and textures into the drab interiors of post-war Britain. In the same year he was elected a Fellow of the RSA, 1951, Reich was commissioned to produce furnishings and carpets for the Festival of Britain. Each of his designs were named after a Shakespearean character. Six years later Reich received the first Design Centre Award for his 'Flamingo' fabric which had been selected by the Faculty of RDIs.



## Missoni Art Colour.

Fashion & Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. 6 May to 4 September 2016. Ticket price: £9.90 adults/£7.70 concessions/£6 students

This exhibition featuring nearly sixty years of Missoni fashion design includes previously unseen textile studies, and Modernist masterpieces by leading 20th century European artists, such as Sonia Delaunay, whose work influenced the development of the Missoni signature graphic style. The Missoni name has been synonymous with the design of knitted textiles for nearly fifty years. Both Rosita and Ottavio Missoni, were appointed Honorary Royal Designers for Industry in 1998.

## Fox Talbot: Dawn of the Photograph.

Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2DD. Ticket price £8. 14 April -11 Sept 2016

This exhibition considers the work of William Henry Fox Talbot as a pioneer of photography. It draws on the world's most comprehensive and important collections of Talbot's work and tells the story of how photography was born, and his relationship with his contemporaries such as Herschel, Brewster, Babbage and Faraday. Talbot took a great interest in the Society of Arts meetings on aspects of photography and included his work in the exhibition of Photography they organised in 1852



*Exhibition of Photography held in the Society's Great Room, 1852*

## Engineering the World: Ove Arup and the Philosophy of Total Design.

The Porter Gallery, V&A Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL. Ends 6 November 2016. Ticket price: £7, concessions available.

This exhibition focuses on the design philosophy of one of the most influential engineers of the 20th century Ove Nyquist Arup CBE (1895-1988). From some of his well known projects such as the Sydney Opera House to previously unseen archive materials, this exhibition will demonstrate his multidisciplinary approach to design. Elected FRSA in 1954 Arup gave the Alfred Bosson Lecture on 'Architects, Engineers and Builders' in 1970, and the then Director of Ove Arup & Partners, Peter Rice, presented RSA Fellows with 'A celebration of the life and work of Ove Arup' in 1989

## Report on 'Drawing: a pre-eminent skill'

The report by WSG member Dr Susanna Avery-Quash on 'Drawing: a pre-eminent skill', recently circulated to the members has been published in the latest issue of *The British Art Journal*, vol.XVII (1), p.152. Please contact the Honorary Secretary if you would like a copy.



*Refreshment break during symposium in the RA Drawing School*



## Westminster City Council unveil a green plaque to William Shipley (1717-1803)

On the 6th April members of the WSG, RSA Fellows and staff gathered at 25 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden to see Councillor Peter Freeman (Deputy Cabinet Minister for the Built Environment) and Dr Nicholas Cambridge (WSG Chairman) unveil a green plaque to mark the site of Rawthmell's Coffee House where Shipley held the foundation meeting of the RSA on 22nd March 1754. Councillor Freeman said it had been a straightforward decision for Westminster City Council to award this green plaque as the aims of the RSA, to enrich society through ideas and action, was a mission that Westminster City Council wholeheartedly supported. The WSG was delighted that the Lord Mayor of Westminster Lady Flight, together with Lord Radnor, a direct descendant of founding member and first President Lord Folkestone, were able to attend the unveiling. Dr Cambridge thanked Councillor Freeman and the RSA for sponsoring the plaque as a lasting memorial to William Shipley and his work in founding the Society.



*l-r, Lady Flight, Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Peter Freeman; Councillor Freeman and Dr Nicholas Cambridge unveil the plaque; some of the group who gathered to watch the unveiling.*

