THE CHIPPENDALE SOCIETY

President: the Marquess of Zetland

NEWSLETTER No. 167
Autumn 2026

www.thechippendalesociety.co.uk



Photo: Nick Haynes

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The photograph above shows Chippendale Society members on the steps of Dalmahoy House during this year's highly successful September tour. 28 members attended and over four days in and around Edinburgh we saw houses by William Bruce, William Adam, Robert Adam, James Adam and Sir William Chambers. We climbed many 'turnpike' stairs, saw a plethora of fine Scottish 18th century furniture, one outstanding Chippendale collection and two subscriber copies of the 1754 *Director*. There were, in addition, innumerable fine paintings and works of art.

The Society is indebted to the hard work of our events organiser, Caroline Jacques, and to committee member David Jones, who jointly organised the trip. A full report will appear in the next Newsletter.

This Newsletter includes reports of the Society's other summer events and an application form for our forthcoming Christmas Lunch, which will be held at a new venue, *The General Tarleton* at Ferrensby. See back pages for for details.

Adam Bowett, Chairman

Dr David Bower (1937 – 2026)

We were saddened to learn of the death on 30th April of our long-standing colleague and friend David Bower, following a short illness. He and his late wife Elizabeth came to the Society in their retirement and made a significant contribution through their work and support.

David was born in Bradford in 1937, the son of Dorothy and Walter Bower, Head Gardener for Bradford City Parks. He won scholarships to Bradford Grammar School, where he was an exact contemporary with David Hockney, and to Oriel College, Oxford, where he read Physics, and later a PhD in spectroscopy. At Oxford he met – across the tennis courts - Elizabeth, a St Hugh's graduate, then working in administration at St Hilda's College They married in 1962.

After teaching for a year at Rugby School, David moved with Elizabeth to Leeds in 1963, when he was appointed an Assistant Lecturer in the University's Physics Department. Over the next thirty years he built a distinguished career in teaching and research, specialising in polymer spectroscopy; his publications in this and related fields total about 60 titles. He was closely involved in establishing the prestigious Interdisciplinary Research Centre for polymer scientists at Leeds, Bradford and Durham universities. Elizabeth continued working in academic administration in Leeds, later becoming Registrar at the School of Dentistry. Their daughter Helen worked as a curator at Temple Newsam 1994-2003. She is now an artist and textile historian living in North Carolina, USA.

In retirement David and Elizabeth pursued other interests. Elizabeth became involved with Leeds NADFAS and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, while David turned to cartographic history, publishing a further 14 titles, and completing a BA in French, adding to his studies in German and Russian. They also shared a love of long-distance travel and visits to British country houses. Elizabeth was introduced to the Chippendale Society in the early 2000s through Helen's connection with Temple Newsam. At the time the Society urgently needed help with its membership records, and Elizabeth became a committee member and *de facto* officer, bringing to the task her excellent administrative skills. David soon joined her, and together they carefully reorganised the membership procedures, and, among other duties, took on the thankless job of ensuring subscriptions were paid on time. David also put his considerable IT skills to work in helping the old-style Newsletter editor to format and distribute the old-style publication. He was also closely involved in the new website. Both became regular participants in the Society's events, making many new friends and offering generous informal support. One example is especially memorable: this writer remains grateful that David stepped in to read his short paper at the joint Furniture History Society/Chippendale Society symposium in 2018 after the author was laid low with bronchitis. Following Elizabeth's illness and death in 2016, David continued with the membership duties until Margaret Pullan took over.

David's was a remarkable and productive life; that of a true polymath who shared his gifts generously and widely.

James Lomax

EVENTS REPORTS

Lotherton Hall, Monday 23 March 2026

Located about ten miles east of central Leeds, Lotherton Hall is an Edwardian house filled with art treasures. Once home to the Gascoigne family, this charming country house was given to the City of Leeds in 1968 and is now part of Leeds Museums and Galleries. It boasts a fine collection of decorative arts including some superb furniture. Our tour was led by the Curator of the Chippendale Society, Adam Toole, who is also the Curator of both Lotherton Hall and Temple Newsam House. Caroline Newton, the Assistant Curator of Lotherton, also accompanied us.

