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YOUR COMMITTEE

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- Sharon Groher – Vice President
  - Wendy Babiolakis
  - Louise Box
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REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

The months pass by very quickly and I am delighted to be writing another report for the newsletter's Spring issue. The Friends AGM was held on 26<sup>th</sup> August at the handsome East Melbourne house of Peter and Maureen McKeon. The house was designed by the famous architect Leonard Terry (responsible other fine buildings such as the Melbourne Club), so it was of great interest to us. We had a splendid roll up and everyone agreed it had been a most successful year. The Committee was re-elected and the Office Bearers are as in the previous year. We were honoured to have in attendance His Grace the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Freier and Mrs Freier who expressed much interest in the Friends. Our hostess, Maureen spoke in her charming manner of her book on Lygon Street – we were all fascinated and there were many questions. We finished the night with drinks – always a good chance for Friends to meet other Friends.

At the AGM we shared details of the projects the Friends are funding and it is quite an impressive list. Apart from subscriptions and proceeds from events, many of you have been extremely generous with donations, so we will be able to offer even more support to the Collection. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the Friends and to mark this important event we are aiming to purchase some really interesting piece for the Collection. We feel that Friends can identify with such an item and proudly say they helped purchase it.

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Pictured clockwise from left;

Suzy Rowland & new Committee Member Georgia Hutchison

Jennifer Thomson, Diana Dougall & Bridget Evans

Valerie Robinson & Elizabeth Isaacs



The Committee is very excited about the remaining events we have organized this year. The Christmas Party at my house in South Yarra will be held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December (originally scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> December). It will be our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Event so I very much look forward to seeing you there. One other bonus is a generous invitation by Sothebys to a special preview night of their Decorative Arts Auction on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October. We are so fortunate to have these special evenings: the atmosphere is superb and of course wine and cheese are served. Another new development of ours is to have a regular “welcome” evening for New Members (as seen in the photos) which will include a drink with the Director and the Committee and a walk through the Collection. Yet another good reason for your friends to join the Friends!

Also do not forget all the exciting lectures which are held in the Gallery at the Collection, Louis and Olivia have arranged a splendid line up. As you can see being a Friend has many benefits for you as well as helping support our great House Museum.

Robert Thomson SIDA, President

### AUSTEN-TATIOUS

During Jane Austen’s lifetime, fashions of dress underwent a radical change. A contemporary of Jane Austen’s, George Bryan Brummell (1778 – 1840), led a revolution in the way gentlemen dressed. Georgian society had dictated a very formal way of dress: velvets and silks, jewels and even makeup were *de rigueur* for fashion conscious gentlemen. ‘Beau’ Brummell, as he was dubbed, introduced a new elegance in male fashion, that of absolute simplicity.

Born without title in 1778, on his coming of age Beau inherited a fortune from his father’s estate and in 1797 he moved to Mayfair and began to revolutionise male fashion. His daytime dress was a double-breasted blue tailcoat with velvet collar, black trousers, and a buff waistcoat over a white starched cravat, tied in his own ‘waterfall style’. The cravat was to become the forerunner of the modern neck tie. Brummell’s mode of tying was famous, but proved to be too time consuming for most of his fashion followers. The collections of miniatures and the portrait of *A Man Reading Voltaire* in the Johnston Collection illustrate different ways of tying the cravat. Shirts were of fine linen and made by seamstresses. Georgian waistcoats, which formerly had sleeves, became sleeveless.

Fashionable daytime footwear was riding boots, with hessian or top boots (a top flap that could be folded up to protect the knees while riding). Dancing shoes for men with buckles were still work with silk knee breeches and hose for formal occasions. Jane Austen, in describing her hero Henry Tilney in *Northanger Abbey*, says, “the innumerable capes of his great coat looked becomingly important”. The fashion was shortlived as Beau did not approve of the distortion of the classical silhouette. His simpler boxcoats and the Petersham soon took its place. Beau Brummell insisted that elegance was dependent upon the cut and style of a coat.

