



THE WILLIAM SHIPLEY GROUP FOR RSA HISTORY

Newsletter 36: February 2013

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

18 March 2013 at 1pm. **Annual General Meeting** followed by the Chairman's Address, **From Tiny Tim to Mr Pickwick: Charles Dickens and Medicine** by Dr Nicholas Cambridge in Room CS2, Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RS (Nearest stations: King's Cross, St Pancras or Russell Square)

13 May 2013 at 8pm. **Long May They Reign. Jubilee Souvenirs from George III to Elizabeth II**, by Dr D.G.C. Allan. This talk follows the AGM of the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society will be held at St Mary's, Church Hall, Twickenham at 8pm. £2.50 on door.

EXHIBITIONS

Hartnell to Amies: Couture by Royal Appointment. The Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF. 16 November 2012 – 23 February 2013. £7 for adults, £5 for students and concessions. Exhibition ticket booking line: 020 7407 8664. This exhibition deals with London couture fashion by designers to H.M. The Queen: Norman Hartnell, Hardy Amies & Frederick Fox. Hardy Amies was elected to the RSA's Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry in 1964, and in 1989 he spoke to the RSA on 'A Century of Fashion'.



*Edward Bawden, detail of The
English Pub (1949-51)*

British Murals and Decorative Painting 1910-1970. The Fine Art Society, 148 New Bond Street, London W1S 2JT. 14 February – 9 March 2013. This major exhibition brings together many important murals undertaken in Britain in the sixty years between 1910 and 1970. On show are works by Edward Bawden, RDI as well as two newly-discovered murals originally commissioned for the 1951 Festival of Britain, *The Englishman's Home* by John Piper and *Mural for The Nelson Bar of the HMS Compañia* by Alan Sorrell. This show also features *Man at Work* by Barbara Jones, a painting she considered as her masterpiece.

Extraordinary Stories about Ordinary Things. Design Museum, Shad Thames London SE1 2YD. 30 Jan 2013 – 4 January 2015. Tickets £11.85 (Concessions £10.70) This exhibition considers key designs that have shaped the modern world with some elements being changed every year. RDIs featured in this exhibition include Margaret Calvert, James Dyson, Charles Eames, Sir Jonathan Ive and Jasper Morrison. Also on display is the red K6 telephone box designed by RSA Albert Medallist Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

HONOURS

Two members of the RSA's Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry were knighted in this New Year's Honours List: Sir Quentin Blake, CBE, FCSD, RDI 'for services to illustration', and Sir Kenneth Grange, CBE, MCSD, RDI, for services to design'.

WSG Chairman Dr Nicholas Cambridge has been made an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham.

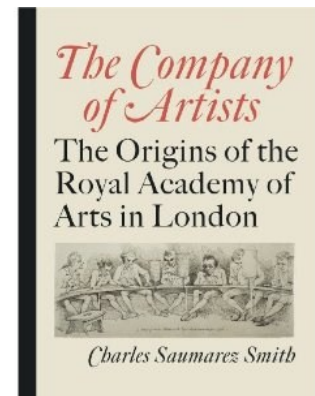
BOOKS

Charles Suamarez Smith, *The Company of Artists. The Origins of the Royal Academy of Arts in London*. London: Modern Art Press, 2012 ISBN 978 1408182 10 9 (£25)

Designed by Derek Birdsall RDI, this account by Charles Saumarez Smith RDI provides, as far as possible, a day-to-day diary style account of events that led to the foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768, and the two years that followed. The author wanted to discover why the Academy was founded, the interaction of the group of artists and architects who established it and why they broke away from the Society of Artists and what they felt when King George III signed the



James Barry, *James Barry, Lefevre, James Paine the younger*, 1767



Instrument of their Foundation. He also identifies the Society of Arts as a key institution in furthering public interest in the arts, and that many of the early Royal Academicians were winners of the Society of Arts' awards, and/or members of the Society. Pupils from William Shipley's drawing schools were later to enrol in the Royal Academy Schools. James Barry was pleased to write in 1769 that 'Mr Reynolds is at the head of this academy', because 'whilst it is in such hands as his, we have nothing to fear'. However, after joining the RA and appointed its Professor of Painting he was later to challenge Reynolds and the RA, to such a degree that he was expelled – one of only two artists in the Academy's history to suffer this fate.