The tour began in the Drawing Room (**1**), where the spectacular Vile and Cobb tables and pier glasses from Croome Court (1761) are displayed. Several pieces of the famous Titus Salt furniture by Leeds firm Marsh & Jones are here (c.1865-7), including two grand pianos designed by Charles Bevan in a muscular Gothic Revival style, They are constructed with exotic materials such as satinwood, amboyna, and other inlaid woods. The instruments were restored to playing condition in 1999 with funding from the Friends of Leeds City Museums.

The tour continued into the Hall, where a beautifully carved pair of tables is attributed to the precocious Gothic revival designer A W N Pugin. There was also a notable side table with marble and *pietra dure* top designed by William Burges in 1867 for his Buckingham Street house. Onwards to the Boudoir, where an ornately carved Chippendale revival mirror was found, along with a walnut and mahogany Davenport writing desk believed to have belonged to Florence Nightingale (she was second cousin to Gwendolen Gascoigne). The tour continued through the Medal Room and the Library. The latter contained a stool from the famous Windsor Castle suite of 1827-8 designed by Pugin and made by Morel and Seddon. In the Dining Room was part of the Gascoigne bequest of Gillows furniture from Parlington Hall. This included an extending 'Imperial' dining table and a horseshoe-shaped 'social' table, both made about 1810.

Upstairs we were led through a suite of bedrooms containing a wide variety of furniture, including a

wardrobe by Collier & Plucknett, a high-backed chair by Rennie Mackintosh and elements of the Titus Salt bedroom suites. Among the more recent acquisitions were 20th century pieces by Ernest Gimson, Peter Waals, and Gordon Russell.

The tour ended with a look at Lotherton's new exhibition, entitled *Botanically Beautiful*, which was curated by Caroline Newton. The exhibition featured decorative objects inspired by flowers, fruit, leaves and trees, among which was the Chippendale Society's marquetry table from the Circular Dressing Room at Harewood House. William Morris wallpapers from the Sanderson Archive were displayed alongside glorious ceramics and silver, intricate Spitalfields silks and innovative furniture by Voysey and Pugin.

Caroline Jacques



1 Lotherton Hall, The Drawing Room
Photo: Leeds Museums

Manchester Art Gallery and John Rylands Library, 9 July 2026

England's rainiest city was basking in hot sunshine when we convened in the café of Manchester Art Gallery to meet our host for the morning, curator Jennifer McKellar. Jenny conceived and curated the exhibition *Won't Sit Still*, featuring items from MAG's extensive furniture and lighting collections. The colourful and intriguing display mimicked the arrangement of furniture in the Museum's stores, with three tiers of furniture, mostly but not exclusively chairs, arranged on brightly lit racks (**2**). The aim was to encourage visitors to look at furniture in a new way, as abstract and intriguing forms rather than mere accessories to living.

The exhibits ranged in date from the 17th to the 21st centuries and included such ground-breaking designs such as Gerrit Reitveld's *Red and Blue Chair* of 1917 and Gerald Summers' one-piece plywood armchair of 1934. Neither of these was commercially successful, unlike Chippendale's parlour chair from Plate 12 of the 1754 *Director*, of which many versions survive and one of which was also on display.

Furniture by Chippendale junior was represented by an armchair of c.1785 from a suite originally installed at Apsley House, London. Several pieces designed and made in Manchester were included in the exhibition, notably a sideboard designed by J. Henry Sellars (1861-1954), whose work had much in common with his contemporaries Edwin Lutyens and Ernest Gimson. A more international flavour was provided by an intriguing circular table, inlaid with a map of the world in coloured woods and metal, and with mechanical functions which have yet to be fully understood. The presence on the map of the short-lived Republic of Texas (1836-45) and the Indian province of Sind acquired by Britain in 1843 allow

2 Manchester Art Gallery Exhibition *Won't Sit Still* Photo: Adam Bowett



the table to be closely dated, but its purpose and place of manufacture remain, for the time being, a mystery.

