



THE WILLIAM SHIPLEY GROUP FOR RSA HISTORY

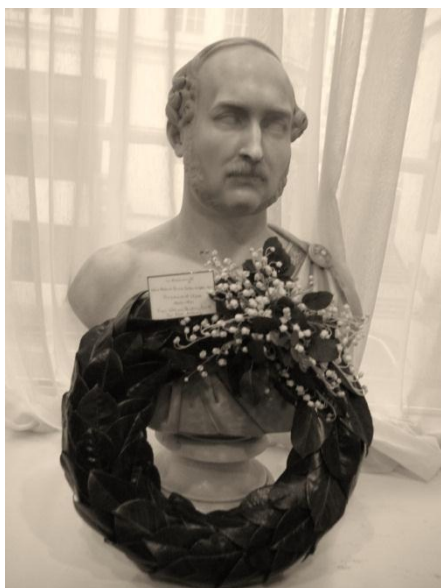
Newsletter 32: March 2012

Forthcoming meetings

Wednesday 21 March 2012 at 12.00pm. The WSG **AGM** which will be followed by the Chairman's Annual Address at 12.30pm: ***From Devonshire Colic to Bladder Stone: Benjamin Franklin and Medicine*** by Dr Nicholas Cambridge at Benjamin Franklin House, London WC2N 5NF

Wednesday 18 April 2012 at 2pm. ***"Long may they Reign": Royal Jubilees from George III to Elizabeth II*** by Dr David Allan. This meeting is held under the auspices of the Richmond-upon-Thames U3A and will be held in the Clarendon Room, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham TW1 3AA. Tickets available at the door £3. On direct bus route from Richmond station or a short walk from Twickenham station.

Letter from HM The Queen on the ceremony to mark the 150th anniversary of death of Prince Albert



After the ceremony at the Albert Memorial on 14 December the wreath was taken to John Adam Street, where it was placed on the marble bust commissioned from William Theed (1804-1891) by the members as part of the [R]SA's own memorial to Prince Albert.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

25th January, 2012

Dear Ms. Bennett,

The Private Secretary has asked me to thank you for your letter of 8th December.

It was most kind of you to write and let The Queen know of the ceremony held by the members of the William Shipley Group for RSA History and other Fellows of the Royal Society of Arts to remember the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Albert, Prince Consort.

Your thoughtfulness in writing as you did is most appreciated and I have been asked to convey Her Majesty's good wishes to you and all those who attended the ceremony.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Sonia Bonici
Senior Correspondence Officer

Ms. Susan Bennett.

Imperial College rings out

Imperial College and the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 arranged for the bells in the Queen's Tower at Imperial College to be rung on 14 December to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of Prince Albert. The Archivist at Imperial College has produced an eight page souvenir booklet on the tower and its bells. This is available on application to Susan Bennett, Honorary Secretary, William Shipley Group for RSA History, 0790 5273293 or email: susan@bennett.as



RCA/V&A/WSG conference: Internationality on Display

Over 100 delegates attended the WSG/RCA/V&A conference 'Internationality on Display' held in the Sackler Centre at the V&A Museum, on Friday 3 February 2012. The meeting opened with a goodwill message from the WSG Honorary President Dr David Allan. Then WSG committee members Prof John Davis and Anthony Burton gave papers setting the scene for a wide-ranging programme on the organisation of the 1862 International Exhibition. Contributors considered aspects of labour politics and public response to this almost 'forgotten' exhibition. Three V&A/RCA History of Design MA students took time out from their studies to present 'The Visitor's Experience of the 1862 Exhibition' through a survey of the many guides and publications produced at the time. Professor Christopher Frayling drew the various threads together with his concluding reflections on the day. Thanks are extended to Matilda Pye (V&A) and Jane Pavitt (RCA) for their work in enabling this conference to take place, and to Anthony Burton for his help in bringing his initial suggestion to a successful conclusion.