Recent WSG publications



Occasional Paper no.24: *Professor R.D. (Dick) Russell, RDI, FSIAD (1903-1981). Marian Pepler, ARIBA, FSIAD (1904-1997) 'Formulating a peculiarly British brand of modernism'* by Ray Leigh, MBE. The author has drawn on his personal memory of working with Dick Russell and Marian Pepler over a twenty-five year period to present a portrait of a couple whose contribution to 20th century British design has yet to receive recognition. As well as an overview of their designs, and their success in business this account also highlights their achievement in bringing modernism to the British public. (Copies are available from the WSG Honorary Secretary at a cost of £5.00 plus £1.50 p&p).

Occasional Paper no.23: *The Society of Antiquaries and the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. An account of shared memberships and interests from the mid-18th to the early 21st centuries* by David G.C. Allan. In this volume Dr Allan traces the history of the two societies during the two and half centuries of their joint existence. He includes a list of those awarded grants under the terms of the Maltwood Fund for archaeological research managed by the RSA, as well as alphabetical and chronological lists of those members who belonged to both societies. (Copies are available from the WSG Honorary Secretary at a cost of £7.50 plus £1.50 p&p).



WEST WYCOMBE



Up Church Lane ©Country Life

In its issue for 23rd January 2013 *Country Life* reproduced the photograph of the Wheelwright's Yard at West Wycombe which had first illustrated the report by H. Avray Tipping, FSA, FRSA, on 'The Preservation of a Buckinghamshire Village' in their edition for 23rd March 1929. Tipping had been an avid supporter of the Campaign for the Preservation of Ancient Cottages which the RSA established following a lecture at John Adam Street by Sir Frank Baines¹ in 1926. When the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, called for support for a fund for this purpose, at the first conference organised by the RSA the following year, Tipping not only donated £10 but agreed to serve on the fund committee set up by the Society. At a second conference held on 15 March 1929, chaired by Ramsay MacDonald (who had succeeded Baldwin as Prime Minister) Tipping announced that, having saved and preserved the Thomas à Becket Cottages near Worthing, and Arlington Row at Bibury, 'we are determined to try our hands on a large scale, we are determined to lay our hands on a complete village'.²

This was the village of West Wycombe in Buckinghamshire which had been put up for sale by Sir John Dashwood. Tipping described West Wycombe as full of history as well as charm. An 'ideal village', with 'the attraction of its architecture heightened by the fact that it is a full and active community'. Three inns, two factories, a workshop, wheelwright's yard, school, together with 53 cottages dating from Tudor to Georgian times formed the RSA's purchase. The Society appointed William Weir (1865-1950), who specialised in the repair of ancient structures, to manage the restoration work. It was decided that each cottage would be reconditioned from the ground to the rooftop, rebuilding where necessary walls and chimney stacks. A charming Queen Anne house, almost in the centre of the village, did not form part of the original sale but was subsequently purchased thanks to the generosity of a Fellow of the RSA. After it had been thoroughly reconditioned it was partly let to the District Nurse with the two front rooms handed over to the village to provide residents with a free library.



The Wheelwright's Yard ©Country Life

¹ *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, vol.74 (1926), pp.706-829

² *Ibid*, vol.77 (1929), pp.450-470

At the West Wycombe Furniture Manufacturers' Federation annual dinner in 1930 their guest speaker, the architect of Portmeirion', Sir Clough Williams-Ellis told his audience that they 'should give the enterprise of the Royal Society of Arts all the support you can, because it is going to be a great shrine of pilgrimage.'³

Although the village was handed over the National Trust in 1934 the RSA maintained an interest on developments in the village, and announced in the Trust's competition for designs for cottages for working-class tenants, which were to be built on the site of the recently demolished factory. William Weir, together with Darcy Braddell (1884-1970) and Edward Maufe (1883-1974) agreed to act as judges.⁴ From 257 entries they selected the design of Messrs T. Mellor, G. Grenfell Baines and J.A. Ashworth for the award of the first prize of 100 guineas.



