

THE CHIPPENDALE SOCIETY



President: the Marquess of Zetland

NEWSLETTER No. 166

www.thechippendalesociety.co.uk

May 2026

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NEWSLETTER
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in
ENGLAND

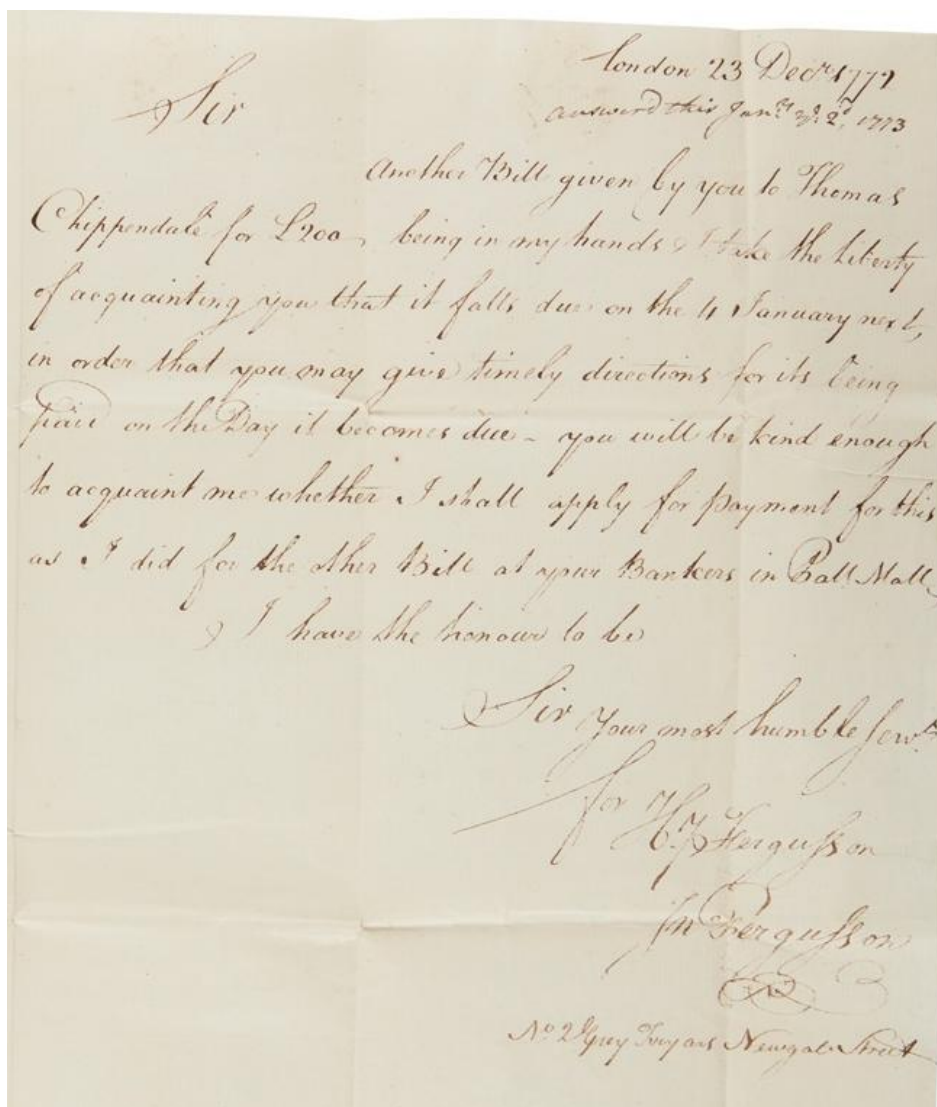
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PLEASE APPLY
IN THE FIRST INSTANCE,
to
THE CHIPPENDALE SOCIETY
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Please note: this an honorary position and carries no emolument other than the satisfaction of furthering the aims of the Society

A LETTER FROM JOHN FERGUSON TO SIR ROWLAND WINN

The Society has recently added several Chippendale related letters to its collection. Purchased on separate occasions from different sources, each has significance that adds to our knowledge of the Chippendale firm during the lifetimes of father and son. Now that all have been catalogued and housed at Temple Newsam, the committee has decided that it would be useful to explain the importance of these letters in a series of short Newsletter pieces. This is the first.



London 23 Decr. 1772

Answered this Jany. 2d 1773

Sir,

Another Bill given by you to Thomas Chippendale for £200, being in my hands I take the Liberty of acquainting you that it falls due on 4th January next, in order that you may give timely directions for its being paid on the Day it becomes due - you will be kind enough to acquaint me whether I shall apply for payment for this as I did for the other bill at your bankers in Pall Mall.

I have the honour to be

Sir, Your most humble Servant
 for H J Ferguson
 Jno Ferguson
 No 2 Grey Fryars Newgate Street

A LETTER FROM JOHN FERGUSON TO SIR ROWLAND WINN cont

The letter appeared in an auction of *Rare Books, Manuscripts, Maps & Photographs Auction* at Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh 21 June 2023, and was bought on behalf of the Chippendale Society by Thomas Heneage.

