



Welcome from the President



BY SUE LOGIE-SMITH
PRESIDENT

Happy New Year to you all and may 2007 bring you all you wish.

I am really looking forward to many fascinating and enjoyable occasions in your company as we spend rewarding times together at Friends events.

A special welcome to all our new members. Our afternoon drinks at Chrysalis Publishing to celebrate Christmas and the year's end was such a resounding success that we have planned a return visit on March 1 to launch the Friends activities for 2007. The Director, Delwyn Freestone, was a most generous hostess and told us something of the printing process and the eminent artists whose works are printed in her studio. Her interesting talk was followed by many questions which showed the considerable interest of the members. Thank you to all those who attended and to Andrew for organizing the day.

You and your friends are invited to "Chrysalis Cocktails" on March 1 at this superb print gallery.

Your invitation to this event will be mailed to you and I urge you to reply soon to secure your place.

Anne Neri who was a Committee Member for a year and did a splendid job as Newsletter Co-ordinator has resigned from the Committee. We will miss her quiet enthusiasm and commitment to the Friends. Anne will continue as a Guide and we will enjoy seeing her at Friends events. Thank you for all your excellent work, Anne.

Thanks also to Deborah Holland for her contribution as a member of the Committee.

Louise Box, who joined the Committee in 2006, has taken on the role of Newsletter Co-ordinator. I know that she will do a fabulous job!

I am very pleased to welcome Robert Thomson as a member of the Friends

Committee. He has much to contribute and will be a wonderful addition to the team. You will read more about Robert's background and distinguished career elsewhere in this publication.

Our grateful thanks to Glenn and Peta O'Brien who generously donated the printing of the first two "new look" newsletters. Judging by the numerous complimentary comments, everyone agrees that it is very popular and an eminently readable magazine. Glenn has kindly offered to continue as Editor, employing his considerable skills for our enjoyment.

I would like to remind you that "Festively Decking Fairhall" continues at the Johnston Collection to the end of February. If you haven't had a tour, don't miss it! The decorations are stunning!

There are many exciting events in store for you, the members and your friends this year.

On **March 1** at 6.00pm we would like you to bring along friends that you think would enjoy becoming members of the Friends, to Chrysalis Publishing. Your invitation will be mailed to you.

Here are the other dates for your diary.

Visit to the Lempriere Sculpture Exhibition at Werribee Park, on **Saturday April 21**

A talk on porcelain by porcelain specialist Barrie Cathcart on **Thursday June 14.**

Wednesday September 19 we will visit the "Australian Garden" in Cranbourne with a special guided tour.

The Friends of the Johnston Collection AGM will be held on **Thursday August 9** at 5.30 pm (place yet to be decided)

Our Christmas celebration will be a tour of Trinity College, University of Melbourne, led by the Curator of Art and Archives, Nina Waters, on **Thursday November 29.** We will also be treated to a musical performance.

I hope you will join us for all these happy, congenial experiences that have been specially arranged for your participation and enjoyment!

YOUR COMMITTEE

- ◆ Sue Logie-Smith, *President*
- ◆ Andrew Dixon, *Vice President and Events Co-ordinator*
- ◆ Sylvia Black, *Secretary*
- ◆ Louise Box, *Newsletter Co-ordinator*
- ◆ Sue Flanagan, *Membership Liaison*
- ◆ Robert Thomson, *Committee Member*



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Director's Report



BY NINA STANTON

Recent Donations

I am delighted to announce that since the last Friends' Newsletter we have received some major donations.

Firstly Vice President of the Friends of the Johnston Collection, Andrew Dixon, donated a substantial amount of money which was used to acquire the 1706 painting of Lord Cowper by Jonathon Richardson. Read Andrew's article on the painting on page 3 of this newsletter and you will understand why this is such an important acquisition. If this inspires you to make a monetary donation to the Johnston Collection, don't forget that we are a charitable trust and monetary donations are tax deductible. Under the Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme significant objects offered for donation may also attract tax benefits, though the acceptance of objects into the collection requires approval by the Trustees and the Scheme itself requires that independent valuations be sought. A number of objects have been acquired under this scheme.

The Johnston Collection's glass advisor, Mr Bill Davis, has donated some sixteen books on the subject of Glass. He has also donated a copy of *The Complete Encyclopaedia of Antiques* and a significant number of back copies of *The Antique Dealer and Collectors Guide*. These are a very welcome additions to our new Library and we will in due course be looking for a volunteer to index them.

Thanks must go to Patricia Case for her ongoing contribution of *Country Life* magazines which she has brought in regularly over a number of years. We are grateful to Peter Struthers for donating the book *The World of Mary Ellen Best*, and our thanks go also to our Portrait Miniature Advisors Carmela and Roger Arturi-Phillips who continually donate books to our Library.

