THE JOHN SCOTT COLLECTION
‘MODERN ENGLISH’ DESIGN FROM THE 1860s AND 1870s

THE FINE ART SOCIETY
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VOLUME TWO

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John Scott has assembled a peerless collection in the field of the decorative arts, which numbers almost one thousand works. Displayed in two connected houses in Notting Hill Gate, it fills each room with pieces that have continued to hold his attention. In its totality, the collection reflects a singular vision and an incisive mind.

The decision to sell his treasures was difficult, but it is the purpose of this first exhibition, and those which follow, to pay tribute to an exceptional collector and to allow a wider audience to see the sum of his life’s work. We have planned three simultaneous exhibitions to start the series, which will be spread over the coming twelve months. The first three celebrate the works made for the great international exhibitions mounted in the 1860s and 1870s, Powell & Sons Whitefriars Glass and British Art Pottery. Each exhibition will show a different aspect of John Scott’s collection.

The Victoria and Albert Museum’s exhibition *The Cult of Beauty* described one area of John Scott’s collection, and he lent to the show using the name The Birkenhead Collection, the town of his birth. He has enthusiastically supported exhibitions in this way, and now our own show reflects his energetic pursuit of the beautiful.

In this quest, many dealers and curators have become his friends; although many of them are no longer alive to feel the warmth of his appreciation. Michael Whiteway of Haslam & Whiteway, our partner in this project, has been closely associated with the collection over the years and was the source of many of the works. His knowledge and passionate interest in the works has mirrored that of John himself.

The Fine Art Society is proud to present the John Scott Collection and to acknowledge the achievement of an extraordinary man.

GORDON COOKE
Managing Director, The Fine Art Society
day, had yet to find defenders. When John Scott began collecting, his aim was to build a comprehensive design collection. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there were many discoveries to be made in mapping the nineteenth century – as well as new paths to be taken. While Charles Handley-Read had pioneered the connoisseurship of nineteenth century design, John Scott has proved to be a distinguished successor.

This is the first of a series of exhibitions at The Fine Art Society exploring different aspects of the Scott Collection. It concentrates on 'Modern English' design (a term coined by the Art Journal) of the 1860s and 1870s – especially upon important exhibition pieces.

The first international exhibition, was the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations held in Hyde Park, London. It attracted six million visitors. International exhibitions were staged regularly over the next decades – London 1862, Paris 1867, Vienna 1873, Philadelphia 1876 and Paris 1878. The International Exhibition of 1862 introduced a new generation of designers schooled in the principles of A. W. N. Pugin and Owen Jones who laid the grounds for the reform of British design. Many of these young designers exhibited in the Medieval Court at the London International Exhibition of 1862 that was organised by the architect William Burges – the most mischievous and scholarly of the Goths. Exhibitors included J. P. Seddon – who designed the famous King René’s Honeymoon cabinet in the V&A Museum. Seddon also exhibited two chairs – a version in ebony is in the Scott Collection (cat. 61), Richard Norman Shaw, C.E. Street, William Morris, and Philip Webb. The 1862 Exhibition also included designs by Christopher Dresser and George Gilbert Scott, and portières by Templetons (cat. 69).

The subsequent 1867 Paris Exhibition, included the Bruce Talbert Pericles cabinet made by Holland and sons (cat. 66), the Owen Jones ebony and ivory display case made for Alfred Morrison (cat. 58) and the magnificent Minton vase and the Coalbrookdale hallstand (cat. 8) designed by Christopher Dresser. The 1873 London Exhibition included a version of the Pet Sideboard (cat. 65), and the 1878 Paris exhibition a suite of furniture by R. Davey (cat. 5), an extraordinary centrepiece by Hart and Sons (cat. 4) and a group of Japanese style metalwork designed by Thomas Jeckyll and made by Barnard Bishop and Barnard (cat. 49–54). This is an occasion to see some of the finest Victorian design. It cannot be repeated.

Michael Whiteway and Stuart Durant

Great collectors are trailblazers. This is one of the finest thematic collections of the decorative arts to have been made by a private collector. Much of his collection is of the highest museum quality. The Scott Collection has been assembled over a period of more than forty years – forty turbulent years in the history of taste.