Jenny is to be congratulated on this exhibition which, possibly for the first time in MAG's history, puts furniture at the centre of its displays. In doing so she has demonstrated that the furniture collection can be a real asset which in future can be used to enhance and broaden the gallery's appeal. To complement the furniture a few paintings had been selected from the gallery's permanent collection, showing furnished interiors at different periods.

Of course, paintings are MAG's chief strength, and the collection of pre-Raphaelite work is simply outstanding. We had chance to look at these and other artworks after our buffet lunch, before walking a short distance to the John Rylands Library for our second visit of the day. Our guides here were visitor services manager Dominic Marsh and Chippendale Society committee member Tim Phelps. Tim is an ICON registered conservator who has been keeping the library's 600 bookcases in good order for the past twenty years.

EVENTS REPORTS cont.

Even for those who had been before, our visit to the newly refurbished building was a revelation. The recent work includes a new entrance and visitor centre, together with state-of-the-art storage and conservation facilities, but the real star was the original building, designed by Basil Champneys and built between 1889 and 1899. Having been comprehensively cleaned and with new lighting and exhibition spaces, the library looked splendid. It is a neo-Gothic tour de force, a testament not only to Champney's architectural vision but also to the forceful personality of John Rylands' widow, Enriqueta Augustina Rylands, whose insistence on quality is manifest in every detail. The deep red Cumbrian sandstone exterior gives way inside to more nuanced pink, red and buff stone and fine oak woodwork. In the principal reading room, soaring arches and Gothic windows (with stained glass designed by C. E. Kempe), stone tracery and oak bookcases were embellished with carved detail of wonderful virtuosity (**3 & 4**). At the level of the first-floor gallery were a series of statues by Robert Bridgeman & Sons of Litchfield, representing the intellectual history of mankind.

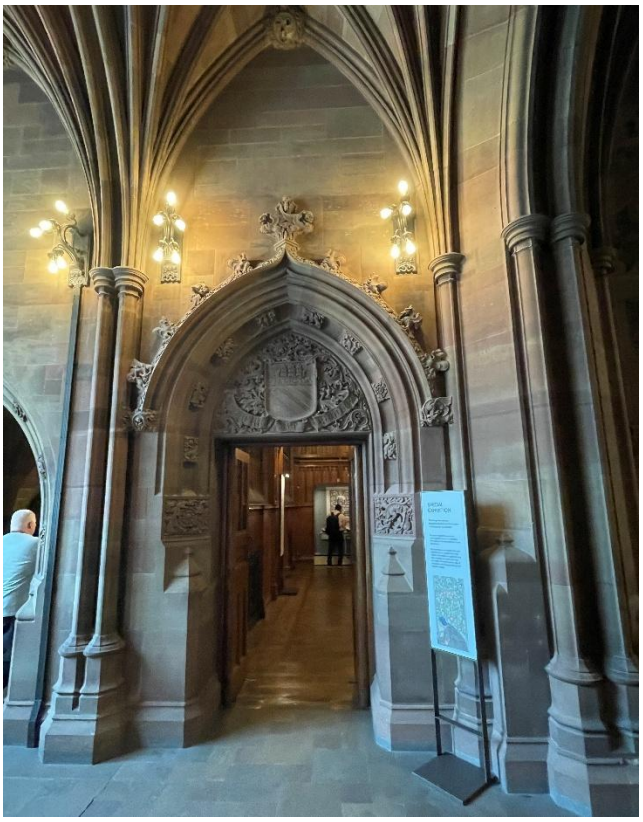
Although designed in the neo-Gothic style, with more than a nod to Britain's great medieval cathedrals, the Library was from its inception a thoroughly modern building. It was one of the first public buildings in Manchester to be built with electric lighting installed from the beginning, and the original bronze light fittings and switches are still *in situ*. Power was supplied by a gas-fired generator. The building also had an air filtration system, designed to keep Manchester's notoriously sooty air from damaging the books, and to that end the bronze bookcase doors were designed with integral seals to protect their precious contents. As a finale to our visit, Tim Phelps gave us a detailed exposition of the doors' construction and locking systems, his knowledge honed by two decades experience in dealing with their sophisticated but delicate mechanisms. Any slight settling of the building was liable to render the locks inoperable – a problem which Champneys had probably not foreseen but which keeps Tim returning yearly.