The RSA: 278 years of encouraging Art and Design

On 17 January 2012 the WSG Honorary President, Dr David Allan, gave a talk to 50 students and staff at Richmond-upon-Thames College on the RSA's continuing encouragement in the areas of art and design. His talk ranged from 18th century textile designs to local artist J.M.W. Turner. He also considered the Thames Valley Artists who were Fellows of the RSA, and students of RUTC who had won RSA Student Design Awards.



Dr David G.C. Allan and Ms Jan Perryman, Art & Design tutor at the RUTC.

(photo credit: Prof Paul Leonard FRSA, College Governor and WSG member)



Designs by RUTC students which gained RSA awards 1994-7

Exhibitions

British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age. Victoria & Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL. 31 March -12 August 2012

This major exhibition documents the transformation of design in Britain from the post-war 'Austerity Games' of 1948 through to the London Olympic Games of 2012. Drawing on the V&A's unrivalled collections, the exhibition will include product design, fashion and textiles, furniture, ceramics and glass, theatre design, graphics, photography, architecture, fine art and sculpture. Over fifty RDIs feature in this exhibition including furniture designers Sir Gordon Russell, Ernest Race and Robin Day; fashion designer Dame Vivienne Westwood, and product designers Kenneth Grange and Sir Jonathan Ive.

One of the complementary displays to this exhibition can be seen in Room 111 and features work by **The New Medallists** which runs from 11 February to 19 August 2012. Medallion design has been an interest of the RSA from its early days and this display celebrates the first six years of the New Medallist scheme for British-based artists to deepen and broaden their knowledge of the medal and the possibilities it offers for artistic expression.



A Sovereign of One Peaceful Hour by Petra Mills

Designing Women: Post-war British Textiles. Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. 16 March – 16 June 2012 Tuesdays to Saturday 11am-6pm. Ticket price £7

This exhibition explores women's pioneering role in combining art and manufacturing to change the direction of the modern design industry. Textile design radically changed after the Second World War and three women artists working in England in the 1950s, Lucienne Day, Jacqueline Groag and Marian Mahler, were pivotal in this artistic revolution. This exhibition features more than a hundred of their colourful prints and textiles.

Doctoral student Leah Armstrong explains the context for the display she has curated of twelve portrait photographs of women designers which complement this exhibition.

The post-war years were bold and ambitious in more than aesthetic terms. After the war, designers sought to construct a professional identity, alongside the architect and engineer, that would be recognised, valued and rewarded with money and status. To this end the Society of Industrial Artists (SIA), established in 1930, invigorated its plans to professionalise the design profession by issuing a Code of Professional Conduct and a Scale of Fees in 1945. The distinction 'Royal' was added to the RSA's designation of DI (Designer for Industry) shortly after its establishment in 1936, and a Faculty of RDIs set up to 'honour designers of excellence and promote the important contribution of design in manufacturing and industry'. As such, it elevated the status of the designer in Britain. The attempt to promote the designer was also captured through photography.

By looking at the dress, language and 'lifestyle' codes of designers in post-war Britain, we can get an insight into the construction of the professional identity for the designer. With this in mind, the University of Brighton Design Archives has collaborated with the Fashion and Textiles Museum, London, to curate a display of 'Designer Portraits: Women Designers in Post-War Britain'. The portraits were collected by the Council of Industrial Design, (CoID) and held as part of its extensive photographic library, which now forms a unique holding at the Design Archives. The CoID was set up in 1944 to 'to promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British

industry'. Used promotionally by the council, the portraits in this display articulated a particular 'way of seeing' the British designer in the post-war years.

The display is made up of twelve photographs of women designers who worked during the post-war period, including textile designers Jacqueline Groag and Lucienne Day (pictured) as well as Barbara Jones, Gaby Schreiber and Sylvia Crowe, who were establishing themselves in the dominantly male industries of illustration, industrial design and architecture. Four of the designers in the display were awarded the honour of RDI; Ethel Mairet (1937), Lucienne Day (1962), Marianne Straub (1972) and Jacqueline Groag (1984).

