

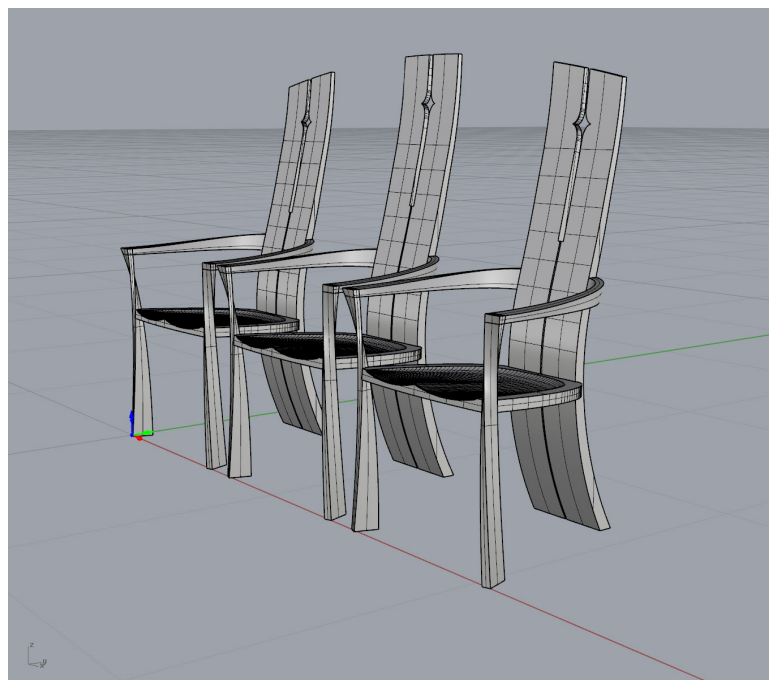
TEACHING THE MACHINE MANNERS: MAKING IN THE MODERN AGE | MAY TO 18 JULY 2015

The latest GRDM exhibition opened to great success at the private view held on 1st May with over 40 guests taking the opportunity of seeing the displays curated by Jennifer Pieperreit. They tell the story of Gordon Russell's journey as a furniture maker in the 1920s and his crusade to make 'decent furniture' for ordinary people in a modern age. It looks at his formative years in the Cotswolds, steeped in the Arts & Crafts Movement, and follows his development of new production methods that fostered a positive relationship between craft and industry.



Designer/maker Sean Feeney, who has helped the curator organise the display on the contemporary furniture company Waywood, in the upstairs gallery, writes:

Waywoods aim to create works that are unique and inspiring, yet harmonious and respectful of their material. Waywood use both traditional and cutting edge techniques in both their design and making, bringing together the ideals of the craft revival with the possibilities afforded by the digital age.



TALKS IN THE UPSTAIRS GALLERY

Craft in the Digital Age

On Monday 22nd June 2015 at 3.30pm Barnaby Scott, one of the few innovators experimenting with CNC machining and rapid prototyping, will talk about the use of modern digital technology combined with highly skilled hand craft in furniture making.

Barnaby Scott is a proprietor and founding partner of the Cotswold firm of furniture makers, Waywood. He is a Fellow of the Society of Designer-Craftsmen.

Tickets: £10 (includes a glass of wine). Payment at the door. email: grdmuseum@gmail.com to reserve a place.

THE COVENTRY CHAIR GOES BACK INTO PRODUCTION

Dick Russell originally designed this chair for Basil Spence's new Coventry Cathedral. Luke Hughes, who has been designing furniture for cathedrals and churches across the UK and USA for the last 25 years said, 'it's an iconic 1960s design, beautiful in itself, practical, hard-wearing and passing that key test, really important for churches, of minimizing visual impact on the interior. So many beautiful church interiors are ruined by inappropriate furniture'. His firm, Luke Hughes®, and the Gordon Russell Museum Trust have agreed an exclusive world-wide licensing deal which will benefit the Broadway-based museum from future royalties. The deal was recently signed by Luke Hughes, CEO of Luke Hughes® and Ray Leigh, former Chairman of Gordon Russell Ltd (and, before that, architectural partner of Dick Russell) who is one of the trustees and founders of the museum.

GRDM Trustee, Trevor Chinn, was formerly in charge of the original production at the Gordon Russell factory of this chair in its thousands. This design, he said, 'epitomises all the best traditions of the Arts and Crafts Movement with the practicalities of the machine age. Gordon used to say that we needed to teach the machine some manners – well, his brother Dick certainly did with this chair. It's marvellous to know this classic design will have new life'. Luke Hughes added that, to take into account modern production techniques that simply were not available fifty years ago, the stacking, linking chair has been upgraded. He is already receiving significant enquiries, especially from the United States, and we look forward to further news in the coming weeks.



Luke Hughes and Ray Leigh signing the licensing deal for the Coventry chair.

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL TAKES OVER THE MUSEUM



In November the Gordon Russell Design Museum welcomed 32 children for the National TakeOver Day initiative. They split into four groups and thoroughly enjoyed showing visitors around the exhibits, selling crafts and cards, drawing and designing chairs and even a bit of sanding and polishing their 'take home' paperweights. The GRDM is delighted that more young children have had an opportunity to experience the workings of their local museum and look forward to welcoming them in later years, when hopefully they will bring their own children into to see the collection.

GR MARRIAGE COFFER FOR JACK TANNER, ARTS EDUCATOR AND ETCHER

GRDM volunteer and collector Jonathan Gibbs spotted that this early Gordon Russell design was coming up for auction in March this year and he drew it to the attention of the Crafts Study Centre in Farnham as it had been originally commissioned by one of their Founder Trustees, arts educator, etcher and print-maker Robin Tanner (1908-1998). 'One seldom comes across an early piece of Gordon Russell with such a fascinating provenance as this Chesnut coffer', writes David Timson, GRDM volunteer working on the museum's archive. In the collection of letters offered for sale with this coffer Tanner tells his new bride that by the way, *Gordon Russell is making your chest for the hall after all - a much nicer one than Heal's, in chestnut, very modern and plain, for not much more. So I readily let him do it.* A sketch accompanied the letter. The coffer bears a Russell Workshops Label even though the company name had changed by the time it was made in 1931.

However, David Timson adds, 'that although Tanner brought several items from Gordon Russell, which were recorded when the contents of his old home were auctioned in 1996 there is no reference to this coffer, neither drawing, photograph or customer record in the GRDM museum archives. So who designed this beautifully made, strikingly plain, modernist piece? Is it a one-off, uncharacteristic late design by Gordon Russell for his friend, Tanner, or is it by his brother Dick or one of the staff designers, W.H. Russell or Eden Minns? Or was it made from a sketch by Tanner himself? Do get in touch with David Timson at the GRDM if you have any ideas or evidence relating to the designer of this coffer.

The Crafts Study Centre were able to acquire the coffer and it has joined other Gordon Russell items in their large collection of works and artifacts relating to Tanner at Farnham. See <http://www.studiohyde.com/csc/> for the online catalogue which accompanied the exhibition on Tanner curated by Jean Vacher, Collections Manager, Crafts Study Centre and <http://csc.ucreative.ac.uk/> for information on the Centre and its activities.

