

GRDM FRIENDS NEWSLETTER 9

SUMMER PARTY



Over 70 Friends joined the museum's volunteer team for the annual summer party on 20th July 2018 held, thanks to the generosity of Roger and Rose Marie Dudley, in the beautiful grounds of their Arts and Crafts home in Broadway. In spite of the onset of rain as the guests arrived at 6pm it was a delightful and convivial evening. Fortunately four gazebos had been borrowed from the Ebrington Fete which protected us from the downpour as we enjoyed some excellent canapés. Two hours later the rain, probably the first anyone had seen in over two months, finally stopped as the party ended.

The evening concluded with the presentation of a wonderful bouquet of flowers to retiring Chair of Trustees, Gabrielle Falkiner, in thanks for all her hard work in guiding the trust over the last three years. Jonathan Russell was welcomed as the incoming Chair and he spoke about his plans for the museum, which had been set up in honour of his grandfather's promotion of design quality for all.



Verity Elson Museum Manager



Gabrielle Falkiner Outgoing Chair

Our thanks to Carol Jackson for supplying the photographs

Forthcoming Talks

A HISTORY OF LEATHER AND THE NATIONAL LEATHER COLLECTION

Wednesday 21st November 2018 at 6pm

by Philip Warner MA



The use of leather is so ubiquitous that it is often taken for granted. In his talk Philip Warner MA, Curator will consider the worldwide story of leather which spans 4,500 years. From early Theban garments, the Dead Sea scrolls, Samuel Pepys wallet and the belts used to drive the industrial revolution, right through to the work of contemporary designers and craftspeople today. Over 70 years ago John Waterer RDI (a friend of Gordon Russell) co-founded the Museum of Leathercraft to collect, curate and share the world story of this remarkable material. In 2014 the collection was 're-discovered' in storerooms in Northampton and thanks to grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers, the National Leather Collection was established to preserve this legacy and present this remarkable resource in a way that delights, serves and educates on 'all things leather' for everyone, forever.

About the lecturer: Philip Warner is an experienced professional of twenty years standing. He developed his career working ostensibly for the National Trust and has managed some of their finest collections; Waddesdon Manor, Anglesey Abbey and Claydon Abbey to name but three. He has a Masters Degree in Decorative Arts and specialises in the interiors and decorative arts of France and England from the mid-17th century to the mid-19th centuries. Philip was appointed Curator of the National Leather Collection in May 2014.



[Click here for booking form and ticket price](#)

Date for your diary: Friday 5th April 2019 at 6pm talk by Mary Greensted on Ernest Gimson and the Barnsleys (title to be confirmed)

Freelance curator, lecturer and writer Mary Greensted was for many years responsible for the internationally important Arts & Crafts Movement exhibition held at Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. She contributed to the V&A's major exhibition on International Arts and Crafts and has written extensively on craft and design. She is a Trustee of Court Barn and has served as Chairman of the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen. Mary Greensted, an authority on Ernest Gimson, will talk to the Friends about this English architect-designer, who moved to Sapperton and set up workshops with the Barnsley brothers, and his influence on the young Gordon Russell.

Title and booking details to follow in due course but in the meantime **save the date**.

Forthcoming Visits

HANDS of High Wycombe Wednesday 13th March 2019

Former GRDM Trustee and Managing Director of William Hands of High Wycombe, Peter Head, has issued an invitation to the Friends to visit their factory next year. We will be given a guided tour of the factory and an opportunity to see the manufacturing process from selection and purchase of materials through to the finished product, in the tradition of the Gordon Russell factory in Broadway.



Gordon Russell Ltd Broadway workshop

An example of the success and evolution of the British furniture Hands still operates from the original site of its factory which opened in 1906. Influenced by Gordon Russell and wishing to continue his design philosophy with the combined use of hand and machine in their products. Hands acquired the Gordon Russell brand and designs in 2008.

Places limited to 25. Refreshments will be provided on arrival and lunch will be taken at a nearby pub. Details and booking form will be sent out nearer the time.

(For more on the company see <http://williamhands.com/>)

Far and Wide

In June this year the Friends received an email from a family living in Alberta, Canada. They wrote:

We are very proud owners of Gordon Russell furniture, having bought our first walnut dining room suite in 1968 and has been in use every day since for a family of five, and the upholstery has not been changed since 1964 when we purchased an extra chair and had the first four recovered to match. The furniture looks as good as it did when we bought it. We also purchased a second suite (Teak) in 1973 - again in regular use for our family of five. The set of three teak coffee tables have been terrific again look as new after all these years. Thank you Gordon Russell for making such beautiful furniture.

On further enquiry we learnt they said they had lived in Gotherington, near Cheltenham and bought their first suite in Bristol. The second came from the Gordon Russell shop in Broadway. This furniture went with the family when they emigrated to Canada. They kindly supplied photographs of these pieces.



Rustless Iron

One of the many highlights in the GRDM collection is the Lloyd George chest with its 'top hat' drawer. I tell visitors that the drawer furniture was made of 'rustless iron', the name then given for stainless steel. I had not encountered this term before, but on a recent visit to the National Trust property at Lanhydrock near Bodmin in Cornwall, my eye was drawn to an ancient set of golf clubs. On closer inspection I noticed that the putter was impressed with the words 'rustless iron'.



Although Professor Frederick S. Barff of Kilburn produced a viable process for 'rustless iron' in 1877 it was only a partial success due to the high cost and difficulty in obtaining uniformity of finish on large pieces. George Bower of St Neots combined Barff's method with his own experiments leading to the patenting of the Bower-Barff process. The Rustless Iron Company, set up in Keithley in Yorkshire in 1877, used the Bower-Barff process to treat iron goods to prevent rusting.

Does anyone know whether the Bower-Barff process was used for the Gordon Russell drawer furniture?

Exhibition Gordon Russell: Designer & Maker 23 September to 6 October 2018

Edinburgh based auction house Lyon & Turnbull are holding an exhibition of furniture designed by Gordon Russell at their London gallery, 22 Connaught Street, W2 2AF. Open from 10.30am to 5pm weekdays and 12 noon to 4pm on Saturdays. For more information and an invitation to the private view email london@lyonandturnbull.com see [Lyon and Turnbull website](http://LyonandTurnbull.com)

