

THE CHIPPENDALE SOCIETY



President: the Lord St Oswald

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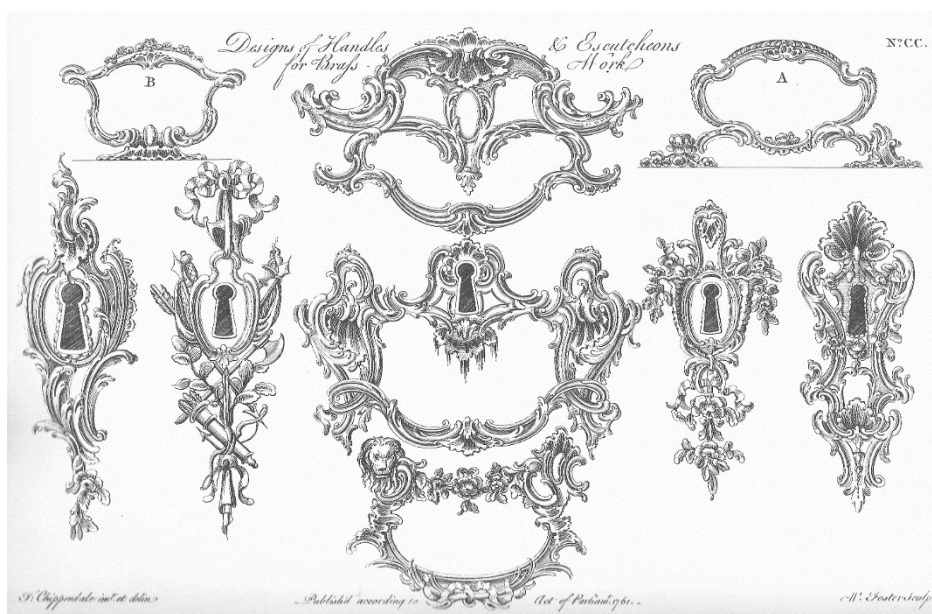


Plate CC from the 1762 edition of *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*, 'Designs of Handles and Scutcheons, of Brass-Work, for Cabinet-Work. A and B are Handles for Tea-Chests'.

USE OF EMAIL

Please help us to keep costs to a minimum by requesting that the Newsletter be sent to you by email in future. Please contact dib.chippoc@enterprise.net

NEW CHIPPENDALE SOCIETY WEBSITE

As promised in the last Newsletter, the Society's new website is now online and you are encouraged to visit it. There is

a very large amount of information about the Chippendales and their work, with links to other collections. Please let members of the committee know what you think about the site and if you have any suggestions for changes or additions also pass these on, but do not expect immediate implementation even if the committee thinks the ideas are good.

In this connection, we are looking for an assistant to the web officer and volunteers would be welcomed.

CHRISTMAS EVENT

Visit to Bramham Park and Christmas lunch at the Crown Inn, Roecliffe Monday 7th December 2015

With the kind permission of Mr and Mrs Lane Fox members of the Chippendale Society are invited to a private visit to Bramham Park followed by a festive lunch at the Crown Inn, Roecliffe.

Although most famous for its magnificent formal landscape (which will not be seen on this occasion) Bramham is an equally fascinating house. The names of various

famous architects have been suggested but none are wholly convincing. It was probably the brain child of the owner, Robert Benson, 1st Lord Bingley, Queen Anne's highly successful diplomat and ambassador to Spain. His successors, the Lane Fox family have lived here ever since. Although badly damaged by fire in 1828 the house retains fine sporting pictures and portraits, good English and French furniture, porcelain and silver. (See separate application form.)

CHIPPENDALE SOCIETY VISIT TO RABY CASTLE AND ROKEBY PARK

20 AUGUST 2015

RABY CASTLE



Seen from the short approach road, Raby is a formidable sight, a grey stone medieval fortress rising from green parkland. But the view is deceptive, because it never was a castle in the true sense of the word. Rather, it was a very substantial defensible house, built in the 14th century by the Nevill family who lived there until dispossessed in 1569 by Elizabeth I for their part in the Rising of the North. In 1626 Raby was bought from the Crown by Sir Henry Vane, of whom the present owner, the 11th Lord Barnard, is a direct descendant.

Since the beginning of the 18th century the castle has been substantially altered in several phases; first, by James Paine in 1750s; second, by John Carr in the 1770s and 1780s; third, by William Burn in the 1840s. Despite these changes, the castle has retained and even added to its medieval character. For example, the extraordinary Entrance Hall, created by John Carr to allow family and guests to drive by carriage directly into the house, is one of the most dramatic and innovative Gothic revival interiors of its age, while William Burns' Barons' Hall and Octagonal Drawing Room are triumphant statements of Gothic and Jacobean revivalism respectively.

On leaving Carr's grand Entrance Hall we passed down a narrow passage and through a series of lobbies before entering the Small Drawing Room. Here, under a wonderful 18th century plasterwork ceiling of musical trophies, we saw an eclectic mix of 18th and 19th-century furniture and objects, both English and Continental, while on the walls was a fine array of sporting pictures by J.F. Herring, John Wootton and others. The panelled Library next door was a large wood-panelled room remodelled about 1750, also furnished with a range of styles and periods; among the highlights were a longcase clock by George Graham and two huge Chinese carved ivory ornamental pagoda towers. Two things particularly caught our attention; the first was a suite of late Regency chairs of outstanding quality, in the manner of Morel and Hughes, and made in solid kingwood with gilt-brass mounts. The second was a satinwood secretaire cabinet of c.1800 by Thomas Weeks, with its original mechanical barrel-organ in

the lower part. It is the only one of the seventeen known such cabinets in working order. In adjoining the Ante-Library was a fine Antwerp cabinet of about 1670, veneered with turtleshell, ebony, ivory and marquetry of various woods. Among the outstanding pictures were oils by David Teniers the Younger and Pieter de Hooch.

