

The Chippendale Society

NEWSLETTER NO. 45.

OCTOBER 1985.



HONORARY OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT: Lady Elsie Stoddart-Scott.
CHAIRMAN: Andrew Firth.
SECRETARY: Simon Stell.
TREASURER: John Holdsworth.
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Tony Lumb.
CURATOR: Christopher Gilbert.

NOVEMBER EVENT. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH. 7.30 - 10.30 p.m.

Members will be delighted to hear that once again the Society has organised this highly popular event "Going for a Song", which in the past has proved very enjoyable and attracted a large audience. Please make a note of the date in your diary, bring your friends and spread the word around. A panel of experts led by Robert Aagaard (organising secretary of the Harrogate Antiques Fair) will look at and talk about a selection of antiques. Members of the audience may each bring two small antique items of furniture, silver, ceramics or decorative art on which they may ask the experts to express a private opinion (free of charge). There will be a Tombola, White Elephant, Book and Produce Stalls, a Raffle and a "Guess the date of the Antique" competition. Profits go to the Chippendale Society's purchase fund.

Admission at the door: £1
O.A.P's and students: 50p.

The success of the evening will depend upon members bringing along items to sell at the various stalls. However, articles donated to the tombola stand will need to be received early and may be left at Barclay's Bank during business hours

c/o Mr. J. Holdsworth
Barclays Bank Limited
2 Manor Square
Otley LS21 3AP.

There will also be a bar.

THE ANNUAL DINNER.

This again was a most enjoyable occasion held at the Otley Civic Centre. Our principle guest speaker was Councilor Patrick Crotty O.B.E and former Lord Mayor of Leeds. He greatly entertained us by giving an amusing account of his period of office as Lord Mayor, and we thank him for fulfilling this year, that which he was unable to do last year, because of illness. Christopher Gilbert, honorary curator of the Society further enhanced the occasion by talking briefly but interestingly about some items of the Thomas Chippendale Collection which were on display. We were particularly pleased with the marquetry table from Harewood House restored by David Hawkins. Ninety people attended the dinner.

JACK RHODES.

The death of Jack Rhodes shortly before the Annual Dinner in June signalled the passing of one of the principal founders of the Chippendale Society. His illness in the last few years of his life had been a source of anxiety to all who knew him and caused him to relinquish the office of Hon. Secretary which he had held since the inception of the Society. He continued to serve as a member of the committee. An appropriate tribute had, happily, been paid to him during his lifetime when Andrew Firth spoke in glowing terms of him, his family and his service to Otley in general, and our Society in particular, during his speech at the 1984 Annual Dinner. It is now right to pay our final farewell to him and to express to Winnie and her family our thanks for Jack's service to the Society coupled with our continuing good wishes to them.

RESTORATION IN PROGRESS.

The spectacular carved figure of a crane from the canopy of a domed bed from Harewood House, which the Society purchased a year ago with money raised from a public appeal, is currently being conserved in the workshop of Cliff Wright, who is removing a coating of Victorian gilding to reveal the original surface. This process should be completed before Christmas and will be paid for from a surplus from the appeal fund, and a special donation from the Sam Chippindale Foundation which has once again made generous contribution to this project.

In 1983 Lord Harewood gave the Society three bed cornices covered with exotic chintz which are all that remain from Chippendale's scheme for the Chinese bedchamber at Harewood House. They were found in a loft over the joiner's shop in a shocking state, but are of extreme rarity and the Society, as custodians, obviously has a responsibility to conserve them and are doing so with an astonishingly generous gift of £1,400 from one of our members. The best preserved cornice is being expertly treated at the Hampton Court Conservation Centre as a student project, which means the client is only charged one third of the full cost. The chintz is enriched with peony blossom, birds, prunus sprays, butterflies and bees.

The Tripod Pole Firescreen made by Chippendale for Harewood House circa 1770 which we acquired two years ago, was in a damaged condition. The missing elements are now being re-carved by Dick Reid of York. This work is being funded by the Sir George Martin Trust and the Museum and Art Gallery Service for Yorkshire. The firescreen is overlaid by Victorian gilding and the next step is to establish accurately its original livery of blue and gold.

THE CHIPPENDALE EXHIBITION AT THE HARROGATE ANTIQUE FAIR.

It is worth recording that a special exhibition at this year's fair featured a newly discovered picture frame made by Chippendale for Nostell Priory in 1767 at a cost of £34.10s (which exceeded his estimate by over £12). It had for long been thought that this spectacular frame had not survived, but Hugh Roberts of Christie's recently established that the existing surround of a painting of Cleopatra conformed to Chippendale's drawing for this frame; and he furthermore discovered in the attics the elaborate carved cresting and apron ornaments, which had been removed during the last century when the frame was partially restyled. This new find re-confirms that the last word has not been said about Chippendale's work even at such a well researched collection as that at Nostell Priory. Our Curator contributed a prefatory essay to the Fair handbook on this important re-discovery.

NEWLY DISCOVERED CHIPPENDALE FURNITURE.

Members will be interested to hear that Christie's have recently discovered and identified a distinguished pair of marquetry commodes which Thomas Chippendale supplied to William Constable of Burton Constable Hall in 1774. They are described in his bill as "two very neat commodes for the piers of Air Wood (sycamore veneer), very neatly inlaid with various other fine woods with folding doors and drawers within, cross bounded etc. £58". The identification is confirmed by the existence of paper labels in the drawers inscribed "William Constable, Miss Constable etc". These are unquestionably the most important documented pieces of Chippendale furniture to come to light since his bill, for supplying five extant beds at Petworth, emerged in 1977. They will be auctioned in New York in October 1985.

At the last A.G.M. Beatrice Greenwood was appointed Newsletter Editor. She would welcome any comments, contributions or suggestions which would make the newsletter interesting and exciting.

Please contact her at:-

103 Leysholme Crescent
Leeds LS12 4HH.
West Yorkshire.

Tel. Leeds (0532) 631105.

May I please remind members that subscriptions are due.

The membership secretary would like to bring to members' attention the fact that many subscriptions are now considerably overdue. Would they please send to :-

Mr. A. Lumb,
2, Montpellier Gardens,
Harrogate, HG1. 2TF.

If current membership fades, the cost of printing and postage will make it impossible to send out newsletters. Please don't let this happen. Send your subscription Now.