As historian Jill Seddon has noted, the design profession was predominantly male in composition and character in its formative years and so it is interesting to look at how the women in this display are represented. To what extent do they project the ideals of 'fifties femininity' or 'fifties professionalism' and do any of them combine the two?



Lucienne Day, RDI, Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives.

Lucienne Day's portrait can be read as a particularly poignant attempt to 'balance' these two identities. Presenting Day as a woman who designs from home, at the kitchen table, the portrait complies to the conservative gender values of post-war Britain. Folders and files dominate the top left background of the photo, whilst a coffee cup and jug dominate the bottom left foreground. Other women in the display, such as Jacqueline Groag, Gaby Schreiber and Sylvia Crowe present a more defiant, confrontational image of the woman designer at work, in the boardroom and office.

Part of the aim of the display was to portray the wide range of styles and personalities that made up the image of 'woman designer' in the post-war period. Whilst we may characterise designers according to the colours, patterns and textiles they designed, it is equally useful to look at the designer portrait for a more intimate insight into their professional and personal identities.

*Leah Armstrong,
PhD Candidate, University of Brighton.*

Leah is holder of AHRC Doctoral Award for the project: **'Towards an Atlas of the Design Profession, 1930-2010'**, in collaboration with the University of Brighton Design Archives and the Chartered Society of Designers. www.arts.research.brighton.ac.uk/LeahArmstrong

New WSG Occasional Paper: *Sir Gordon Russell CBE, MC, RDI (1892-1980). A twentieth century design pioneer*

Helen Auty, former RSA Director of Design, has written this authoritative account of a former Head of the RSA's Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry, *Sir Gordon Russell CBE, MC, RDI (1892-1980). A twentieth century design pioneer*. This paper complements Jeremy Myerson's excellent book, *Gordon Russell Designer of Furniture*, published twenty years ago, and provides an illustrated review of not only Russell's professional career, but also the concrete designs he produced for his garden at Kingcombe. (Available from the Honorary Secretary, 7 Drakes Drive, Ducks Hill Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 2SL. Cost £7.50 p&p. Please make cheques payable to the William Shipley Group)

Charles Dickens

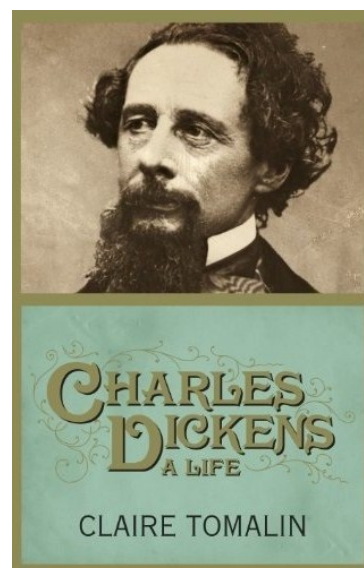
Members of the William Shipley Group and Fellows of the RSA London Region met at Bridewell Hall on the evening of Wednesday 25 January to hear Dr John Drew and Dr Tony Williams introduce Dickens journalism. By the bicentenary of Dickens' birth on 7 February their project, Dickens Journals Online (DJO), will provide free of charge, and fully searchable, a complete online edition of Dickens' weekly magazines *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. The two lecturers provided an entertaining evening of readings from Dickens' journalism with particular reference to the work of the Society on patent reform which inspired Dickens short story, 'A Poor Man's Tale of a Patent'. A major launch conference on 'Charles Dickens and the mid-Victorian Press, 1850-70' will be held on 28-31 March 2012. See <http://www.djo.org.uk/> for further details.