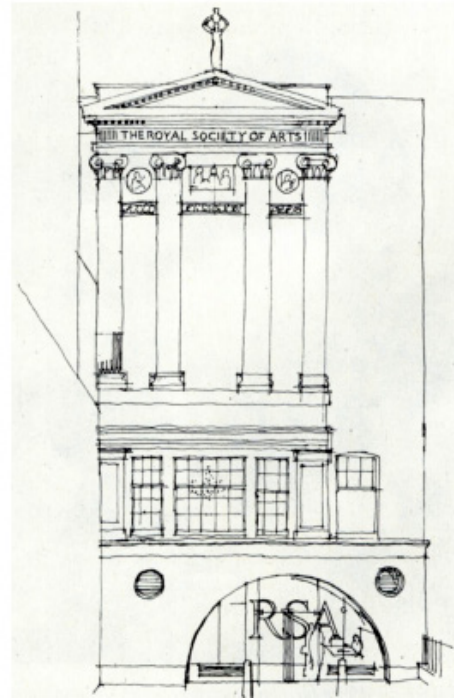


### Recent discovery

A coloured lithograph of the Strand façade of the RSA's house has recently come to light. This view of the building, originally a dirty expanse of bare brick wall, was exposed to public view following a road-widening scheme on the Strand in the 1920s. The then Chairman of the RSA Council, Sir George Sutton, expressed his desire to commemorate the golden jubilee of his first association with the RSA – he had obtained a first-class certificate in book-keeping in the Society's examinations – by bearing the whole cost of the decoration of the wall. The Council gratefully accepted his offer. The firm of Sir Aston Webb and Son were commissioned to carry out the task and Maurice Webb produced a skilful suggestion of the main façade in John Adam Street to successfully transform the blank wall. E.V. Lucas, who prided himself on his knowledge of London wrote in the *Sunday Times* that, although he had walked along the Strand many hundreds of times he had only just noticed a very fine piece of Adam work on the back of a building behind the Tivoli. As part of the 1980s development scheme to incorporate the vaults into the main RSA building, the architect created an auditorium out of the rump of Durham Street that ran underneath the main building.



*Exposed rear wall of RSA's building*



*Strand entrance to RSA*

*Illustration by Dennis Bailey RDI (1988-90)*

It would appear that this colour lithograph by William P. Mann was originally part of a set of prints, 'London in Colour' produced for Pinchin, Johnson & Co, a major supplier of paints and coatings, to give to their customers. (My thanks to Ronald Sim, WSG member, for this information). Several busts from the RSA's collection can be seen in the windows of what was the Fellows' Library (now the Benjamin Franklin Room) above the pathway under the building.

## **RDIs honoured**

At a special ceremony on 15th June 2016 Cambridge University awarded Sir Jonathan Ive KBE, RDI an honorary degree in science for the 'elegance, purity and beauty' he brought to personal computers.

In this year's Queen's Birthday Honours Magaret Calvert RDI was made an OBE for services to typography, graphic design and road safety.

## **RDIs and the RSA**

Eighty years ago the RSA instituted the distinction Royal Designer for Industry (RDI) in recognition of the importance of their work. In 1936 no more than thirty designers could hold this distinction at any one time. Today this number has risen to a maximum of 200 designers, selected by their peers, covering a wide and diverse range of design disciplines. Non-British resident designers are also recognised with the appointment of Honorary RDI status. They elect a Master from their number to lead the Faculty in the promotion of design skills and education.

In September 1980, shortly before his death, Sir Gordon Russell RDI (Master 1947-49) wrote to Neville Ward RDI to say that he had been thinking 'how many things of various kinds the Faculty are able to do for the Society' and how these had been amply balanced by the RSA's 'generous wish' to help them in many ways. Russell said that he felt that this mutual arrangement, which he had experienced during the forty years he had been an RDI, had been of great value not only to the RDIs themselves but, even more important, he thought, to designers as a whole. He charged Ward 'to mention this on any appropriate occasion'.

Sarah Curtis, Editor of the *RSA Journal* and RSA Head of Communications (1985-89) recalls the help the RDIs gave her with cover illustrations for the *RSA Journal*.



Between April 1990 and August 1996 the front covers of the *RSA Journal* exhibited the work of the Royal Designers for Industry, beginning with David Gentleman's evocative watercolour of the RSA House. The *Journal* at that time was published each month. It was smaller than now, a size between A4 and A3, and on the cover were titles of some of the contents. All the Society's lectures given annually, thirty or more, were published in the *Journal*, only slightly edited, with news of RSA projects and some arts and book reviews. The covers looked handsome, using Bembo type as in all RSA publications. The *Journal* did, however, have the air of a learned journal looking to the past, whereas the RSA, then as now, was leading the way to the future.