As many of you will know, I have been the Executor of a large and complex Estate over the last year. I am pleased to report that gifts from The Alex Copland Estate have now been made to major cultural institutions including the NGV, the National Trust, the Museum of Victoria and the State Library of Victoria. The Johnston Collection has received some 450 books, as well as early copies of *Country Life*, a French Annular clock, a specimen marble top table, a pair of Empire style light brackets and on the advice of our Portrait Miniature Advisors, Carmela and Roger Arturi Phillips, we accepted some miniatures which will go into our portrait miniature teaching collection. Ephemeral material has also gone to Caulfield Grammar School, the East Melbourne Historical Society and the City of Stonington. You may be interested to know that the auction of Alex Copland's mansion at 23 Bruce Street, Toorak will be conducted by R.T. Edgar on 3 March 2007 and the remaining items in the collection will be sold by Bonhams and Goodman on 4 March 2007 - visit their website for one-site viewing details www.bonhamsandgoodman.com. It will be a very interesting and unusual sale.

East Melbourne Festa

The inaugural East Melbourne Festa on 25th March has now become a major event for the Johnston Collection following the suggestion of our staff member Fil Natarelli, that we

host an Antique Road Show. This is a great opportunity to bring along any small items of silver, glass or ceramics for identification. Our experts will be silver and glass collector and Glass Advisor to the WR Johnston Collection, Mr Bill Davis, and Robyn Ives, President of the Wedgwood Society, Past Vice President of the Ceramics and Glass Circle of Australia and a WR Johnston guide.

For further details see the enclosed flier of forthcoming events.

Expanded Premises

How lucky are we that Robert Thomson has joined the Friends Committee and is assisting us with the "stylistic" development of our new premises next door to our administrative building? Two carpets have already been purchased, 45 chairs with writing slopes attached have been ordered - though they are likely to take a couple of months to arrive - and the curation of our inaugural exhibition is well in hand. Read the article about Robert and his illustrious design career on page 4 and you will know we are in the hands of someone with a very good "eye" and a wealth of interior decoration experience.

The philosophy behind this expansion is three-fold. Firstly it is a fantastic workshop space and I am currently running a 6 session decorative arts course "Six Shivers of Pleasure". Not only are we now enjoying state of the art overhead projection presentations, but there is enough room for us to break into small groups when the program requires. Read more about this innovative series, our 2007 tours and some new programs in the separate flier inserted into this newsletter.

Secondly, once our new showcase is in place, will be able to curate exhibitions of silver, ceramics, glass and other small objects. But before that arrives we thought it was a great opportunity to mount

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TO MAKE A
MONETARY DONATION
TO THE JOHNSTON
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DEDUCTIBLE"

CONTACT DETAILS

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Director's Report continued

a contemporary art show.

We have selected a number of paintings from the Collection of Robert Allison, a Sydney Collector, and you will be surprised how we can make links between the contemporary works in Robert's collection and historical periods. For more on this event also see our new flier.

Thirdly, the space has allowed us to develop a library - and with the donations mentioned above, it is now substantial. We will be announcing a regular schedule of times when

members of The Friends of the Johnston Collection in our next newsletter.

Make sure you go through our new program carefully and return your completed form to Fil Natarelli at the Johnston Collection. Remember that Castlemaine is now working on the 2007 Christmas show and we already have bookings for it. The *Christmas in July* show which will show selected items from the last few years has also attracted much interest. But right now *Festively Decking Fairhall* is still on and whilst

January is now booked out there are still some spaces in February. I never cease to be amazed at people's creativity. In the current show the chess set made by a doll maker and inspired by intaglios in the collection, the firescreen inspired by the astragal glazing on the Chippendale style bookcase and the gold work book inspired by the 1740's Rococo desk, are alone worth a visit to see - and that is just some of the work in the Green Drawing Room.

As we move rapidly into 2007 I wish us all a happy and healthy decorative arts filled year ahead.

"MAKE SURE YOU GO THROUGH OUR NEW PROGRAM CAREFULLY AND RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO FIL NATARELLI AT THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION"

The Cowper Portrait



BY ANDREW DIXON

In December 2006 the Johnston Collection purchased a notable oil portrait of Lord Chancellor William Cowper (c. 1665–October 10, 1723), who was a key player in the transition from the Stuart through to the early Georgian period in a number of roles including that of the first Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain in 1707.

The portrait was done in 1706 by the renowned painter Jonathan Richardson who is widely held in private and public collections including the National Portrait Gallery in London.

This purchase was supported by a generous donation from the former President of the Friends, Andrew Dixon. The portrait was sourced in London from the firm of Philip Mould Historical Portraits, London whose web address is: <http://www.historicalportraits.com>

PORTRAIT OF LORD CHANCELLOR WILLIAM COWPER

Sir Robert Booth, a London merchant and was called to the Bar in 1688. Having promptly given his allegiance to the Prince of Orange on his landing in England in 1688 he was rewarded with the position of Recorder of Colchester in 1694. He enjoyed a large practice at the bar, and had the reputation of being one of the most effective parliamentary orators of his generation. He was elected to Parliament in 1695 and 1698 but lost his seat in parliament in 1702 owing to his unpopularity caused by the trial of his brother Spencer on a charge of murder. (He was acquitted).