John Scott began collecting at a time when Victorian art, architecture and design had long been in the doldrums. The Modern Movement had disparaged the achievements of the nineteenth century. But in 1972, Mies van der Rohe’s dictum ‘Less is more’ was transmuted by Robert Venturi, the founding-father of Post Modernism, into ‘Less is a bore’. Change was in the air when John Scott started to form his collection.

The 1952 V&A Museum exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Art, organised by Peter Floud, demonstrated the intellectual and creative energy of one of the great eras of cultural transformation. The ideas of John Ruskin, the most influential nineteenth-century aesthete, are implicit, as well as explicit, in much of what we could have seen in the 1952 exhibition.

The large Handley-Read collection, shown in early 1972 at the Royal Academy, reinforced the view that we would do well to treat the Victorians with respect. While William Morris and Philip Webb had been accorded a place in the evolutionary sequence of Modernism, A. W. N. Pugin, Owen Jones, William Burges, Christopher Dresser and Bruce Talbert, all of whom were major figures in their
LEON ARNOUX 10
CHARLES BEVAN 12
WILLIAM BURGES 14
R. DAVEY 18
CHRISTOPHER DRESSER 20
MINTON 'CLOISONNE WARE' 30
CHARLES L. EASTLAKE 60
JAMES HADLEY 62
THOMAS JEECKYLL 64
OWEN JONES 74
JOHN POLLARD SEDDON 80
BRUCE J. TALBERT 83
ALBERT AUGUSTE ADOLPHE WILMS 94
W. BROWNFIELD & SONS 95
1  ‘Henri II’ ewer, c.1878

White earthenware, slipcast with inlaid and painted colours, painted Minton & Co and C. Toft, to base
Height 11 in · 28 cm

Provenance: London, Bonhams, Masterpieces of Minton auction, October 2004 (152)

In the second half of the nineteenth century Minton & Co., and Arnoux especially, were constantly looking for new challenges and sought to revive ‘lost’ techniques used in ancient ceramic manufacture. Henri II ware was inspired by the French renaissance faience known as ‘Saint Porchaire’, or ‘Henri Deux’. Arnoux perfected the technique by 1858 and trained Charles Toft who produced the technique during the 1870s. A group of Henri II ware was shown by Minton & Co. at the International Exhibition, London 1871, and illustrated in the Art Journal catalogue, 1871, p.54. The complex and intricate technique was very costly and few pieces were made.

An identical ewer to this is in the V&A Museum collection [Circ.825–1920], donated by HM Commissioners for the 1851 Exhibition.

‘This is fine work of Renaissance inspiration by Charles Toft.’ JS
Charles Bevan c.1828–1882
MARSH & JONES, LEEDS (ATTRIBUTED MAKER)
2 Reclining chair with green leather seat, c.1865
Oak with leather upholstery and brass rivets, incised 0945
37 × 23¼ × 28 in · 94 × 59 × 71 cm

The Building News pointed out that Bevan’s designs emphasised their construction rather than concealing it, there was ‘neither veneering, paint, nor concealed jointing.’ In 1865 Bevan advertised this ‘New Registered Reclining Chair’, manufactured by Marsh & Jones, in the trade press.

However, when The Building News released the first design, controversy arose between Bevan and designer J.P. Seddon. In September that year Seddon wrote to The Building News complaining Bevan had plagiarised an existing design by Richard Holmes, the ‘Alpha Folding Chair’, first exhibited by Johnstone & Jeans at the London International Exhibition of 1862 and accredited to Seddon. Bevan responded later that month maintaining he had developed Holmes’s idea but that the design was of his own making and not attributable to Seddon. Bevan was strongly influenced by Seddon and there is some suggestion that he was an assistant to Seddon.