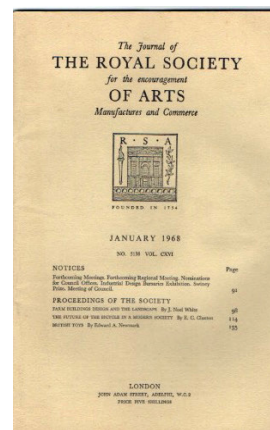
When I became Editor of the *Journal* in 1989, I wanted to modernize the Journal without losing its essential gravitas. I expanded the news and reviews sections and then put forward the idea that the front cover should display the work of the RDIs. Christopher Lucas, Secretary and Chief Executive of the organisation as well as Secretary to the Faculty of Royal Designers, immediately liked the idea of giving a platform to the work of the RDIs while embellishing the Journal. The difficulty was how we could afford the extra cost of covers which had to be well produced and in colour.

It was impossible to lure advertisers for a house magazine with a small circulation to a diverse group or to make any other savings. The only staff of the Journal were the Editor and her secretary, Marilyn Cohda, and the distribution was by an inexpensive packaging and posting unit. In the end I was given permission to go ahead for a trial year provided the RDIs gave their work free - which, of course, they all generously did. David Gentleman as Master of the Faculty in 1990 was the perfect choice for the first cover. His picture of the House was already known and admired. Then began some six years of learning, excitement and fun for me as I came to know both British RDIs and Honorary RDIs abroad while choosing their covers with them.

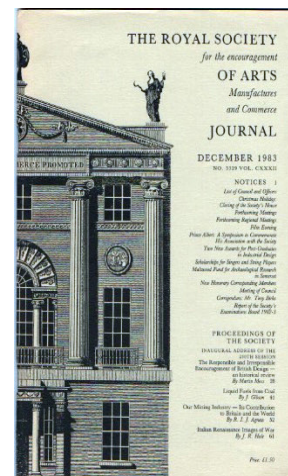
The response by Fellows to the covers was immediate and warm. The RDIs were equally enthusiastic. Henry Wolf, the American designer, photographer and art director, selected a photographic cover showing the circle of light around the bulb of a lamp placed in front of an open window through which the bright circle of the moon could be seen. It was created to demonstrate the fact that two things can appear to be the same size even when they are of vastly different dimensions. “The cover looks better than its original use”, wrote Wolf (this was the age before emails).

One of the delights of choosing the covers was that it sometimes entailed visiting RDIs in their studios, from the Earl of Snowdon in his elegant house in Kensington to Paul Smith in his cluttered eyrie near the Royal Opera House where I was tempted into buying a tie. “The cover was great,” wrote Paul. “I’m sorry it was expensive for you! But I’m sure your husband will be happy.”

At other times an RDI would ask me to choose a suitable picture from the files the RSA Design Office held for each RDI. For Ronald Searle, who lived in France, in March 1991 I chose a sombre picture of a giant-like seated figure squeezing between its huge hands a tiny, stick-like man. “The picture attempts to suggest the amorphous man that can emerge anywhere”, Searle explained, “at any time, to engulf and threaten the thinker, the writer, the creative questioner. Politely known as ‘authoritative censorship’ (for the good



*1960s cover and layout prepared on advice of Milner Gray RDI. The vignette of the Society's house had been designed by F.H. Andrews for the RSA library bookplate.*



1980s version



Watercolour of façade of RSA's house by David Gentleman RDI

of the people), it can be more appropriately labelled as ‘power corrupted’.” He was delighted that I had not chosen one of his trademark St Trinian’s drawings. There followed a long friendship until he died in 2011, mainly conducted through letters. One year my husband and I were in Avignon because my husband used to review the plays at the Avignon Festival. We had arranged to meet the Searles for dinner as their home was nearby but Monica, Ronald’s wife, was ill with an affliction caused by sunlight. When we reached our table on the projected evening there was a bottle of champagne with a note, “the bottle we had intended to share with you, had it been snowing or something”, and one of the many drawings he used to send me in his letters. I was always one of his ethereal, slightly odd pussy-cats. This time I was saying to my partner, “Why don’t we skip the Peter Brook tonight?” Ronald knew well we never would as it was the world première of Peter Brook’s Maharabata.