The Yard of the Chair Works ©Country Life



The Queen Anne House and the Sign of the George and Dragon Inn ©Country Life

'In the hope that they may help towards a growing appreciation of the charm of West Wycombe, as well as an understanding of the Society's insight in preserving it for future generations' Mrs Austin

³ *Ibid*, vol.78 (1930) p.449

⁴ *Ibid*, vol.91 (1943), p.624

Chauncey Richards presented to the RSA in 1932 seven water colour drawings of West Wycombe by Kate Chandler-Thomson (current location unknown).⁵

Thanks to Justin Hobson, Picture Library Manager, *Country Life* we have been allowed to reproduce this selection of images from Tipping's original 1929 article.

HARRY GORDON SELFRIDGE (1856-1947)

Doubling as the London home of Harry Gordon Selfridge and his family in the current ITV series *Mr Selfridge* is the Society's former National Training School for Music. With limited resources and indifference on the part of the government the Society of Arts opened this independent new institution to provide free musical education. Although short lived, it fathered an enduring child in the Royal College of Music. Architect, builder and Vice-President of the Society of the Arts, Charles James Freake undertook to cover the cost of the building and later make a gift of it to the nation.⁶ It later served as the Royal College of Organists before its conversion into a private dwelling.



Selfridge took an interest in the Society's work in promoting design. On 28 October 1918 the RSA held a meeting to consider their scheme for the 'Promotion of Industrial Art' and the Board of Trade's proposal to institute a British Institute of Art. Although the two schemes originated quite independently of each other it became evident that they were really complementary and should work together in close co-operation. To make this clear both schemes were submitted for consideration and support. In the discussion following the presentations Selfridge endorsed both schemes but pointed out 'in this country, where durability is such a fetish, people are made to feel that they must wear them until they are worn out...the duty of those who lead in this project must be to educate the consuming public.' He added that he would like 'to see everything in every detail done better in England, and better in London than anywhere else...we should see manufacturers looking round for bright young people of ability, skill and art to make products better'. Selfridge spoke about the exhibition held in Chicago, which was then his home, in 1893 and how 'it was a perfect production of the architects', the manufacturers', the artists' and the industrial managers' skill, and it was really a wonderful education...if we could just dream out a beautiful Exhibition...in a central location...where everybody could pay a shilling and go in and learn something' he added, 'I think it would go a long way towards making your most admirably proposed Exhibition a permanent and much appreciated feature of the people and the manufacturers of this community'.⁷ Two years later the *Journal* reported on the first exhibition of the British Institute of Industrial Art and asked its readers to support the event. Fellows were particularly requested by the Editor to interest the nation in its objects 'and thereby link up more closely than ever the aims of the Institute with those of our own, which after all are one and the same'.⁸

Selfridge showed his support of the RSA's scheme by accepting the invitation, issued by Sir Frank Warner in 1923, to join the Textile Section Committee of the RSA's scheme for its Annual

⁵ *Ibid*, vol.81 (1932), p.153-4

⁶ See John Skidmore, 'The Society and the National Training School for Music', *Ibid*, vol.140 (1992), pp.203-207; Giles Brightwell, 'The National Training School for Music 1874-1882: Catalyst or cul-de-sac?', MA thesis 1998

⁷ *Journal of Royal Society of Arts* vol.66 (1918), pp.761-773

⁸ *Ibid*, vol.68 (1920), pp.492-3

Competition of Industrial Design. He served on the committee for the ten annual competitions held by the Society until it had to discontinue the scheme due to the state of its finances in 1934, the year that Selfridge was elected a Fellow of the RSA.

