

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



HORNBY CASTLE: A GEORGE II SIDE CHAIR

England, *circa* 1755

The superb carving and detailing on this chair are emphasised with the original gilding, a manner of enrichment used as a contrast to the bronze-like mahogany.

These chairs originally formed part of a larger suite of side chairs, armchairs and a settee from Hornby Castle, Yorkshire that was sold Sotheby's London, 20 October 1972, lots 64 and 65. An open armchair from the suite was sold Christie's London, *Simon Sainsbury - The Creation of an English Arcadia*, 18 June 2008, lot 48 and a pair of armchairs was offered Sotheby's Charlottesville Virginia, *The Collection of Patricia Kluge*, 8 - 9 June 2010, lot 110. The settee is illustrated in Macquoid and Edwards, *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, vol. III, p. 96, fig. 59. The form of these chairs was popularised by furniture-designers such as Mayhew and Ince and Thomas Chippendale, the latter illustrating 'eight different designs of French Elbow Chairs, of various patterns' in *The Gentlemen and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, 1754, pls. XVII-XX.

Samuel Norman appears to have had a meteoric rise to the upper echelons of the mid-eighteenth

century cabinet-making world. Following his apprenticeship to Thomas Woodin from 1746-1753, he began his own business. Shortly thereafter, most likely through the influence of his renowned uncle and fellow cabinet-maker William Hallett, he entered into partnership with James Whittle of Gt. St. Andrew's Street, Soho, in 1755. The partnership was enabled by the death of Whittle's son Thomas that year and assisted by Norman's marriage to Whittle's daughter Ann a month after her brother's death. The partnership of Norman and Whittle flourished and they were patronised by the Duke of Bedford at Woburn, the Earl of Egremont at Petworth and the Earl of Holderness, probably for Hornby Castle, Yorkshire.

Following Whittle's death in 1759, Norman inherited half the stock of goods in trade of this father-in-law allowing him full control of the business. Continued patronage from established clients assisted Norman's business as did his purchase of Paul Saunder's Royal Tapestry Manufactory in Soho in June 1760. In 1762 he was honored with a royal appointment as 'Master Carver in Wood' to the office of Works and in 1765 was described as 'Sculptor and Carver to the majesties, and surveyor of the curious carvings in Windsor Castle'.

From the collections of the Dukes of Leeds, Hornby Castle

Attributed to Whittle & Norman

An exceptional mid 18th century George II Chippendale period mahogany and parcel gilt side chair. In the French taste, of extremely elegant design and attributed to Whittle & Norman, Paul Saunders. With serpentine shaped upholstered back and seat, standing on elegant cabriole legs to front and rear, carved with stylised shells, acanthus and C-scrolls, and with scroll toes.

The mahogany of fine colour, and retaining the original parcel-gilt decoration to the legs - a beautiful and very effective colour combination. Now upholstered in blue silk damask, but retaining period webbing.

Literature:

G. Worsley, 'Hornby Castle', *Country Life*, 29 June 1989, pp. 189 - 194, fig. 7 (photographs from 1906)

For armchairs from the suite:

Christopher Claxton Stevens and Stewart Whittington, *18th Century English Furniture - The Norman Adams Collection*, p. 41 (colour plate 5) and p. 45

Norman Adams Ltd., *The Connoisseur*, June 1973, p. 140 (advertisement)

Sotheby's Charlottesville Virginia, *The Collection of Patricia Kluge*, 8 - 9 June 2010, lot 110

The settee from the suite:

Macquoid and Edwards, *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, vol. III, p. 96, fig. 59

Height: 3' 1" in (94 cm)
Width: 2' 0³/₁₆" in (62 cm)
Depth: 1' 11¹/₁₆" in (59 cm)

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