It is an application for payment of a promissory note given by Sir Rowland Winn of Nostell Priory, near Pontefract, to Thomas Chippendale senior and passed to Henry Ferguson and Son of Newgate Street, London. A promissory note is very similar to a bill of exchange, but more likely to be used for post-dated instalments. It requires the same details as a bill of exchange, the addressee's name (the creditor), plus the amount and date of repayment, and the signature of the debtor who will make the future payment.

Because this letter is not part of the Winn/Chippendale correspondence in the Nostell archive, it provides a useful sidelight on Chippendale's Nostell commission and the parties involved. Sir Rowland Winn and his Swiss wife Sabine d'Hervert were important and particularly demanding patrons of the Chippendale firm, buying furniture worth around £2200 (about £440,000 using the rough general inflation multiplier for current value) for Nostell Priory and their London home at 11 St James's Square between June 1766 and October 1771. Henry Ferguson and his son John were whalebone merchants based in London and members of the wealthy Ferguson family of merchants from Kirkcaldy, Fife. They traded in *baleen*, the soft bone from a whale's palate that could be pressed into mouldings, particularly for picture frames. Henry Ferguson was an executor of the will of Thomas Chippendale's first Scottish financial partner James Rannie. He became a sleeping partner in the Chippendale firm at some time in 1771, with a view to reclaiming the capital with which Rannie had underwritten the business until his death in 1766.

To put the letter into context, Winn owed money to the firm for furniture that had been completed and delivered in 1768. The account was still unsettled in late 1772 and other customers, including Lascelles of Harewood and Knatchbull of Mersham le Hatch, had not paid for their extensive commissions. Meanwhile, Chippendale was under great pressure to pay Rannie's executors acting on behalf of family and creditors in Scotland who were demanding swift settlement of legacies and debts due to them. Ferguson stepped in to recover the money but also to keep the firm in business.

An indication of Chippendale's predicament is shown in a letter to Winn written on 3 March 1769 in which Chippendale declares he is 'oblig'd to make up £500 this week to pay the Executors of Mr Rannie my late Partner. His Brother is come to Town from Scotland to settle accounts with me and other people, which must be done this week.'

Winn's preferred method of payment was by promissory note that could be passed on to a creditor or discounted with a banker. His usual instalment was for £200 with a promise to honour the note after six months, but the Nostell letters reveal that he failed to honour his notes on several occasions. A letter of 5 July 1770, for example, states that one of Winn's bills had bounced and the banker was holding Chippendale responsible for payment. Chippendale pleaded with Winn, saying 'I shall Certainly be arrested for it and I beg Sir Rowland that you will not let that happen to me.'

Compared with Thomas Chippendale's often desperate pleadings, Ferguson's firm but polite requests for settlement seem to have been effective, and this letter is interesting as a contrasting foil to the Chippendale/Winn correspondence in the Nostell archive. It is an illustration of the use of promissory notes, which appears to have been common in the eighteenth century due to a shortage of circulating currency, but more likely as a method amongst aristocratic clients of delaying payment for goods. The letter tells us, also, a little more about Henry Ferguson, Thomas Chippendale's third Scottish partner, along with James Rannie and Thomas Haig. It shows that he was in business with his son John, who is, in this letter, the signatory, but it is not known if Chippendale used the firm's whalebone in his furnishings. What is more probable is that Ferguson, a known associate of James Rannie, was simply a member of the circle of affluent Scots who kept the Chippendale firm solvent throughout the eighteenth century.

David Jones



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Edinburgh, 21-24 September 2024

This year's autumn tour will be based at the MacDonald Houston House hotel, a former 16th - century tower house set in 22 acres of grounds a few miles to the west of Edinburgh. It will be led by Chippendale Society committee member David Jones, the leading authority on historic Scottish furniture and an authority on Chippendale's work in Scotland. As usual we will travel by Hargreaves coaches driven by our outstanding driver, John Farren.

On **Monday 21 September** we will travel from Yorkshire to Paxton House near Berwick, stopping at Berwick Rail Station to pick up members meeting us there. Paxton stands on a bluff overlooking the river Tweed, looking south over the border to England. It was built 1758-63 to the designs of John and James Adam and furnished largely by Thomas Chippendale senior and junior, with well over 100 pieces of furniture surviving. In the early 19th century more furniture was added by the Edinburgh firm of William Trotter and much of this also survives. After lunch in Paxton's restaurant, our special tour will be led by David Jones and Paxton Curator Fiona Salvesen Murrell. From Paxton we will head to Houston House to settle in. After dinner David Jones will give us an illustrated introduction to our tour, discussing the people, places and furniture and we will encounter during the week.

On **Tuesday 22 September** we begin with a short stop at Dalmahoy House to view the exterior before going into Edinburgh to the National Museum of Scotland. Here we will be led by David Jones and museum curator Stephen Jackson. We will see, among many other things, one of the spectacular Dundas chairs, designed by Robert Adam and made by Thomas Chippendale for Sir Lawrence Dundas's London house in 1765.

On leaving the National Museum we will pass by Dundas House, designed by William Chambers for Sir Lawrence Dundas in 1771 (and now the Royal Bank of Scotland), on our way to lunch at the famous Abbotsford Bar, with its fabulous Edwardian interior.