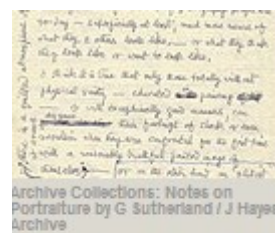
In their review of the Loan Exhibition of English Decorative Art, held in 1929, the RSA expressed the gratitude due to Mr Selfridge for lending his home for the display of the treasures lent for this occasion, including an Elizabethan four-poster bed in carved oak. Among the curiosities on display were portraits of two great Admirals: Collingwood by Nelson, and Nelson by Collingwood.



English Heritage Memorial tablet to Selfridge on Lansdowne House

THE PAUL MELLON CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN BRITISH ART LIBRARY

The Paul Mellon Centre library collections contain approximately 20,000 books, pamphlets, exhibition catalogues and theses, 800 auction catalogues and 230 periodical titles covering British painting, sculpture, drawing, prints, architecture and garden history from the 16th to the mid-20th century, and 18th century decorative arts. The collection of auction catalogues belonging to Sir Ellis Waterhouse, and that built up by Arthur Tooth & Sons form part of these collections. The Centre also houses their own photographic archive of over 100,000 black and white reference photographs covering the period 1500-1900, and the Tate photographic archive of c.350 boxes of images created and compiled by curators working at the Tate. Additionally the Centre holds over twenty archive collections, including the research papers of distinguished art historians, such as Sir Oliver Millar (1923-2007), W.G. Constable (1887-1976) and Sir Ellis Waterhouse (1905-1985), together with the papers of Sir Brinsley Ford (1909-1999) which provide a rich resource for scholars researching the Grand Tour. The Centre's online catalogues can be accessed at www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/168. Researchers can also view this material in the Centre's Public Study Room **by appointment only** between 10.00-17.00, Monday to Friday. Contact collections@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk or telephone 020 7580 0311.



INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1862

V&A Publications are interested in publishing the papers from the recent WSG conference on the 1862 International Conference but we need to cover the substantial production costs. This would enable us to publish a good quality volume with colour images to illustrate the texts. We would like to publish in 2013 as this year marks the 150th anniversary of the last publication on the 1862 exhibition. The Honorary Secretary would welcome any suggestions for sources who might be interested in supporting this volume, which will be of particularly benefit to Museum Studies graduates. Please contact Susan Bennett if you have any suggestions or wish to discuss this further.

WEBSITE ON GORDON RUSSELL RDI

Furniture historian and author Dr Bill Cotton has written that he has 'read many web sites in my time, both professional and otherwise and I can honestly say that I have never seen one which is so much on target for its purpose and so responsive in delivering its different categories of information so succinctly as this site': <http://www.gordonrussellmuseum.org/>



OBITUARY

SIR PATRICK MOORE CBE, FRS, FRAS (1923-2012)

On 9 December 2012 Sir Patrick Moore died at the age of 89. As an amateur astronomer he attained prominent status as a writer, researcher, radio commentator and television presenter of the world's longest-running series, *The Sky at Night*. In 2001 he was knighted for 'services to the popularisation of science and to broadcasting'. On 1 January 1958 he gave the RSA's juvenile lecture on the subject of space travel. He concluded that he firmly believed that 'the first lunar voyage will take place within the next fifty years' and he added that 'since it can only be carried through by means of peaceful co-operation between the scientists of all nations, it may also go some way towards uniting the Earth'.⁹ He was delighted to report twelve years later, when he returned to the RSA to give a second juvenile lecture on 'The Moon and Beyond', that 'Nineteen-sixty-nine will always be remembered as the year when men first set foot upon the surface of the moon'.¹⁰ During his long astronomical career Moore helped to map the moon. Dr A.R. Michaelis, Director of The Weizmann Institute Foundation, described Moore 'as the greatest professional amateur I know – a real lover of astronomy!' as he introduced the lecturer to RSA Fellows on 13 February 1974, before Moore's lecture on 'Astronomy for the Amateur'. He was also a regular book reviewer for the *RSA Journal*.