Enid Marx used to ask me to tea, scones and blackcurrant jam, in her house in Islington. She wanted my help in finding a publisher for her memoirs. I did my best but succeeded only in getting the chapter about her schooldays at Roedean during the First World War appreciatively published in the *Roedean Magazine*. When my first grandchild was born she gave me a print from her Alphabet series, H for Horse for Harry. A for Alice followed and after her death I managed to buy their name letters for another four grandchildren.

Through Kenneth Grange, whose 125 High Speed train dashed across the cover of the August/September 1991 issue, I met in October of that year, when on holiday in New York, local RDIs in the Pentagon offices near the Flatiron Building on Fifth Avenue, for a convivial dinner to tell them about the RSA’s current projects.

We had only two mishaps. Gerald Scarfe sent me one of his characteristic cartoons of Mrs Thatcher, a harpy with a pointed nose, red in tooth and claw. It was an amazing picture but I was told it would offend many Fellows. The RSA did not take sides politically. Scarfe was extremely civil about its rejection. I was embarrassed and not a little angry. The other mishap was our fault. The slide of a stage set by a celebrated RDI theatre designer went missing at the printer’s after its use. It was unique and the best one of that set the RDI had. Our print manager at the excellent Alden Press in Oxford searched and searched but never found it, to my great regret.

I left the RSA in late 1995 and the covers continued until August/September 1996 when Maurice Sendak contributed the last one. The Journal was then out-sourced and changed to its present form. For six years Fellows admired the scope, creative powers and virtuosity of the RDIs, from graphic designers and illustrators, to engineers, architects, furniture, fashion, ceramic, landscape, lighting, textile, theatre, typography and other product designers, all contributing notably to industry.

## Obituaries

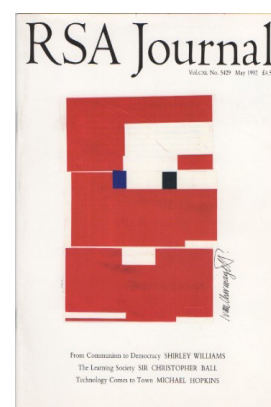
### Lord Asa Briggs

WSG Deputy Chairman Professor John Davis has written this appreciation of the life of the WSG Honorary Patron, Lord Asa Briggs.

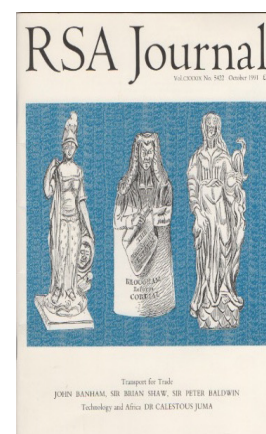
I first met Lord Briggs in 2001 at a conference I had helped organise on the subject of the 150th anniversary of the Great Exhibition and its legacy. Convened jointly by the Prince Albert Society, the Victorian Society and the Royal Society of Arts, the event had two parts – in Coburg (Germany) and in London (at the RSA) - and I was asked to open the first, German leg of the conference. As a relatively junior and aspiring academic, being



Cover design by  
Peter Blake RDI



Cover design by  
Serge Chermayeff RDI



Cover design by  
Enid Marx RDI

thrust to the fore of things was both welcome and terrifying in equal measure. The latter aspect was increased immeasurably, however, when I found out on the morning of first day that Asa Briggs would be attending. To anyone working on nineteenth-century British history, Asa Briggs formed a colossal presence. Given his many publications on Victorian culture, society and aesthetics, any mistakes on my part were unlikely to go unnoticed.

Asa Briggs had, it turned, out, been a founder member and long-standing supporter of the Prince Albert Society – an organisation set up to foster academic and historical collaboration between Britain and Germany. He had presented at the Society's very first conference in Coburg in 1980 and was a regular attendee into the twenty-first century. It was one example of the myriad of affiliations and commitments he sustained throughout his life, and indicated his commitment to international cultural contacts and transnational historical discourse. While Asa Briggs' educational connections with the United States and the Commonwealth have been recognised, it is also important to note his commitment to closer Anglo-German and European understanding, particularly when one reflects on his own part in the Allied campaign during the Second World War.

I need not have worried about his presence at my paper. During questions after the presentation, and at the conference dinner shortly afterwards, rather than demonstrating his own vast knowledge of the subject area, it quickly became apparent that Lord Briggs was intent on learning from me! The most enduring impression I have is of someone that showed humility and curiosity about others – no matter how far down the academic food chain - both in terms of their research but also in terms of their lives more generally. It was a powerfully engaging combination, and I can appreciate its importance in making him one of the most widely-read and influential historians and educators of the twentieth century.