It was his sartorial magnificence and his wit that made Brummell the darling of London’s highest social circles. Such was his influence on the way gentlemen dressed that he became a confidante and advisor to the Prince of Wales and his entourage. Sadly, Brummell exhausted his fortune by gambling and extravagance and he died in a charitable asylum in 1840.

Wilma Oxley, Volunteer Guide



Portrait miniature of Thomas Bonnar (c. 1800) by an Unknown Artist, The Johnston Collection, Reg: A0800

Editor’s note: This article was first published in TJC Guide / Volunteer Newsletter, Issue 11, Winter/Spring, 2009  
Ian Kelly’s *Beau Brummell: the ultimate dandy* (Hodder and Stoughton, Edinburgh, 2005) offers a fascinating 578 page insight to Regency London and the man behind the ‘Beau’ image

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Sotheby’s Auction Preview**  
Connoisseurs Collection  
21 October 2009 at 5 -7pm  
(details to follow)



**Friends Christmas Party and 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**  
3 December 2009 (evening)  
At home with Robert Thomson  
President, Friends Committee



### PROPOSED 2010 EVENTS

**Corio Villa/Moorabool Antiques**  
February 2010  
Visit an 1850’s prefabricated villa  
of special significance and  
Moorabool Antique Galleries  
(including the Lorraine Rosenberg  
Reference Collection and Library)  
specialists in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century  
collectors’ porcelain



**Visit to Bishopscourt,  
East Melbourne**  
October 2010

Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne  
Dr. Philip Freier and Mrs Joy Freier  
have most graciously agreed to host  
the Friends “At Home” for  
afternoon tea in the garden.



**Visit to Neil Robertson’s Home,  
Gisborne**  
Winter 2010

Neil Robertson, the progenitor of  
the Open Garden Scheme, has  
kindly agreed to open his 100 year  
old home and garden at Gisborne  
near Mt Macedon. The large home  
accommodates an eclectic fine and  
decorative arts collection, including  
objects owned by William  
Johnston. We plan to visit when  
the daffodils are at their peak.



### **Kozminsky**

Our 2008 visit was delightful, and  
we look forward to our return visit  
(date TBA).



## DIRECTOR'S DESK

As I write it seems like spring has arrived. The light is clearer and the days are warmer. There is now the feeling that Summer and Christmas are approaching.

*AT HOME IN A GEORGIAN HOUSE* is well received and visitors are enjoying the stripped back modern interpretation of the current House Tour. The response to being able to see the objects and the evocative insights of the Guides has made it a wonderful tour to discover and understand how people may have lived at this time.

Similarly the concurrent *FROM CHAWTON TO PEMBERLEY: a journey through the decorative arts with Jane Austen* has been buoyed along by the insightful illustrated talk generated by the Guides. If you haven't had the chance to get to see (and learn) either of the experiences I encourage you to come along before they finish at the end of October.

This then means that we are heading towards *WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE: Christmas at The Johnston Collection* which will open on Wednesday 4 November 2009. This year the spectacular exhibition will have handmade decorations created by artists and craftspeople from Geelong - City by the Bay. Members of The Embroiderers Guild of Victoria (Geelong Branch), Geelong CWA, Trolley Dolly Cloth Doll Club Inc, Coastal Textile Artists, Porcelain Artists Group, The Third Wednesday Group, Leopold Lacemakers, Geelong Textile and Associates Artists Inc., and the Geelong Patchworkers and Quilters' Guild will all be contributing.

It's going to be a great show this year and of course quite different from last year. Remember to make your booking if you haven't already.

Congratulations to The Friends as they enter their tenth year. It's been a wonderful, productive and enriching history so far. I know the Friends go from strength to strength with exciting events planned and membership steadily increasing. Well done and watch this space as there are great events planned for 2010.