‘This is a lovely, adjustable and practical lounger.’ JS
William Burges ARA 1827–1881
J.D. CRACE (maker)
3 ‘The Wheel of Fortune’ octagonal table, 1858
Oak base, marquetry and inlaid top including details of inlaid ivory, mother of pearl and metals
29⅓ x 53 in. · 75 x 134.5 cm
exhibited: London, International Exhibition, 1862, this design possibly exhibited in the Medieval Court
Widely regarded by his peers as one of the most brilliant designers of his day Burges created a world of architectural fantasy with his flamboyant and extravagant style. He was strongly influenced by the medieval art and architecture he had seen in his travels around Europe and in particular the work of his French contemporary Eugene Viollet-le-Duc. Burges’s romantic fascination with historical legend and spiritual symbolism is manifest in the design of this tabletop, although its precise meaning is obscure. At the centre of the table is the wheel of fortune, spun by Fortuna or St. Catherine surrounded by eight figures from all strata of society from royalty to peasants. The designs for these are in the Victoria and Albert Museums drawings collection.
‘The Wheel of Fortune’ centre table was designed by William Burges for Colonel Somers Cocks as part of an interior scheme for the Mrs new house in Cornwall. Cocks commissioned ‘Treverbyn Vean’, from the architect George Gilbert Scott (designer of the Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras and the Albert Memorial), with Burges creating the interior scheme. The inlaid tabletop sits on an oak base of a modified A.W.N. Pugin design; it is one of Burges’s earliest designs for furniture.
‘This is the famous Wheel of Fortune Table by William Burges. Michael Whiteway properly ordained that the sale of this table should be “first come, first served”. The vendor opened at 10 am, so I was there at 6 am. I knew there would be a long queue. I sat cold and alone until he arrived, late, at 11 am! It is a real masterpiece by the master of all William Burges, made for a huge hall.’ JS

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Epergne fragment, c.1875

Electro-gilt bronze with ivory carvings and semi-precious stone decoration.

Height 16½ in · 42.5 cm

EXHIBITED: Paris International Exhibition, 1878


The French Gothic-style epergne, of which this is the central section, was exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition, 1878. Made from over two thousand pieces welded together, it was set with ivory carvings depicting ‘things suitable for the dining table,’ enamelled panels and shields; the Art Journal announced ‘the Exhibition does not contain a more remarkable example of Art manufacture.’

Hart Son Peard & Co. was represented at all the world exhibitions from 1851 through to Paris in 1878. They commissioned designs from J.P. Seddon and B.J. Talbert and are known to have made at least one piece for William Burges, supplied silver plate to William Butterfield’s designs and produced ironwork for Alfred Waterhouse’s architectural commissions.

‘Having purchased this from Michael Whiteway as probably by William Burges; the next and important step was to obtain proof. Happily there was a magnificent engraving of the entire centrepiece in the Art Journal Catalogue of the Paris International Exhibition. The portion offered here is approximately one quarter only of the whole ensemble. Never was so much asked for a fragment of an enormous monstrosity of Victorian metal! Never was the dislike, indeed abhorrence, of Victorian art so exemplified as here. The object had recently changed hands in the Portobello Road Market for £25! Stuart Durant who had raised our hero Dr Christopher Dresser from obscurity knew the author of a recent biography of Burges, namely, Mr John Mordaunt Crook. Happily this gentleman wrote an extensive essay on the centrepiece. True to the mystique that surrounded Burges he felt unable to guarantee it as from the great man’s hand!’

I cleaned it up a bit, found a standard glass liner for the interior, black base and put it on the shelf. Perhaps someone will restore it fully. I feel more confident it’s Billy’s work – the magic carvings, like netsuke, but of bone.’
Mr R. Davey

WILLIAM WALKER, LONDON (MAKER)

5 ‘Anglo-Moorish’ buffet, c.1878

Oak, with bands of ebony and pear wood inlaid decoration
59 x 59½ x 24 in · 150 x 151 x 65.5 cm

EXHIBITED: Paris, International Exhibition, 1878


This sideboard was part of a dining room suite shown at the Paris International Exhibition, 1878. The entry in the catalogue for the exhibition reads:

‘William Walker, an eminent and very extensive cabinet-maker of London, contributes several works of great excellence’. The sideboard to which this buffet is en suite is described as ‘in the “Anglo-Moorish style”…constructed of English brown oak, relieved with pear-tree wood and ebony, and was designed by Mr. R. Davey, one of the artists of the firm. Among the many admirable exhibits of British upholsters this excellent production takes a foremost place, and we have much pleasure in giving an engraving of it. It is clear that the cabinet-makers of England are obtaining merited honours in the Exhibition.’

