

## GRDM FRIENDS NEWSLETTER 13

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### RECENT TALK

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2019 around 35 GRDM Friends enjoyed a Talk by furniture designers and makers Jeremy Broun and Andrew Lawton. Each had put a great deal of effort into their power point presentations and conveyed their passion for their craft.

In hindsight, two speakers may have made for a somewhat overlong evening particularly as we had to delay the start by 15 minutes while we waited for a number of Friends who had booked to arrive. Unfortunately a dozen did not turn up, no doubt for good reason. However, most of those had not paid in advance and so for the first time the Friends made a small loss on the evening. In future and to ensure we do at least cover our expenses, Friends and guests must pay in advance. Shortly an Arts Tickets system will be in place to enable an effective pre-booking system for future talks.

I would like to remind Friends that after each talk I invite the Speaker to join me and a few Friends for supper at the Lygon Bar and Grill. If you would like to join the diners (at your own expense!) at a future talk do email me and let me know

### Summer Garden Party 2019

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July the Friends Summer Garden Party took place at Little Buckland House. For the second consecutive year the weather Gods vented their fury upon us. After a wonderful spell of glorious sunshine our Party took place in torrential rain BUT by common consensus it was a roaring success. We all took shelter in the Gallery which proved a splendid and interesting venue, where we mingled and there was a very convivial atmosphere. 60 Friends and guests attended and the Friends account profited by a little over £300. Thank you all, and a particular thank you again to Arabella Kizely for her generosity. A selection (of her) photographs follows.



### Dates for your 2019 Diary

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September:** Friends visit to Bedales School and Barnsley Workshops at Petersfield [full details and booking form below]. Just FOUR places still available for what will be a fascinating day.

*[NOTE: on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September, Ray Leigh is giving the Annual Ashbee Lecture for the Court Barn Museum in Chipping Campden. The title of the Lecture is "A Life in Design". Contact Court Barn direct on 01386 841951 for full details.]*

**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September:** at the Edinburgh Room in the Lygon Arms at 1730 for 1800. *NOTE: **Wednesday** not Friday.*  
Talk by Naomi Games [full details and booking form below]

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November:** at the Edinburgh Room in the Lygon Arms at 1730 for 1800.  
Talk by Joseph Bray [full details and booking form below]

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September: Friends visit to Barnsley Workshops and Bedales School at Petersfield.

Bedales was founded in 1893 to be a humane alternative to the authoritarian regimes typical of the late Victorian public schools. In 1898 the school became fully co-educational and in 1916 the children were given a formal voice when the school council was formed.

We will tour the whole school but the focus of our visit will be upon firstly, the Memorial Library designed by Ernest Gimson (and thus we will see and hear an echo of the earlier talk given by Mary Greensted) to commemorate the Great War and secondly, the Lupton Hall (originally the Assembly Hall) built in 1911 as a venue for plays, concerts and singing.

The Barnsleys, like Gimson, were leading makers of Arts and Crafts furniture. Edward Barnsley was himself a pupil at Bedales prior to the Great War and in 1920 trained with Geoffrey Lupton after whom the Hall is named and worked on the construction of the Library and in 1923 took over the workshops from Lupton. The workshops have continued to make bespoke furniture to the present day. James Ryan is the present Designer/Manager. We will have an opportunity to see how hand made furniture is designed and produced today.

The visit to the Barnsley Workshops will be in the morning followed by a pub lunch at The Pub with no Name (!) and then Bedales in the afternoon. All three locations are within about 3 miles of each other.

This will be a longish day but most of the route is dual carriageway and having made the trip myself to reconnoitre what is involved it is perfectly manageable. Only 20 places are available. **FOUR PLACES STILL AVAILABLE.**

[Click here for booking form](#)



### Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019: Talk by Naomi Games: "Abram Games: 60 years of Design"

Abram Games was one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most important graphic designers. His career spanned 60 years and during the Second World War, when he designed 100 posters, he was uniquely appointed "Official War Poster Artist". Postwar, he created posters for London Transport, Guinness, the Financial Times and the British Overseas Airways Corporation. He designed the first animated ident for BBC television, the covers of Penguin Books and the emblems for the 1951 Festival of Britain and the Queen's Award to Industry. Games also created postage stamps issued in Britain, Jersey and Israel. The length of Game's career makes his work a striking record of the social history of 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Naomi will talk about her father's personal philosophy of "maximum meaning, minimum means". She will relate personal stories, show his designs and progressive sketches and explain his working process.

[Click here for booking form](#)

### Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019: Talk by Joseph Bray: "The Future of Furniture Craft Education – A Churchill Fellowship"

In his own words Joseph describes his talk:

"Over the past 20 years I have observed both the demise of graduate level craft programmes in the UK and the significant reduction in children learning craft in schools. At the same time the furniture industry reports a skills gap and an aging population with craft skills in very high demand. Set against this backdrop my fellowship took me to northern Europe and the east coast of America to learn first hand from programmes and institutions that deliver excellence in furniture education. I met many teachers, students and graduates, learning that these challenges are not unique to the UK."