By 1701 Cowper was a leading player among the Whigs and enjoyed the friendship and active patronage of the formidable Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. In 1705 his first wife died in April and he was later appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and took his seat on the woolsack without a peerage presiding over the House of Lords. In 1706 he conducted the negotiations between the English and Scottish commissioners for arranging the union with Scotland. He secretly married for a second time the beautiful 20 year old Mary, daughter of John Clavering, of Chopwell, Durham. In November of the same year he succeeded to his father's baronetcy; and on December 14 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Cowper of Wingham, Kent.

REMINDER!
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The Cowper Portrait continued

When the union with Scotland came into operation in May 1707 Queen Anne in Council named Cowper the first Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain until he resigned the seal in 1710. On the death of Queen Anne, George I appointed Cowper one of the Lords Justices for governing the country during the king's absence, and a few weeks later he again became Lord Chancellor. He was Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales in 1714.

A paper which he drew up for the guidance of the new King George I on constitutional matters, entitled *An Impartial History of Parties*, marks the advance of English opinion towards modern party government. Cowper supported the impeachment of Lord Oxford for high treason in 1715, and in 1716 presided as Lord High Steward at the trials of the peers charged with complicity in the Jacobite rising.

As Lady of the Bedchamber to Caroline, Princess of Wales, his wife Mary immediately put her new-found access to court and her fluent French to use in acting as a go-between for her husband. The first day she attended the Princess she gave her Bernstorff's 'A Treatise on the State of Parties which she "had transcribed and translated for my Lord, in French and English, to give the King"

On March 18, 1718 he was created Viscount Fordwich and Earl Cowper, and a month later he resigned office on the plea of ill-health, but probably in reality because George I accused him of espousing his son the Prince of Wales's side in his (ie, George Augustus, Duke of Cornwall, the later George II's) quarrel with the King.

While he retired to his country seat, Colne Green, his wife Mary remained at Court as Lady of the Bedchamber to Caroline, Princess of Wales and in her diaries aimed to write an accurate account of events at Court. (The diaries covering October 1714 to October 1716 and April and May 1720 were later published by Charles Spencer Cowper in 1864).

Taking the lead against his former colleagues, Cowper opposed the proposal brought forward in 1719 to limit the number of peers. He died after a short illness on the 10th of October 1723 at his residence, Colne Green, in Hertford, built by himself in 1704 (demolished by the 5th Earl in 1801 on advice from the landscape designer Repton) nearby to which the later mansion of Panshanger was built in 1840 (and also sadly demolished in 1954). The 1st Earl left two sons and two daughters by his second wife Mary, who died grief stricken the following year. He was grandfather of William Cowper, the poet.

Since the painting arrived in December research has continued and we have discovered that there was a sale of some of the pictures from Panshanger at Christie's in St James square on 16th October 1953 and it was reported that the family retained many of the finer paintings.

The information in this article was compiled from a number of sources including Encyclopaedia Britannica; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and http://experts.about.com/e/w/wi/william_cowper_1st_earl_cowper.htm

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

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FRIENDS

THANK YOU TO ALL
INVOLVED FOR YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
NEWSLETTER!

GLENN O'BRIEN
EDITOR

Editors Note

All errors and omissions in the design and content are the responsibility of the editor.

Introducing Robert Thomson



Robert Thomson was born in Brisbane the son and grandson of booksellers who had a well known business in that city for over 100 years.

After attending Brisbane Grammar School he studied Law at Queensland University, however his creative instincts overrode his desire for the Law and he moved to Melbourne to commence a career in Interior

Design and Decoration.

Robert was trained by the legendary Reg Riddell (the doyen of Interior Designers in Australia), who had a long and fascinating career and whose influence was paramount in so many well known houses in Melbourne and in fact throughout Australia.

This resulted in Robert becoming a director of Riddell Marly Interior Design for more than 30 years until his recent early retirement.

His special talent has been to incorporate into his designs antique furniture, (in particular Georgian) along with interesting decorative pieces and beautiful

fabrics and in many cases contemporary Australian art. The latter, Robert found, invariably complimented antiques.

He is an enthusiastic collector of books, furniture, silver, glass, porcelain and paintings. His other great interests are reading, particularly in the fields of history, architecture and art and of course travel. This is the reason he retired early as although he had been on many trips they were naturally shorter because of his busy career. Now he is able to travel more extensively and spend more time investigating and developing these interests. It is because of this interest that he has had much

satisfaction from his travels and the places he has visited in the last 18 months including England, Scotland, Russia, Poland, Germany, Italy, France and Spain.

He is keen for as many people as possible to join and support the Friends and hence ensure the continued interest in the Johnston Collection, which truly is a Melbourne treasure.