

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



A SET OF FOUR GEORGE I WALNUT CHAIRS

England, *circa* 1715

These chairs relate very closely to those supplied by Thomas Roberts to Sir Robert Walpole, later 1st Earl of Orford (d. 1745) for Houghton Hall, Norfolk, with similar shaped cabriole legs and ending in stylised hoof feet. Two pairs of chairs from Houghton were sold Christie's London, 8th December 1994, lots 126 and 127. Thomas and Richard Roberts both held the warrant as 'joiner to the Royal Household' for over thirty years, from 1686 until 1729, and supplied furnishings for Whitehall, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court and Windsor Castle.

With their similar central inlaid cartouche to the front seat-rail, a suite of furniture traditionally ascribed to the workshops of John Belchier and supplied to Streatlam Castle Durham is worth comparison. Belchier is particularly known for his work at Erdigg Hall, Wrexham for which he supplied the finest quality 'mirror glasses, cabinet works and chairs'.

Three related pairs of chairs, commissioned by Sir John Trevor (c.1637-1717) for Trevor House, later Powis House, Knightsbridge and then removed in the mid 18th century to Brynkinalt, Denbighshire, were sold Sotheby's London, Of Royal and Noble Descent, 19 January 2017, lots 333 – 335. These chairs show near identical construction, similar inlaid marquetry panels and near identical feet. A further set of walnut and marquetry chairs featuring the similar leg pattern and hoof foot was supplied to Thomas Watson-Wentworth, 3rd Earl of Stafford for Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire.

Originally probably a set of twelve chairs, six further chairs from this suite are in the collections of Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University. Purchased (as part of a set of six matching chairs) from the dealer C.H.F. Kinderman, London by Mildred Barnes and Robert Woods Bliss, November 13, 1922;[1]

Collection of Mildred Barnes and Robert Woods Bliss, Washington, DC, November 13, 1922 - November 29, 1940; Gifted to Harvard University, November 29, 1940; Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, House Collection, Washington, D.C.

The dates likely tie in with the presentation of our six to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Mrs Leonard Cohn, and perhaps Kinderman sold six chairs to Charles of New York, splitting the set.

A superb set of four George I walnut and seaweed marquetry side chairs attributed to Royal chairmakers Thomas or Richard Roberts, each with an arched upholstered and close-nailed back and seat, on shaped cabriole legs with square hoof feet, the legs and circular panel to the front seat rail beautifully inlaid with seaweed marquetry decoration.

Exhibitions

AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 3 May – 4 September 2006.

Previously on permanent view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Literature:

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'Recent Accessions of European Decorative Arts', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 8, April 1948, p. 227.

Connoisseur Antiques for Export edition, 1949 (one of our chairs illustrated)

P. Remington, 'The Galleries of European Decorative Arts & Period Rooms: Chiefly XVII and XVIII Century', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 12, no. 3, Nov 1954 (likely the chairs mentioend on p. 68)

Cescinsky, *The Old World House: Its Furniture and Decoration*, 1924, vol.2, p.234

Comparative Literature:

A. Bowett, *Early Georgian Furniture 1715-1740*, pl 4.19, 4.53-54

G. Beard and J. Cross, 'Thomas and Richard Roberts', *Apollo*, September 1998, pp. 46-48

G. Beard,

, London 1997, p. 149, fig. 167.

Height: 3' 7¹/₁₆" in (110 cm)

Width: 1' 10⁷/₁₆" in (58 cm)

Depth: 2' 1³/₁₆" in (65.5 cm)

Stock Number

M10.95a

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