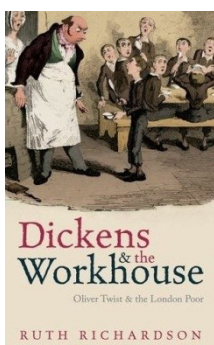
Book reviews

Claire Tomalin, ***Charles Dickens: A Life***. London: Viking, 2011
ISBN 9780670917679

In her immensely readable biography Claire Tomalin captures the depth and range of this giant of English literature. His lifelong commitment to the poor, the downtrodden and the unjustly treated provided Dickens with inspiration for many of his memorable stories and character. Actor, playwright, journalist, newspaper editor, supporter of liberal causes and father of ten children, Dickens' energy knew no bounds.



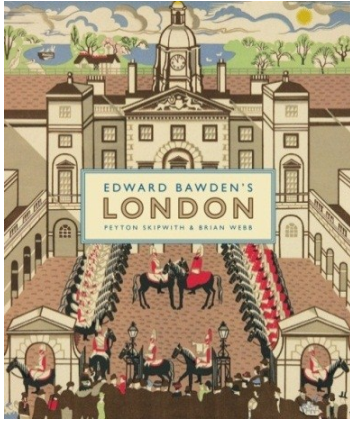
With such a rich life it is impossible to include everything and missing from this account is any mention of Dickens' membership of the Society of Arts. Elected in 1849, Dickens found time to serve on some of the Society's Committees. His story, 'The Poor Man's Tale of a Patent', which he published in *Household Words* in 1850, provided a vivid account of the mass of legal forms which a would-be patentee had to go through. This publication greatly assisted the Society's campaign for patent law reform. Chairman of the newly formed Council, Sir Henry Cole, who persuaded Dickens join the Society's committee for promoting artisans' drawing schools, provided Dickens with the inspiration for creation of the character of the school inspector in *Hard Times*. [See WSG Occasional Paper no 5 'Barkiss is willin': some Dickensian associations of the Society of Arts by David G.C. Allan for further information on Dickens and the Society of Arts]



Ruth Richardson, ***Dickens & the Workhouse. Oliver Twist & the London Poor***. Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-19-964588-6

This book presents the story behind the recent campaign to save the Cleveland Street workhouse. The historian Ruth Richardson discovered that, in his early life, Charles Dickens lived a few doors away and no doubt this informed the author's views on the workhouse system. After a public campaign, no doubt fuelled by the media's mistaken identification that this was *Oliver Twist's* workhouse, the building was saved from demolition.

Ruth Richardson shows that the two periods that Dickens lived in this part of London – before and after his father's imprisonment in a debtor's prison – were profoundly important to his subsequent writing career.



Peyton Skipwith and Brian Webb, **Edward Bawden's London**. London: V&A Publishing 2011 (Hardback £20)

This book celebrates a singular vision of London by Edward Bawden RDI (1903-89) painter, illustrator and graphic artist. The book begins with a biography of the subject running to 55 pages and can be supplemented by a useful chronology at the back of the book. The remaining 103 pages consist of a superb selection of coloured and black and white reproductions of Bawden's London views and designs; all accompanied by perceptive annotation by the joint authors. Regrettably no space could be found for either a list of the illustrations or for an index.

Curiously although reference is made to Bawden's award of the CBE and election as an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1946, no mention is made of his becoming an RDI in 1949 and his Fellowship of the RSA. His 1962 Christmas card for the Society, depicting the International Exhibition of 1862, has an especial resonance for the WSG as we are commemorating the 150th anniversary of that event.

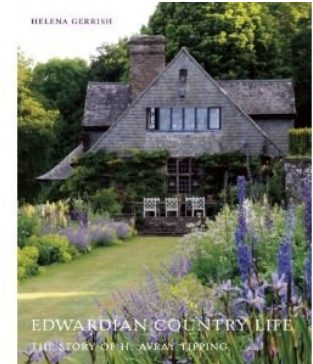
D.G.C. Allan



Edward Bawden design RSA 1961 Christmas card – showing part of the nave and west dome of the 1862 International Exhibition

Helena Gerrish, **Edwardian Country Life. The Story of H. Avray Tipping**. London: Francis Lincoln, 2011. Hardback £35

Henry Avray Tipping (1855-1933) was an Edwardian re-incarnation of the connoisseur and dilettanti who had once been so numerous in the membership of the Society of Arts; Horace Walpole and Thomas Hope among them. Having grown up in the grand surroundings of Brasted Place in Kent. Tipping restored a medieval Bishop's palace for himself and his widowed mother, built one of Wales's last important country houses and, after the First World War, commissioned his ideal 'cottage' as a retreat in the Monmouthshire hills.



