

GRDM FRIENDS NEWSLETTER 6

Dear GRDM Friend

With all good wishes for the New Year and I look forward to seeing you in 2018 at Friends events.
Christopher Hotten, Friends Organiser

TALK: THE PRIVATE FROLICS OF LORD BERNERS

by **Roger Vlitos, Curator, Buscot Park on 23rd FEBRUARY 2018 at 6pm** in the Edinburgh Room, Lygon Arms, Broadway

A jolly evening with lots of visual stimulation, certain to lift the mid-winter gloom.

Lord Berners, the avant garde composer, author and painter was known in the press as a 'versatile peer'. He was also a lovable eccentric. His circle of friends was like a Who's Who of the Arts in the first half of the 20th century and included Lady Mary 'Marnie' Lygon. Few have seen the photographs he made of them, or what he called his 'improvements' to Cecil Beaton's celebrity photographs and his 're-arranged' Royal Academy pictures. These made his friends (apart from Cecil Beaton) roar with laughter, and will do the same for us.

Roger Vlitos, who so amusingly entertained the Friends on our tour of Buscot earlier this year will show the best from the archives at Farringdon House, Oxfordshire where Lord Berners lived his extraordinary life.

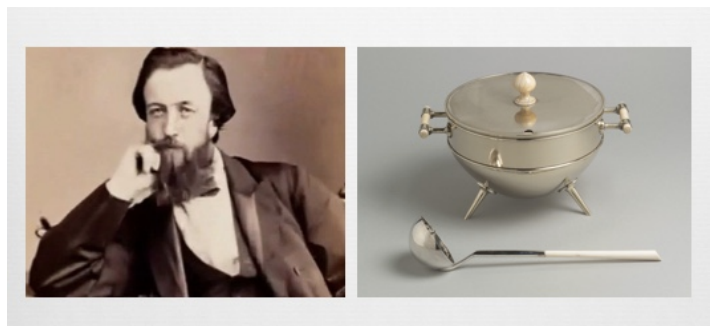


Lord Berners painting Penelope Betjeman's horse in the drawing room at Farringdon House.

TALK: UNITY IN VARIETY. DR CHRISTOPHER DRESSER, PIONEER OF MODERN DESIGN

by **Matthew Winterbottom** Curator, late 19th century British Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Ashmolean Museum on **6th APRIL 2018** at 6pm in the Edinburgh Room, Lygon Arms, Broadway

Dr Christopher Dresser (1834-1904) believed that well-made objects should be within the reach of the widest possible public and his design theory was based on the belief that natural forms should be



abstracted and made geometric for use in ornamentation, as can be seen in his designs for ceramics, glass, metal, furniture, wallpapers and textiles. Considered to be the first industrial designer he fully embraced the implications of industrial production and created forms and ornament for a wide range of manufacturers here in Great Britain as well as France and the United States. Dresser's work was influenced by Japanese arts and crafts, which he saw on his tour of Japan (the first by a European designer) in the late 19th century. He was also the author of a number of important books on the subject of ornament and design.

About the speaker: Formerly Assistant Curator at the V&A Museum; Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts, the Royal Collection, and at the Holburne Museum in Bath, Matthew Winterbottom took on the radical redisplay of the decorative art collections of the Ashmolean Museum, when he was appointed their Curator of Nineteenth-Century Decorative Arts in 2014.

VISIT TO OWLPEN MANOR HOUSE AND GARDEN

Wednesday 16th May 2018

With its magnificent 16th century Tudor Great Hall, 17th century Jacobean Solar and 18th century Georgian Little Parlour this manor house was saved from ruin after many years of neglect by the outstanding Arts & Crafts architect Norman Jewson and is now home to Sir Nicholas and Lady Mander and their family. As well as an opportunity to see a series of unique painted textiles in the Great Chamber, Mander family portraits and objects, GRDM Friends will also see a representative collection of Arts & Crafts furniture and fittings. From its hanging terraces, Georgian mill pond and lake, walled kitchen garden, magnificent yew topiary, old roses and box parterres, the gardens at Owlpen have been much admired by some of our foremost garden designers including Gertrude Jekyll, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe and Vita Sackville-West.



Lunch will be at your own expense in a nearby pub restaurant

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VISITING MARCHMONT HOUSE?

Some GRDM Friends have expressed an interest in a trip to Berwickshire to see this restored and refurbished grand 18th century mansion but we need more to make it a viable outing.