Louis Le Vaillant, Director | Curator, The Johnston Collection



Members of The Embroiderers Guild of Victoria (Geelong Branch) and Assistant Curator Olivia Gill practising for *WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE: Christmas at The Johnston Collection*



**Louis Le Vaillant**  
Director | Curator  
The Johnston Collection

### UPCOMING LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS AT THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION

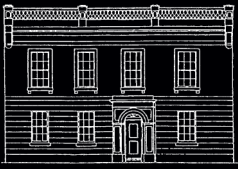
The Edward Lord Montague  
Portrait and Elizabethan Costume  
with Roger Leong  
Wed 14 Oct, 2 - 3pm

Afternoon Tea with Jane Austen  
with Barbara Summerbell  
Mon 19 Oct, 2 - 3.30pm

The Huguenots of the West End  
and Solo  
with Robert Nash  
Fri 23 Oct, 10.15 - 11.45am

Watch our website for details of  
upcoming events and for booking  
details

[www.johnstoncollection.org](http://www.johnstoncollection.org)



## PALÁCIO NACIONAL DA AJUDA – LISBON, PORTUGAL

Continuing our series on local and international house museums, in this issue we feature a royal residence in Portugal. The Editor welcomes any suggestions or articles on house museums of interest to The Friends.

Culturally-oriented visitors to Lisbon are spoilt for choice - the city offers a vast array of excellent museums and galleries, many housed in fine original buildings. The National Palace at Ajuda, although less than a kilometre from the 16<sup>th</sup> century Jerónimos Monastery, National Coach Museum (Museo Nacional de Carruajes) and Belém Tower, is often overlooked, yet offers visitors an intimate view of the Portugese royal family's public and private life.

Commenced in 1796, the palace is a transitional baroque style with neo-classical influences, and became a royal residence in the 1860s when Luis I married Italian Princess Maria Pia of Savoy. In anticipation of her arrival, significant orders were placed for fine customised furniture with the best manufacturers across Europe. Magnificent bedroom suites, wallpapers, rugs and monogrammed pieces were ordered - many now still intact in their original orientation in the rooms for which they were designed. Panelled studies, music rooms and the family's private entertaining spaces contain personal memorabilia, family portraits, and drawings by the royal family all arranged as if the family has just departed. Impressive ambassadorial and ceremonial spaces, ballrooms, the throne room and ministerial chambers are all accessible in the 40+ rooms open to the public.

Ambassadorial gifts and the royal family's own purchases from across Europe provide an insight into the eclectic European/exotic/oriental taste of the period. The collection includes 1780's Gobelins tapestries, the Saxe Room with an extensive display of furniture decorated with Meissen porcelain, and the Queen's Limoges dinner service, one of the few European royal services to remain completely intact.

Over a fifty year period, the Queen (known for her extravagance) drew upon changing interior fashions, and introduced a Winter Garden (the ceiling was a gift from the Viceroy of Egypt), Chinese Room, technologically advanced sanitation and in 1879, a *family* sitting room which was revolutionary for the time.

Queen Maria Pia's later years in the palace were unhappy, with the assassination of her son and grandson (King Carlos I and Crown Prince Luis Filipe) and a military coup in 1910 which overthrew the monarchy and resulted in her exile.



The Winter Garden (Image: IPPAR)



Palace Exterior (Image: Louise Box)

Palácio Nacional da Ajuda – Museu, Largo Da Ajuda, 1349-021 Lisboa – Portugal

[http://www.ippar.pt/english/monumentos/colecoes\\_palacios/ajuda/colecao\\_palacio\\_ajuda.html](http://www.ippar.pt/english/monumentos/colecoes_palacios/ajuda/colecao_palacio_ajuda.html)

Closed Wednesdays. Tram: 18. Buses: 14,32,42,60 and 73

The magnificent royal summer palaces at Sintra (just outside Lisbon) are also open to the public and worthy of visitors' time.

### NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members to The Friends of the Johnston Collection, and look forward to meeting you at one of our upcoming New Friends Welcome events.

Nathan Black  
Jane Blazey  
Anna Cross  
Halina Dymek  
Deborah Hamilton  
Carole Kelly  
Vanessa Kennedy  
Wendy McLaren  
Judith O'Neill  
Joanne Reidy  
Deborah Siefert  
John & Cathy Simpson  
Kerry Watts  
Michelle Williams



The Friends have recently provided subscriptions for

♦ APOLLO

♦ SELVEDGE

♦ STUDIES IN THE  
DECORATIVE ARTS from the  
Bard Graduate Center, New York

♦ V&A Magazine

and these can now be read at  
the Reference Library



Louise Box