After 2001, we met several times again in Coburg. We also grew and maintained another exhibition-related link through the William Shipley Group, of which Lord Briggs was an active and significant Honorary Patron. To anyone researching the High Victorian period inaugurated by the Great Exhibition, the importance of the Royal Society of Arts and its records must be apparent. Lord Briggs was insistent that the Society's significance should not be forgotten and its activities supported and continued.

Asa Briggs was born on 7 May 1921 in Keighley, Yorkshire. His father was an engineer, and he attended Keighley Grammar School, gaining entry to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, aged 16. In 1941 he gained two degrees, a BA in History from Cambridge and a BSc in Economics which he took via the University of London's External Programme. The additional degree – in a programme designed primarily for those engaged in the war effort – testified to Briggs' talent. Certainly, his qualification in economics allowed him to wander easily into disciplinary regions less trodden by other historians.

Towards the end of his studies, Briggs was identified as someone who might be useful in the British Intelligence Corps and – despite his youth – between 1942 and 1945 he was engaged at Bletchley Park, and became a member of the renowned team operating in Hut 6 deciphering Enigma machine messages and working alongside Alan Turing. Key to this transfer from Cambridge to Bletchley Park was Howard Smith, with whom Briggs played chess at Cambridge, and who much later became Director General of MI5. This combination of recognised talent, social networking and easy professional advancement would be demonstrated repeatedly throughout Briggs' lifetime. Talent and affability would take him further than most.

In 1945 he was offered a safe seat as a Labour MP, but turned this down and instead returned to academe as a Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. In 1950 he was appointed Reader in Recent Social and Economic History. During this period, Briggs proofread Winston Churchill's *History of the English-speaking Peoples* (1955). He published his *History of Birmingham* (1952), one of the great Victorian cities. He also taught and became close to Rupert Murdoch, who accompanied Briggs and two others on a camping tour of the Middle East. It is possibly gratifying or at least a relief to learn that, despite his mounting successes, Briggs had an article rejected by George Orwell (on the history of slang). Despite the approaches from Labour and his sympathies with working people, Briggs was not drawn into the Communist camp alongside other contemporary historians, or indeed into any other party. His was a moderate, forgiving and inclusive historical approach that reached



across social classes as well as borders.

In the early 1950s he taught at Princeton University as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study. In 1955 he returned to his Yorkshire roots for a while when he was appointed Professor of Modern History in Leeds. In 1958 he became President of the Workers' Educational Association. His increasing interest in the broadening of education led to one of his most prominent appointments, as Professor of History at the newly-founded Sussex University. He would quickly advance there to become Vice Chancellor, a position he held from 1967 until 1976. It would similarly lead to his successful efforts to persuade the government of Harold Wilson to found the Open University in 1969. In 1976, Asa Briggs was appointed as Provost of Worcester College, Oxford. He was also created a life Peer as Baron Briggs of Lewes the same year. After 1978 Lord Briggs was Chancellor of the Open University.

Officially, Lord Briggs retired as a paid academic in 1991. In practice, retirement was nominal. The position of Chancellor of the OU continued until 1994. Briggs also spent time in the early 1990s at Columbia University. In 1987 he had become President of the Brontë Society, an attachment which preserved his Keighley roots. As made clear at the start, his research activities and institutional affiliations reached well into the twenty-first century.

Lord Briggs' publications covered broad and important aspects of Victorian history, and – in addition to his countless important articles – his *Victorian People* (1955), *Victorian Cities* (1963) and *Victorian Things* (1988) remain standard works for undergraduates and researchers alike and each contribute to areas of interest that are still very much alive today. His *Social History of England* (1983) and his five-volume history of the BBC, completed between 1961 and 1995, are monumental in their own right. The latter demonstrates again his agility in moving into new areas as well as, for some perhaps, his good connections in the Establishment. It also, however, testifies to Lord Briggs' engagement with the world within which he lived and his commitment to public education. In the later years of his life Lord Briggs published a succession of works casting fascinating and surprising new light on his life and work, including (with Peter Burke) *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (2002), *Secret Days: Code-breaking in Bletchley Park* (2011) and *The Complete Poems of Asa Briggs: Far Beyond the Pennine Way* (2016). Lord Briggs died on 15 March 2016.