The entire attic floor of Marchmont House is furnished with pieces by Gimson, Barnsley and our own Gordon Russell, including an entire bedroom fitted out in his designs. Studio space is provided for makers and creators with an interest in the Arts & Crafts movement within the walls of this family home of Hugo Burge. We will see works by Gainsborough, Rowlandson and Tipeolo, many outstanding objets d'art and pieces of furniture from the Georgian period, and in the main with a Scottish provenance, as well as an eclectic mix of contents that encompass Victorian and Edwardian period, the Arts & Crafts movement and modern works.



Please contact Christopher Hotten, Friends Organiser, c/o Gordon Russell Design Museum, 15 Russell Square, Broadway, Worcs WR12 7AP to express your interest.

MY FAVOURITE PIECE

Richard Paice, former Chairman of the Gordon Russell Trust, has selected a boot cupboard designed by Gordon Russell as his favourite piece in the museum. Made from Cuban mahogany with brass fittings, this design is an early example of the use of manufactured laminated board material for the doors. It is 'so discrete, so simple and elegant, the interior is equally beautifully finished', he said but it was the date that so wowed him, '1925 – right up with the Bauhaus in its modernity. It is timeless and would fit beautifully today in a modernist house or flat. A true symbol of the origins of Habitat and IKEA'. What is your favourite piece?



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

by Christopher Hotten, Friends Administrator

2018 will mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. As we know, both Gordon Russell and his brother Don survived the conflict but the trauma of the War remained with them:

'More than a million of my generation, among them most of my school friends and men I had lived with, would remain in the fields of France. There was hardly a family we knew which had not lost someone. I was lonely and uprooted a second time. I found civilians sympathetic, even respectful, but I couldn't explain my vague uneasiness, which may have been partly a kind of delayed shock. I was rather uncertain as to how long it would take me to pick up the threads of any civilian job again, after a lapse of what seemed an age on another planet.' [*Designers Trade* by Gordon Russell (1968), p111]

Remembrance of the Fallen assumed great importance both for the survivors and the families of those who had perished. The years after the end of the War saw almost every town and village in the country erect a memorial and many were in the Arts and Crafts style which informed the furniture Gordon designed in the early 1920's. These memorials had a particular significance: it was government policy not to repatriate the

remains of the Fallen and it was beyond the means of most families to visit the war graves in France and Belgium. Two memorials which may or may not be familiar to you.



Firstly, and close to Broadway, is the remarkable Stanway War Memorial located on the junction of the B4077 with Stanton Road. It consists of a bronze figure of St George spearing a dragon which winds itself around a squat stone pillar. On the front of the plinth are the words, *“Men of Stanway 1914-1918; For a tomb they have an altar; For lamentations memory; For pity praise.”* To the rear, *“For your tomorrow we gave our today.”*

Stanway House is the historic seat of the Earls of Wemyss and March. Two sons of the Earl and Countess were killed in the War. The younger, Yvo, was just 19 and had been in France for only three weeks when he was shot and instantly killed as he led his men “over the top” in October 1915. The memorial was paid for by the Wemyss family, donations from friends of the family and collections in the local villages. Mary Wemyss commissioned Alexander Fisher to design and execute the figure of St George and the Dragon. She chose Eric Gill to undertake the lettering and some of the decorative details on the pillar. The symbolic meaning of the memorial was deliberately enhanced by the use of local stone from Jackdaw Quarry on the Stanway House Estate. The memorial was unveiled on the 30th October 1920 in the presence of 40 ex-servicemen, though whether Gordon or Don were among them is unknown.

Secondly, and farther afield, is the unusual memorial at Westwell, 2 miles south west of Burford. This is a private memorial erected to the memory of brothers Harold and Edward Price. Harold was killed in the trenches and his body never recovered. Edward was a submariner who was captured by Turkish troops in the Dardanelles in April 1915. He was a prisoner of war until October 1918 when he died in an influenza epidemic just a month before the Armistice.

It was Stretta Holland, the sister of Harold and Edward who caused the erection of the memorial which consists of a limestone monolith arising from a limestone base. It incorporates a Gothic numeral “1” which Harold himself had salvaged from the clock face of the ancient Cloth Hall at Ypres which was destroyed in the fighting.

Today we know of Ypres because of its First World War connections but in the 15th century, along with Bruges and Ghent, it was one of the principal trading centres of Flanders, itself part of the Dukedom of Burgundy.