Although the Library's collections were not the focus of our visit, it would be remiss not to mention them. In 1900 the library had about 70,000 books; there are now more than 250,000, and over a million manuscripts and archival items, ranging from a 1,700 year-old fragment of the *Odyssey* to a collection of Alan Turing's correspondence and working papers. The Library is ranked among the world's top five university collections, having become part of the University of Manchester in 1972.

Adam Bowett



3 & 4 John Rylands Library, the Main Reading Room (left) and the entrance to the exhibition room (below). Photos: Adam Bowett



The Bowes Museum and Raby Castle, Wednesday 5 August 2026

The Bowes Museum is a French *belle epoque* mansion perched on a hillside outside Barnard Castle in County Durham. It is an improbable sight, to say the least. It was built for John Bowes to house the collections assembled by him and his wife, Josephine, a French actress. Begun in 1869, it was not officially opened until 1892, by which time both John and Josephine were dead. It was taken on by Durham County Council in 1956 and has been a registered charity since 2000.

The Bowes' collections are enormously varied and have been greatly enhanced by acquisitions in recent years. We were there principally to look at the furniture collection, which includes both British and Continental pieces. Among the latter is a desk/dressing table formerly belonging to Marie Antoinette and wonderful marquetry panel from the workshop of A.C. Boulle, remade into a cabinet in the London workshop of Mayhew and Ince and originally at Warwick Castle. The remarkable Mary Eleanor Bowes cabinet, made about 1780, was designed to house Mary's botanical collection. Veneered in burr elm and applied with carved boxwood classical medallions, its hollow legs contain lead water cisterns which originally drained by taps into a basin supported between the legs (**5**).

Some of the finest exhibits in the furniture gallery come from Gilling Castle, near Ampleforth. This includes Georgian panelling and doorcases, and a fine set of walnut-framed chairs with their original needlework upholstery. Also noteworthy was a mahogany bookcase, designed by Thomas Hope and installed at his house Deepdene, in Surrey.



5 The Mary Eleanor Bowes Cabinet, c.1780.

6 15th century Flemish Altarpiece, recently conserved and mounted in a new frame by Rupert McBain Workshop.

Photos: The Bowes Museum



EVENTS REPORTS cont.

No visit to the Bowes is complete without witnessing the operation of the life-size mechanical silver swan created in 1773 by Joseph Cox. This we duly did, but afterwards we were fortunate to see the opening of the 15th century Flemish altarpiece, its panels recently conserved and remounted in a frame designed and made in the workshop of Chippendale Society member Rupert McBain (**6**). When opened, the panels revealed a carved oak centrepiece depicting scenes from the Crucifixion. It is acknowledged a masterpiece of Flemish art

A short drive took us to Raby Castle, where we enjoyed lunch in the newly opened visitor centre and café.