### **Dr Anita McConnell , FRGS, FRSA, FRMetS (1936-2016)**

Thanks to Jane Insley, former Curator at the Science Museum, we learnt the sad news that RSA Fellow Dr Anita McConnell died earlier this year, in April 2016. Dr McConnell's scholarship had shown what could be done, to great effect, with the material culture of museums. Following her appointment as Oxford University Press Research Editor, McConnell consulted the RSA archives for some of the 600 entries she contributed to the new edition of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography - she provided more entries than any other single contributor. McConnell worked with, and researched, the collections at the Science Museum and published many important works on scientific instruments.

### **New WSG Occasional Paper**

**No.30 A Visual Tour of the International Exhibition of 1862** compiled by Susan Bennett. £8.00 (£1.25 p&p).

This tour, compiled by the WSG Honorary Secretary, offers an opportunity to share the experience of visitors to this international exhibition held in South Kensington. It provides an overview of the layout and highlights some of the objects on display at the 1862 Exhibition. This publication was made possible thanks to a grant from The Worshipful Company of Arts Scholars (<http://www.artsscholars.org/>)

## Book reviews

Eileen Gray  
Her Work and Her World



Jennifer Goff

**Eileen Gray. *Her Work and Her World*** by Jennifer Goff (Irish Academic Press, 2015). ISBN 978 07165 32767

One of the leading authorities on Eileen Gray's work and her legacy Dr Goff has presented us with a thoroughly researched and illustrated biography that has drawn on newly available archival material. A self-taught architect and designer much of Gray's outstanding innovative work was done in the 1920s and 30s but it was not until the 1970s that her importance as a design pioneer was fully recognised. The RSA presented their own accolade in 1972 by appointing Gray a Royal Designer for Industry (RDI) for her furniture and interior design.

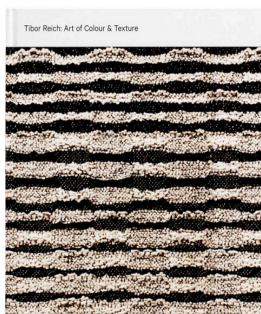
Over twelve chapters we discover her career as an artist, her early interest in lacquer work (which now achieves record prices at auction), her carpet and furniture design, influenced by the major art movements prevalent in Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century. Several chapters consider Gray's work as an architect resulting in her masterpiece, villa e1027 and her relationship with Jean Badovici and Le Corbusier. Goff also considers Gray's personality and her approach to her work through the correspondence with her niece, the artist Prunella Clough. By nature discreet and self-effacing she never sought acclaim and her achievements had been largely forgotten until the early 1970s, when a few committed collectors and historians repositioned her at the forefront of the story of architecture and design. Jennifer Goff has provided a long overdue revision of the life and work of this early female modernist architect/designer in this excellent and extensively illustrated biography.



Bibendum chair (1926)

Not only has the National Museum of Ireland supported the publication of Jennifer Goff's authoritative work, they have realised one of Eileen Gray's last ambitions – to have her work brought back to Ireland, the land of her birth. Their permanent exhibition is on display at the NMI, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7. For more details see <http://www.museum.ie/Decorative-Arts-History/Exhibitions/Current-Exhibitions/Eileen-Gray>

**Tibor Reich: *Art of Colour & Texture*** by Sue Prichard, Mary Schoeser and Sam Reich. (Tibor Publishing, 2016) ISBN 9781526200006. 239 pages, many coloured. £35



This book on the pioneering post-war émigré textile designer Tibor Reich has been published to coincide with a major retrospective exhibition at the Whitworth Gallery, and to mark his centenary.