After lunch we drive to Arniston House, designed by William Adam in 1726 for Robert Dundas of Arniston. There are intriguing Chippendale connections here, and the Dundas family treasure their original copy of the 1754 *Director*. The house has furniture based on Chippendale's designs but probably made in Edinburgh. Fine family portraits by Sir Henry Raeburn and Allan Ramsay remain in the house, which is still a family home.

On **Wednesday 23 September** we visit Newhailes, a fine Palladian house on the outskirts of Musselburgh. It was created in its present form by Sir



Paxton House, Berwickshire
Photo: Paxton House



Armchair, designed by Robert Adam and made in the
Chippendale workshop, 1766
Photo: National Museum of Scotland

James Dalrymple (1692-1751) and descended by inheritance until left empty after the death of Sir Mark Dalrymple in 1976. When acquired by the National Trust in 1997 it was decided to retain, as far as possible, its surviving interiors and decorative schemes. The house has a fine collection of furniture and pictures, rococo plasterwork and original painted

FORTHCOMING EVENTS cont.



Newhailes, Musselburgh
Photo: The National Trust for Scotland

decoration. The Library here was once one of the largest private libraries in Europe. 7,000 volumes were given to the National Library of Scotland in lieu of tax in 1976.

From Newhailes we go to Gosford, having lunch on the way at *Falko Konditormeister*, a German bakery and café in the heart of Haddington Burgh.

Gosford House, on the coast of East Lothian, is the family seat of the Earls of Wemyss and March. It was acquired by the 7th Earl in 1784 and rebuilt to Robert Adam's designs between 1790 and 1800. Many changes were made subsequently, but the house retains a fine art collection, an original subscription copy of the *Director* and important furniture by Scottish makers.

On **Thursday 24 September** we make a leisurely start and drive a short distance to Hopetoun House, the former home of the Marquesses of Linlithgow. It is now managed by The Hopetoun Preservation Trust

Hopetoun House, North Queensferry
Photo: Hopetoun House Preservation Trust



Arniston House, Midlothian
Photo: Arniston House



Gosford House, East Lothian
Photo: Gosford House

FORTHCOMING EVENTS cont.

set up in 1974 by the 3rd Marquess of Linlithgow. It is the family home of Andrew, 11th Earl of Hopetoun, and his wife Skye.

The house was begun in 1699-1700 and hugely extended by William Adam a generation later. Its interiors were finished by John and Robert Adam in the 1750s. The collections at Hopetoun include furniture by some of Edinburgh's best furniture makers, as well as paintings, tapestries and many other works of art.

After leaving Hopetoun we begin our journey home, stopping to visit Abbotsford, the former home of Scotland's most celebrated author, Sir Walter Scott. The house is beautifully situated on the banks of the Tweed and manages to retain something of its humble farmhouse origins despite Scott's worldwide fame. It is furnished much as Scott left it, with unique collections of arms and armour, works of art and furniture made to Scott's specifications.

We aim to be back in Leeds by 8.00 pm, dropping off those members travelling by rail *en route*.



Hopetoun House, the Red Drawing Room
Photo: The Hopetoun House Preservation Trust

Abbotsford House, Melrose

Photo: The Abbotsford Trust



APPLICATION FORM

Study tour to Edinburgh, 21-24 September 2026

The cost of this tour is £765 per person sharing a double room or £865 for a single occupancy. This includes all coach travel, dinner, bed and breakfast at Houston House hotel, all admission fees and tours. A deposit of £100 is required by **15 June 2025** and the balance of £665 for a person sharing a double/twin room and £765 for a single occupancy will be payable by **20 July 2025**. An application form can be found below, or you can apply online [here](#).

Methods of payment

By post Cheques payable to 'The Chippendale Society' should be sent with your application form to Caroline Jacques, 7 Hillside Rise, Guiseley, Leeds LS20 9DJ.

Online BACS payments should be made to The Chippendale Society. Sort Code 20-37-13, Account No. 03389952. Please name your payment 'Edinburgh Tour'.

For enquires contact Caroline Jacques at carolinejanejacques@gmail.com Phone no 07854 846771

Please reserve me places for the Edinburgh tour

I enclose a cheque for £..... made out to 'The Chippendale Society'

I have made BACS transfer to The Chippendale Society for £.....

Names(s).....

Address.....

Tel..... email.....

Dietary Requirements.....

Coach pick-up times, please tick your preference. If any member has difficulty meeting the coach at any of the pick-up points, please phone Caroline.

7.30 am onwards pick-ups between Addingham and Leeds by arrangement with Caroline

8.15-9.00am Leeds ring road pick-ups by arrangement with Caroline

Approx 11 am break for loos &c. *en route*

12.45 pm Berwick-upon-Tweed rail station pick up

1.00 pm lunch at Paxton House

2.00-3.45 Paxton House tour

5.15 pm Edinburgh Waverley pick-up

Please note that the itinerary may be subject to minor changes and that although we endeavour to re-imburse members if unable to attend, we cannot always do so. It is important that you are adequately insured.