From about 1300 Raby was the primary seat of the powerful Neville family, and in 1378 John de Neville was given a license to crenellate, allowing much of the present fortress to be built. The Nevilles, staunch Catholics, were deeply implicated in the failed Rising of the North against Elizabeth I in 1569, and as a consequence they forfeited Raby, which was later bought by Henry Vane (1589-1655) whose family still own it. Much of the public route through Raby takes in the 19th century interiors created by architect William Burn, but we went a different way. We began in the private ground-floor rooms of Harry Vane, 11th Baron Barnard (d. 2016), redolent of pipe smoke and furnished with comfortable, worn armchairs and sporting prints. From there we ascended through narrow passages and winding stairs to a suite of abandoned 18th century state rooms along the west side of the Castle, created within the medieval curtain wall by the architect Daniel Garret (d.1753). These were a revelation; oddly shaped rooms with deeply set windows were fitted with Palladian fireplaces and early rococo plaster ceilings. They had been unused for years, and most of the smaller rooms were still furnished with late Victorian bedroom furniture. The former Drawing and Dining Rooms were empty, except of stored lumber. There was one exception, however; in one corner of the Drawing Room, draped with protective paper, was a four-post bedstead furnished with the most remarkable early 18th century hand-painted Chinese silk hangings (**7**). The colours – red, blue, green, yellow - stood out vibrantly against the white ground. Oddly, the design was European, perhaps derived from Jean Berain, and the headcloth depicted *The Disarming of Cupid*, which must have been wholly unintelligible to the Chinese artists who painted it. It is thought that the bed may have belonged to Anne Vane (1710-36), sister of the 1st Earl of Darlington and mistress of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

We spent our remaining time on the public route. Since coming into the ownership of the present generation of Vanes these rooms have been re-ordered and rationalised, and the great Barons' Hall, re-roofed by the architect William Burn in the 1840s, had been much improved by removing most of its accumulated furniture, leaving a few choice pieces and a set of gigantic white porcelain Meissen birds to set them off (**8**).

Adam Bowett



7 Bed with Chinese silk hand painted hangings, c. 1730

8 Porcelain pelican by Johann Joachim Kaendler, c.1732, on a calamander wood table by Morel & Hughes c.1815
Photos: Raby Castle



APPLICATION FORM

Christmas lunch at The General Tarleton

Wednesday, 9 December 2026

This year's lunch will take place at a new venue, The General Tarleton at Ferrensby, near Knaresborough. It is an award-winning pub owned by Tommy Banks, chef of the Michelin-starred Black Swan in at Oldstead. The cost of £71 includes tea/coffee on arrival, a short talk before lunch by Dr Adam Bowett and a three-course lunch plus tea/coffee and chocolates. Please make your choices from the menu overleaf, making it clear if booking for more than one person, and submit **by post or email by 13th November**.

Payment may be made by cheque, BACS or Paypal. Cheques should be made out to The Chippendale Society and sent with the application form, including your menu choices, to Caroline Jacques, 22 Westfield Avenue, Yeadon, Leeds, LS19 7NG.

BACS payments should be made to The Chippendale Society, Sort Code 20-37-13, Account Number 03389952.

Paypal payments can be made here: https://thechippendalesociety.co.uk/current-events

If paying by BACS please let Caroline know your menu choices at carolinejanejacques@gmail.com or phone her on 07854846771

Please assume you have a place unless you hear to the contrary. Meet at 11.30 am at The General Tarlton, Boroughbridge Road, Ferrensby, HG5 0PZ. Tel: 01423 297050. There is parking at the pub.

I would like to reserve…….. places for the Christmas lunch. I enclose a cheque to the value

of £…….. / have paid by BACS / have paid by Paypal.

Name/s……..

Address……

……..

……..

email……..

phone……

Please indicate any food allergies …….

See next page for Menu

APPLICATION FORM cont

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2026

MENU

Starter

Parsnip & chestnut soup with sourdough croutons

Crayfish & prawn cocktail

Duck liver parfait, mulled wine jelly & toasted brioche

Main

Roasted turkey ballotine, chestnut and sage stuffing & pig in blanket

Pan-fried Chalkstream trout, wilted spinach, trout roe & dill sauce

Potato & Old Winchester cheese gratin, truffle sauce

Slow-cooked beef featherblade, mashed potato, bourguignon sauce

Dessert

Chocolate pot, almond crumb, clementine sorbet, honeycomb

Sticky toffee Christmas cake, clotted cream ice-cream, brandy custard

Sourdough treacle tart, caramelised apple, stem ginger ice-cream

Tea, coffee and chocolates