Joseph has been directly involved with the furniture industry for over 20 years, initially as a bespoke furniture designer and then as an educator at Rycotewood where he was the course leader of the BA (Hons) Furniture Design and Make programme. In 2018 he joined the Sylva Foundation to develop a new role as Head of Wood School with the intention of making craft education available to as broad a range of people as possible.

Our earlier talk by Luke Hughes touched on the future of craft education. This is our opportunity to find out what that future holds.

[Click here for booking form](#)



### The Gordon Russell Education Committee

Thanks to the support of all our Friends the Friends Bank Account is healthily in surplus and at the suggestion of our Trustee Treasurer, Tony Gleave we have decided to transfer the sum of £500 to the Education account for the promotion of the future of furniture design. I hope that you will all agree with and approve of this decision.

Tony asked Sean Feeney, a Gordon Russell Trustee, Head of Design at the Peter Sefton Furniture School in Upton upon Severn and chair of the Education Committee to provide his perspective of the work of the Committee. This is his response:-

"The Education Committee was formed six years ago and its focus is on providing and supporting an educational program at the Gordon Russell Design Museum.

Our core activities include forging links with Primary and Secondary Schools, Colleges and Universities.

Changes in fundraising have meant that the teaching of practical skills in Schools has diminished. The governments' focus on growing the economy and raising productivity by increasing the number of people studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics has impacted directly on funding for designing and manufacturing courses, a subject very close to the philosophy of Gordon Russell.

The committee therefore actively encourages School, Colleges and University visits especially by students considering a career in furniture design and making and this is further supported by annual exhibitions of award winning students work displayed at Broadway.

Our current program of awards and prizes include the Gordon Russell Craft and Design Prize of £250 awarded to the outstanding City and Guilds student at Mid-Warwickshire College, Leamington Spa.

The Ray Leigh Design Prize of £500 awarded to a BA Furniture student at Rycotewood College, Oxford.

The Gordon Russell Design and Making Prize of £250.00 to a student at the Peter Sefton Furniture School.

The Gordon Russell Award at Furniture Makers Hall which provides Industry experience through partnerships with William Hands, GRDM and Rycotewood.

The Gordon Russell National Chair Design Competition with a prize of £1000. This is a bi-annual event open to all students at Schools, Colleges and Universities. The brief is to create a machine made chair for potential production constructed from a range of materials including wood, metal, carbon fibre and plastic etc.

I firmly believe that the present partnership between education and industry, the Gordon Russell Education Committee and the outstanding facility offered by the GRDM itself is vital in fostering, promoting and sustaining the creative industries across the UK."

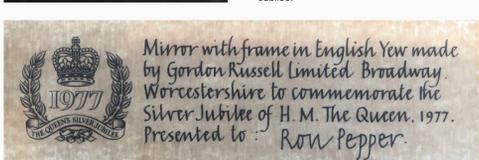
If you wish to make a personal donation to the work of the Gordon Russell Education Committee then please contact either Christopher Hotten or Tony Gleave via the Museum - email: [info@gordonrusselldesignmuseum.org](mailto:info@gordonrusselldesignmuseum.org) tel: 01386 85469



### The "Ron Pepper Mirror"

The end piece for this Newsletter is an interesting tale that spans the whole history of Gordon Russell. In the 1920's Ron Pepper was a Gordon Russell apprentice - this photograph showing him at work is on display in the Museum.

At the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 Ron was still employed by Gordon Russell and he was presented [perhaps to commemorate his long service?] with a mirror made to mark the Jubilee.



Recently, David Pickup antique dealer and great supporter of the Museum acquired that mirror and donated it to the Museum for sale. It hung for a month or two on the stairs to the first floor with a price tag of £250.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> June Geoffrey and Frances Stride visited the Museum. They saw the picture of Ron Pepper and so admired the mirror that they bought it on the spot. They told us that they were the proud owners of two other pieces of Gordon Russell furniture and sent photographs and the story behind each piece.



The first is an R. D. Russell case for a Murphy Batwing radio. Many years ago when Geoffrey was taking over some student accommodation he inherited the radio which he was instructed to throw out or keep as he chose. He decided on the latter and as a student spent many evenings listening to Radio Luxemburg using a metal coat hanger as an aerial! He and Francis still listen to it regularly. It has a 'baffle board' and a booster switch on the side which, once the valves warm up, produce a wonderful mellow sound which modern digital devices cannot replicate.

The other piece is a small hall table which was bought at auction in Paris some 30 years ago. Martin Blakeman undertook some research and was able to tell Geoffrey Stride that the broad arrow stamp on the frame indicates that the table was purchased by the Ministry of Works, and was intended for use in officer quarters in the Army or RAF. The table was probably designed by WH (Curly) Russell who, no relation to the Russell family, was appointed chief designer to the company in the 1930's. It is just possible to make out the date '1960' which would have been when the table was manufactured. The other identifiable mark is 'AC' which refers to a type of lacquer which was introduced in the early 1960's.



Christopher Hotten  
September 2019

