

# MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



## THE DUKE OF LEEDS CHAIRS

*circa 1700*

These extraordinary chairs form part of a larger suite of seat furniture consisting of at least eight chairs, a pair of stools and one settee. The other three pairs of chairs are deposited in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The settee was sold Sotheby's London, 29 January 1960.

The chairs were first recorded in an article about Hornby Castle in *Country Life*, vol. XX, 14 July 1906 p.54-64.

Much of the early furniture sold from Hornby Castle in 1920 is assumed to have come there from Kiveton Park in Yorkshire. Kiveton was built by Sir Thomas Osborne, 1st Duke of Leeds between 1694 - 1704, and these chairs were almost certainly commissioned by the Duke at this time.

Hornby Castle came to the Osbornes through the marriage of Francis, 5th Duke of Leeds to the notorious Lady Amelia D'Arcy in 1773, who later began an affair with Captain Byron, father of the poet. The assumption that much furniture moved to Hornby with the Osbornes is substantiated by the presence of Thomas Osborne's monogram 'D.C.L.' (representing his alternative titles of Earl of Danby, Marquess of Carmarthen and Duke of Leeds) on a day-bed and a sofa, sold from Hornby in 1920 (now

in the collections at Temple Newsam House, Leeds).

Two cabinet-makers are known to have worked at Kiveton. Firstly, Thomas Young who was a joiner and carver who also worked at Chatsworth with Davis, Lobb and Watson. The second, Philip Guibert is referred to in one of the Duke of Leeds' account books for 9 November 1703: 'Pay'd Gilbert, ye joyner by My Lady Duches's order'. Guibert was extensively patronised by William III and supplied furnishings for Windsor and Kensington Palace from 1697-8.

Suites of seat furniture such as these were luxurious furnishings, often used in a state bedchamber, and were used to indicate wealth and status. The tall, shaped back and complex outline of this chair frame are close to designs published by the court designer Daniel Marot (about 1661-1752). The high arched backs were fashionable at the end of the 17th century, and used to display extremely expensive velvets and materials, often imported from Italy. The original multi-coloured Italian velvet upholstery has been replaced.

From the collections of the Dukes of Leeds, Hornby Castle

A magnificent and highly important pair of William III gilt-gesso and black-japanned side chairs attributed to Philip Guibert.

The arched padded back upholstered in old 'Genoa' velvet within rectangular moulded surrounds surmounted by serpentine crestings and with conforming aprons decorated with jewelled motifs punctuated by shells and foliage, the matching upholstered seats with moulded seat rails above valanced aprons decorated with flowerheads and geometric motifs on square panelled baluster front supports with conforming decoration linked to the rear splayed legs by waved and arched X-shaped stretchers centered by turned finials and split turned mouldings.

#### **Literature:**

Adam Bowett, *English Furniture 1660-1714 From Charles II to Queen Anne*, 2002, illustrated frontispiece

Percy Macquoid, *The History of English Furniture - The Age of Walnut*, 1905, p.114

Edward Joy, *The Country Life Book of Chairs*, 1967, illustrated on the front cover

Ian Wardropper and Lynn Springer Roberts, *European Decorative Arts in the Art Institute of Chicago*, 1991, p.44

*Apollo Magazine*, vol. LXXVIII, no. 22 (December 1963), illustrated,

*Country Life*, vol. XX, July 14 1906 p.54-64

Adam Bowett and Ian Fraser, 'An Imposter Unmasked: the "Duke of Leeds" suite at Temple Newsam House', *Furniture History*, vol. LI (2015), pp. 77-86. This chair illustrated as fig. 10., p. 85.

*Mallett Catalogue*, 2002, pp. 18-19

Related Literature:

Christopher Gilbert, *Furniture at Temple Newsam House and Lotherton Hall*, 1978, vol. II, pp.264-7,  
nos. 322-3

Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert (eds.), *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660 - 1840*,  
1986, p.1015)

Height: 53.15 in (135 cm)

Width: 22.44 in (57 cm)

Depth: 25.98 in (66 cm)

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AD.151

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