As architectural editor of *Country Life*, Tipping made that magazine essential reading for everyone interested in Britain's great country houses, their furnishings and their gardens. Between 1908 and 1933 he published twelve authoritative books on architectural history, some of which were multi-volume works, as well as numerous articles in *The Garden*, the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, and of course, in *Country Life* itself.



West Wycombe before restoration

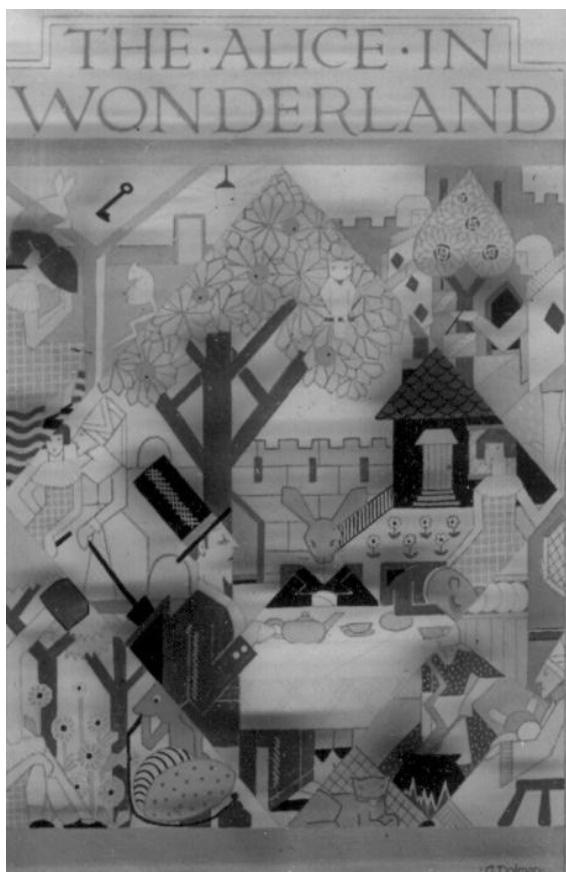
Elected FRSA in 1926 he played an important part in the Society's campaign to preserve ancient cottages which began in that year. The *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* records his announcement in 1929 of the Society's intention to 'try its hand at restoring a whole village' which turned out to be the wonderfully preserved West Wycombe. Helen Gerrish's sumptuously illustrated book, though referring to Tipping's election to the Society of Antiquaries does not mention his association with the RSA, perhaps a future edition may find room.

D.G.C. Allan

Anniversaries

Alice in Wonderland

During a boat trip **150 years ago** Charles Dodgson finally agreed to ten-year-old Alice Liddell's request to write down his fantastic stories. A couple of years later he presented his young friend with an illustrated manuscript entitled 'Alice's Adventures Under Ground'. This was the outline of his first, and most commercially successful, book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published in 1865