‘Islamic furniture is rather lacking in the robust strength the Victorian’s enjoyed. I find this sideboard immensely satisfying. There is much Moorish intricacy and fretting in abundance, so as to leave no doubt as to the basic source of the inspiration. The coupling of such intricacy with such a solid English sideboard is an artistic delight.’
Christopher Dresser 1834–1904
MINTON & CO. (MAKER)

6 Large baluster vase, 1867
Porcelain, with polychrome enamel and gilt on an ivory ground, decorated with Egyptian-style geometric patterns, impressed Minton, 107, date mark for 1867; shape number 1356
Height 19 1/2 in · 50 cm


LITERATURE: Halén, Christopher Dresser, Oxford, 1990, pl.101, pp.103 and 122, Gere & Whiteway, Nineteenth-Century Design, from Pugin to Mackintosh, London 1993, pl.138, p.120; Jones, Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, Shrewsbury, 1993, pp.99 and 100, vase and original design illustrated

This vase was one of twelve designed by Dresser exclusively for the Paris International Exhibition, 1867. The highly intricate borders on this vase derive largely from ancient Egyptian models initially introduced to Dresser by his mentor, Owen Jones. In his text Principles of Decorative Design, 1873, Dresser wrote ‘I enjoy the power and vigour of Egyptian ornament’ and advised students to visit examples in the British Museum. Here Dresser can be seen to be a product of his time, his Egyptian influenced ceramics for both Minton and Wedgwood coincide with the opening of the Suez Canal, in the year this vase was made, and the ensuing ‘Egyptomania’ (see Rudoe, Christopher Dresser: A Design Revolution, 2004). Although ‘Oriental’ precedents inspired the decoration for this vase, the resultant design is highly original and demonstrates an inventive use of colour.

The original drawings for this vase are held in the Royal Doulton Minton archive, Stoke-on-Trent, and a tracing of the pattern is in an album of Dresser designs in the V&A Museum [E.1498–1987].

‘This is a true masterpiece and extremely difficult to fire, hence some firing cracks. It was exhibited very extensively. My wife, Takko, has embroidered a huge cushion showing this marvellous design “unfolded”.’ JS
Christopher Dresser 1834–1904
Coalbrookdale Co. (Maker)

7 Pair of chairs with roundel depicting the Greek god Boreas ("The North Wind"), 1870

One of the pair illustrated
Cast iron with wooden seat, stamped with registration mark for 8 Marc/Height 1870 and no.239430
53½ x 19¼ x 20 in · 136 x 49.5 x 51 cm

In 1871 the Art Journal noted that Coalbrookdale had received honours at each exhibition since 1851 for their cast-iron furniture. A hallstand, en suite with this chair design, was exhibited by Coalbrookdale at the London International Exhibition 1871 (see Art-Journal Catalogue of the International Exhibition, 1871, p.33).

The design for this and other pieces of metalwork from Dresser’s studio at this time show the distinctive hand of John Moyr Smith (1839–1912), illustrator and freelance designer. Smith was probably responsible for much of the figurative work that came from Dresser’s studio at this time. These figurative roundels relate to drawings in Smith’s Studies for Pictures, published London, 1868.

‘I simply love cast iron – no woodworm, no moth and easily cleaned. A touch of light brown wax polish with soft brush enhances the patination. Two of these at the top of a flight of stairs would make a hall palatial.’JS
Christopher Dresser 1834–1904
Coalbrookdale Co. (maker)

8 Hall table with hat and coat stand, 1869
Cast iron, with marble top and painted metal inserts to umbrella/stick stands, the design was registered at the Patent Office, 25 October 1869
91 x 54 x 19¾ in · 231 x 137 x 49 cm
Exhibited: Paris, International Exhibition, 1867, the same design; London, International Exhibition, 1871, the same design


From 1830s Abraham and Alfred Darby had turned the fortunes of the failing Coalbrookdale around by introducing the manufacture of decorative cast iron designs by prominent designers such as John Bell, Alfred Stevens, B.J. Talbert, and Dresser. Dresser provided designs for Coalbrookdale from late 1867 until 1887. His first recorded designs for the company included three coat stands and a suite of hall furniture, registered with the Patent Office in December 1867.* The same design was exhibited at two international exhibitions in 1867 and 1871.