The Octagonal Drawing Room was William Burn's major achievement at Raby and, stepping into it, one felt that it must have looked much the same when first completed in the 1840s. Partly this was due to the fact that much of the furnishing – the pier tables, pier glasses and chandeliers – were original to the room, but it was also the result of careful and painstaking restoration in recent years. Indeed, the whole house is a testament to the care which the present owner has taken to preserve his family's home for future generations.

The Dining Room contained a large 'Imperial' dining table by Gillow and a set of Gillow's dining chairs, both dating from the 1820s, while either side of the fireplace was a pair of sideboard tables in the style of Thomas Hope. The walls were hung with family portraits by van Dyck, Lely and Reynolds, together with others by Cornelis de Vos, and Jacopo Amiconi.

Upstairs we passed through a series of family bedrooms before arriving at the Baron's Hall, the climax of our tour. This vast room, originally capable of accommodating seven hundred knights under a giant hammerbeam roof, has been much altered since the 14th century. John Carr first raised the floor by fifteen feet, to accommodate his new entrance hall below, and William Burn then lengthened it by fifty feet and re-roofed it. None of the original furnishings have survived. In their place was a range of different periods and styles, the most striking being the Gothic Revival tables in striped coromandel ebony, perhaps designed by AWN Pugin, and a large Regency suite with giltwood frames by Gillow. Covering part of the floor was the Raby Tapestry, a large 18th century needlework carpet said to have been worked by Lady Grace Fitzroy, wife of the 1st Earl of Darlington. Probably the most remarkable objects of all, however, were the giant Meissen porcelain birds, modelled by Johan Joachim Kandler for the Japanese Palace at Dresden about 1730.

On our way out we passed through the Kitchen, built about 1370 and surely one of the most remarkable rooms at Raby, albeit a purely functional one. This room was in continuous use from c.1370 until 1954. Its most notable feature is the vaulted ceiling centred by a large octagonal lantern which drew the heat, smoke and smells upward and out. At first floor level there were galleries in the immensely thick walls by which food was taken up to the Barons' Hall.

Adam Bowett

ROKEBY PARK

In the afternoon we proceeded to Rokeby, a quintessential neo-Palladian house built by an amateur architect for himself. In order to understand the arrangement of the house we gathered in front of the south façade where Sally Davies, the current administrator of the house, introduced the physical architecture and the personalities, Sir Thomas Robinson, J. S. Morritt and his son J.B.S. Morritt, who created and developed the house throughout the 18th century.

Sir Thomas Robinson inherited the Rokeby estate in 1720 and when he came of age a few years later (probably in 1723) he set about replacing the old house with a completely up-to-date and fashionable variant of the Palladian villa form. Robinson was clearly a skilled, enthusiastic and well-educated amateur architect and his friendship with Lord Burlington, Palladianism's chief patron and exponent in England, meant he was well placed to produce an interesting exemplar of this new style. Although the house was 'entirely fitted up to be warm and convenient' by 1731, Robinson continued to remodel the house to keep up with the latest fashions over the next twenty years. Robinson sold the estate in 1769 to J. S. Morritt. The house was advertised with its contents and Morritt certainly acquired many of the fixtures, furnishings and paintings. The house is still owned by the Morritt family today and over the years they have added many of their own treasures so sometimes identifying how and when objects came into the house can be difficult.

The Morritts also made changes to the house including the creation of a dining room. The overall design is attributed to John Carr of York and stylistically dates to the 1770s. There was an interesting discussion as to whether

some of the white painted furniture for room, a sideboard, pier tables and pedestals, could also have been designed by Carr.

The house contains many fascinating objects. Some of the most remarkable are a large series of textured needlework pictures based on oil paintings or prints by J. S. Morritt's eldest sister Anne. As regards furniture we were intrigued by several quirky designs such as the Chinese-inspired dining chairs in the breakfast room and the wine coolers in the dining room (Colonial?). We admired the workmanship of the 1930s reproductions by Malletts of the three exceptional pieces by William Vile that were sold to Queen Mary and are now in the Royal Collections. But perhaps the object that created the most interest was the font from the parish church which is now in the Saloon. Robinson designed the church but it was not completed when he sold the estate. However, the advertisement for the sale noted that it would be finished at Robinson's expenses and so presumably to his design. The font is in the form of a Graeco-Roman tripod known as an athenienne and the form and name seem to derive from a 1762 painting by Joseph-Marie Vien. It is not known whether Robinson designed the font or not but he would have certainly approved of its classical origins.

At the end of the visit a small group of us went in search of the picturesque river Greta to try and find the place where J. S. Cotman had stood to paint 'Greta Woods, North Yorkshire', a recent purchase by Leeds Art Galleries with the financial assistance of the Leeds Art Fund.

Sarah Nichols



The Saloon at Rokeby, with the copy of the Rokeby Venus