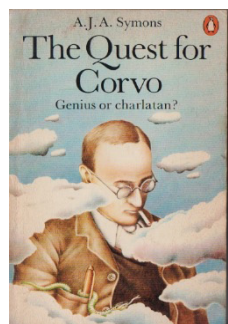
Born in Budapest in 1916 he went to Vienna where he studied architecture and textiles – and fell in love with colour - before moving to Britain in 1937. He set up Tibor Ltd in a nineteenth century mill at Stratford upon Avon, and started designing and manufacturing speciality fabrics. One of his first hand woven furnishing fabric designs was selected as a wedding gift for HRH Princess Elizabeth (now HM The Queen). Reich was commissioned to design and produce fabrics for many key post-war projects, including the Festival of

Britain, London Airport (Heathrow) and Coventry Cathedral. His fabrics were also used by BOAC and Cunard ships, as car seating for Vauxhall cars and he was commissioned to design the first sets of upholstery and curtains for Concorde. Inspired by nature Reich took photographs of interesting textures and he then manipulated these images in a process he patented as Fotextur. This technique was captured in a short film by Pathe News ([https://youtu.be/\\_2LalrWNT6w](https://youtu.be/_2LalrWNT6w)) and an abstract print 'Flamingo', based on a bundle of straw, was awarded the the first Council of Industrial Design Award for textiles. At this time Sir Gordon Russell was Director of COID and the two men became good friends. Reich was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1951.

This beautifully illustrated book with its many large colour photographs explores the design challenges and pioneering techniques Tibor Reich brought to the British textile industry over a career that lasted three decades, as well as his designs for a modern home for his family, what he called his 'Noodles, Oodles & Doodles', his Tigo-ware ceramic designs and concludes with his design for a new language based on colour which he called Collingo.

Sam Reich is reviving his grandfather's company, Tibor Ltd, not only to reproduce some of Tibor's iconic designs but to encourage new young designers to experiment with texture and colour.

Copies can be purchased from the Whitworth Gallery or Tibor Ltd via their website <http://www.tibor.co.uk/>



## Message from the WSG Honorary President and RSA Honorary Historian

Dr David G.C. Allan writes that readers may be interested to learn that the writer, artist, photographer and eccentric Frederick Rolfe (1860-1913), better known as 'Baron Corvo', the author of *Hadrian the Seventh* (1904) approached the RSA for sponsorship. Details of his extraordinary life and time in Venice can be found in A.J. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: An experiment in biography*, (1934)

## ANNIVERSARIES

**2016** marks the **270th** anniversary of the birth of the prison reformer and philanthropist Sir George Onesiphorus Paul (1746-1820). Shortly after his election to the membership in 1801 Paul sent the Society a paper outlining 'the necessity of the admission of Fresh Air into Hospitals and crowded Rooms' based on his observations at Gloucester gaol. This had not only prompted him to adopt the cause of prison reform but also to develop a mechanical mode of ventilation, which had proved successful. The Society thanked Paul and published his paper in their *Transactions*. 'Actuated by his usual philanthropy', Paul also presented the Society with models of the machinery he had employed so that they could put them on public display in their Repository.

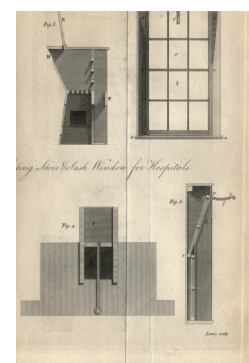
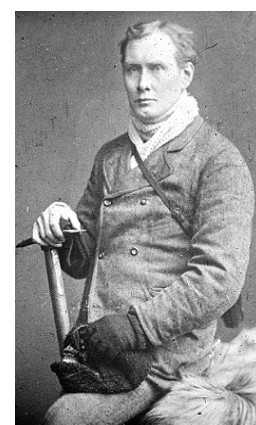


Illustration from Paul's paper in Society's Transactions

**2016** marks the **135th** anniversary of the paper given in 1881 by the mountaineer and wood engraver Edward Whymper (1840-1911) on his recent ascent of Chimborazo in South America. Whymper had been a member of the party that made the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865. When political difficulties prevented him climbing in the Himalayas in 1879 Whymper travelled to Ecuador and here he twice climbed their highest mountain, Chimborazo (20,498ft), and other peaks, including Cotopaxi (19,163ft), an active volcano. Such was the interest in his talk the Society looked for larger premises and eventually negotiated the loan of the lecture theatre at South Kensington in order to give the greatest number of members the opportunity to hear Whymper speak about his experience.



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. Committee: Dr Nicholas Cambridge FRSA (Chair); Dr David Allan FRSA (Director of Studies); Prof John Davis FRSA (Deputy Chair); Anthony Burton; Paul Leonard, FLS; Philip Emery, FRSA; Jonathan Rollason, FRSA; Susan Bennett, MA, FRSA (Honorary Secretary, Editor and Treasurer)