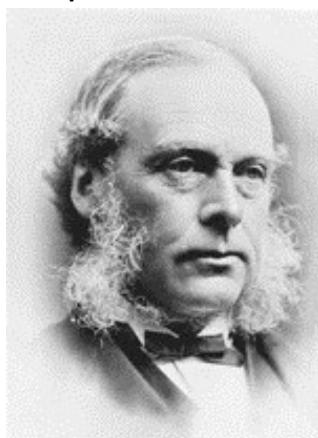


Gwendoline Dolman's prize winning design
Lantern slide RSA/PR/DE/100/19/33

Over two meetings in early January 1926 the English scientist, Professor Henry E. Armstrong, gave the RSA juvenile lecture on 'Alice in Wonderland at the Breakfast Table'. With the help of the daughter of the Society's Accountant and Examinations Officer, J. Buchanan, in the role of Alice, together with the Mad Hatter, the Dormouse, the March Hare, Brer Rabbit, the Cook, the Duchess, Father Christmas and the Tar Baby, Professor Armstrong set his young audience thinking about the various kinds of food on the breakfast table, as these characters discussed what the food was made of and why they ate it. Professor Armstrong concluded with a number of experiments with all sorts of shells – oyster, scallop, mussel, egg and snail. In the course of this presentation it was discovered that 'most of the food we eat is fizz-gas and so we keep ourselves warm'.

Alice was the subject of Gwendoline Dolman's prize winning design for a calendar in the advertising section of the RSA's 1930 Industrial Design competition. She was awarded ten guineas by the sponsor Messrs E.W. Savory Ltd.

Joseph Lister



2012 marks the **centenary** of death of the surgeon Sir Joseph Lister F.R.S. who, in 1895, was awarded the Society's Albert Medal 'for the discovery and establishment of the antiseptic method of treating wounds and injuries, by which not only has the art of surgery been greatly promoted and human life saved in all parts of the world, but extensive industries have been created for the supply of materials required for carrying the treatment into effect'. The Society's *Journal* reported that Lister was entitled to the credit of being the first to recognise the full significance of Pasteur's work in relation to the growth of bacterial germs. Four years later Lister chaired the Society's meeting which heard Dr Armand Ruffer talk on 'Rabies and its preventive treatment'. A former pupil of Pasteur, Ruffer became the first Director of the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine established in London in 1891.

To mark this anniversary King's College London are hosting an exhibition of Lister's personal effects, including his instrument case and walking stick, alongside books, documents, photos and other artifacts associated with him, in the Weston Room of the Maughan Library until 14 April. The exhibition is open Monday to Saturday between 9.30 and 17.00. A conference to complement this exhibition entitled 'Learning from Lister. Antisepsis, Safer Surgery and Global Health' running across three days, 22-24 March, and held at King's College London, the Royal Society and the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons will explore Lister's life, methods and ideas, and his lasting impact on medicine and surgical practice. (see <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/lister2012> for full programme and booking information)

Malta Society of Arts



2012 marks the **160th** anniversary of the founding of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. The Society came into being in response to a dispatch circulated by the British Secretary of State to the respective administrations in the Imperial Colonies to solicit the founding of associations similar to the Society of Arts in London.

In 1952 the RSA's Chairman of Council wrote to the President of the Malta Society of Arts expressing the pride that the London society took a 'in its sponsorship, in 1852, of an institution which has achieved, and we feel, has still to achieve, so much good work'. The Malta Society continues to flourish and further information on their activities can be seen at <http://www.artsmalta.org/>

Stanley Baldwin

85 years ago the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Stanley Baldwin, issued an appeal for 'The Preservation of Ancient Cottages' when he took the chair at the RSA's conference on this issue. In opening the conference he assured the Society that 'whatever steps they in their wisdom may think it most wise to take' to give effect to the best means of preserving 'the ancient cottage architecture of this country' he would cordially support them. In the illustrated appeal booklet published after the conference Baldwin explained that the Society had 'decided to do what they can to save these cottages – not for the week-end, who may be left to look after himself, but for the benefit of...local workers for whom they were originally built'. 2012 also marks the **65th** anniversary of the death of Baldwin.



Members are reminded that their £5 annual subscription is due on 30 March 2012. Please make your cheque out to the WSG and send to the Honorary Secretary, 7 Drakes Drive, Ducks Hill Road, Northwood HA6 2SL. Donations always welcome. Many thanks

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; Jonathan Rollason, FRSA; Mrs Susan Bennett, MA, FRSA (Honorary Secretary and Treasurer)