THE REVD DR JOHN WALL MA, FRPS (1928-2012)

Photographic historian, The Revd Dr John Wall died on 5 October 2012. Principal lecturer and head of religious and social studies at Middleton St George College of Education in County Durham, Wall was also an enthusiastic amateur photographer, who joined the Royal Photographic Society in 1965, and gained his Fellowship of the RPS in 1977. His lasting legacy was the publication of the *Directory of British Photographic Collections* which provided information on some 1,580 collections in the United Kingdom. Following publication of this volume he gave the RSA/Peter Le Neve Foster lecture titled 'Towards a National Photographic Archive'.¹¹ In the discussion following his talk the lecturer agreed with A. J. Stirling, FRSA that the collection formed by the Secretary of the Society of Arts, Peter Le Neve Foster in 1853, was one of the first known public photographic archives.

Anniversaries

2013 marks the 200th anniversary of the award of the Society's Gold medal to John Lewis of Broadstairs for curing 6,533 barrels of British White Herrings. Several very respectable Dutch merchants, and other persons from Holland conversant with taking and curing herrings, were invited to attend the Society's House to examine the half barrel that Lewis had sent in support of his submission. They smelt and tasted the pickle before removing the herrings and preparing them, and after heartily eating the herrings they told the Society's Committee of Colonies & Trade that 'Mr Lewis' process of cure to be precisely the same as the Dutch method.

2013 marks the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Photographic Society which took place at a meeting held at the Society's House in John Adam Street, following the exhibition of photography held by the Society in its 'Great Room' in 1852. To mark the occasion the RSA, with the RPS, organised a 24 hour London photoshoot. (See the RSA Flickr site which includes scans of the Society's Minute Books on the formation of the RPS). For further information see A.J. Stirling's study on 'Peter Le Neve Foster and photography'.¹²

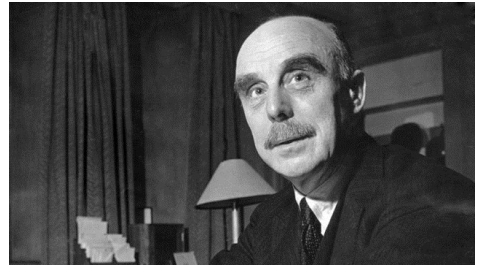
⁹ *Ibid*, vol.106 (1958), pp.367-373

¹⁰ *Ibid*, vol.118 (1970), pp.151-53

¹¹ *Ibid*, vol.131 (1983), pp.70-86

¹² *RSA Journal*, vol.142 (1994), pp.67-70

2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the death of the British civil servant and public relations expert Sir Stephen Tallents (1884-1958). As Secretary of the Empire Marketing Board (1926-33) Tallents exercised his flair for public relations. E. McKnight Kauffer, RDI (1890-1954) was one of the artists he commissioned to produce a series of large posters promoting British and Empire products. He told RSA Fellows about his involvement in



the birth of British documentary film in his 1946 lecture on the subject. When he moved to the GPO he took the film unit with him and they produced many classic documentaries, including *Night Mail*. He became the BBC's first Controller of Public Relations and Deputy Director General under Lord Reith. In 1948 he was elected FRSA and took an active interest in the Society's work. He gave a second lecture on 'Advertising and Public Relations Today'; was Chairman of the Jewellery section of the Student Design Bursaries scheme, where he demonstrated his great interest in the promotion of good advertising and good design (he was an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Industrial Artists). His skill as an administrator made him a welcome addition to the RSA Council, to which he was elected in 1954. His last major service was to serve as Chairman of the Society's Committee which organised the two Conferences on 'Perils and Prospects in Town and Country'.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE SESSION 2013-2014 ARE NOW DUE

Members are requested to send their £5 annual subscription to the Honorary Secretary, who would also welcome donations to the Group's funds. Please make your cheques payable to 'William Shipley Group' and post to Susan Bennett, WSG, 47 Barringers Court, Neats Acre, Ruislip HA4 7JP

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