* See W. Halen, Christopher Dresser, London 1990, p.203

“When I saw this in Alfie’s Antiques Market I was struck – my mother never saw it. If it had been in her family home she would have paid 2/6d, 12½p today but quite a sum in 1930, for its removal. The dustbin man would have needed that for such a lump. She called the Victorian stuff “dust traps”! All my beloved cast iron my mother would throw out. Anyway I’ve got two now,” JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

11 Pair of tinted Parian ware vases, 1868
Porcelain, with white and Celadon glaze, decorated with high relief owl heads; impressed Minton, date mark for 1868, and shape number 0631
Height 7¾ in · 19.5 cm each

‘Very beautiful Celadon and white applied and high relief owl heads. (I shall call them this until someone can deny me! No chance.)’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

12 Pair of tinted Parian ware vases, 1868
Porcelain, with white and Celadon glazes, decorated with high relief owl heads, impressed Minton, date mark for 1868, and shape number 0631
Height 7¾ in · 19.5 cm each

‘Very beautiful Celadon and white applied and high relief owls and foliage.’ JS

Attributed to Christopher Dresser

9 Spill vase, 1869
Porcelain, with gilt on a mazarine ground; hand painted 222; impressed Wedgwood / WFX / P / J and date mark for 1869
Height 4 in · 10 cm

‘I bought this spill vase from Geoffrey van Arcade, 105–107 Portobello Rd, which is now a dress shop! It is a little jewel with dagger gilding around the top and small light blue dots.’ JS

W. Brownfield & Sons (maker)

10 Square section vase with butterfly and bamboo design, 1875
Porcelain, with gilt and enamels; impressed Brownfield, 122, and registration mark for 30 October 1875
Height 10¼ in · 26 cm

EXHIBITED: The Fine Art Society, The Aesthetic Movement and the Cult of Japan, 1972 (96), same design in different colours

‘This shape is of great Chinese antiquity – just what Dresser would seek to inspire his new designs for Brownfield.’ JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

14 Jardinière, c.1880

Wooden frame, carved and gilded, with ceramic tiles
14 1/2 x 30 1/4 x 13 1/4 in · 37 x 78 x 33.5 cm

This tile design (no.1386) is illustrated in the Minton China Works catalogue c.1885, sheet 15.

8 inch square Minton tiles with a black field and silver and gold "plate" decoration. The design is of such magnificence that I don’t think I can bear to part myself from it. If the design is not Dresser then it must be his great mentor, Owen Jones.” 3s

Barnard, Bishop & Barnard (maker)

13 Fire-iron rests, c.1875

Polished brass
6 1/2 x 7 in · 16.5 x 18 cm

LITeRATuRE: Barnard, Bishop & Barnard catalogue, no.845

"The trade has enjoyed ascribing the valuable name of “Dresser” to vast varieties of these andirons and firedogs – many Dresser designs have been “bastardised”.” 3s
As a result of enormous public interest in the Art Movement, ceramic manufacturers such as Minton became increasingly experimental. They were influenced by ‘exotic’ elements in Japanese and Chinese crafts, which the population had been exposed to thanks to flourishing trade links. Like many innovative manufacturers, Colin Minton Campbell, director from 1858, kept a major collection of ceramics at the factory, including early Wedgwood, Sévres, German porcelain, Delft ware, Spanish and Italian pottery and ‘Oriental’ ceramics, including Persian ware, Chinese and Japanese porcelain. This formed a study collection to be used as source of inspiration, along with the Minton Library source material, which included La Décoration Arabe, Peasant Art in Europe, The Ornamental Arts of Japan, and Chinese Ornament, amongst others. Minton’s ‘cloisonné ware’ is an imitation of Chinese cloisonné metalwork where coloured enamel ornament is enclosed within very fine brass-wire outline. In Minton’s pseudo-cloisonné raised enamelled decoration is outlined with gilding. The use of colour is also borrowed from the original technique, particularly the vivid turquoise, which is a hallmark of Minton’s cloisonné.

During his career Dresser was employed by over sixty manufacturers, many of whom used his name explicitly as a marketing device (see Halén, 1990). In her comprehensive text on Minton, Joan Jones suggests that Dresser’s association with the firm began in the early 1860s. At the London International Exhibition of 1862 Dresser produced over eighty detailed sketches of exhibits, and purchased many of these exhibits for his personal collection. In his report on the exhibition Dresser praised a number of Minton pieces that relate very closely to designs which he later supplied to the firm, implying these were his designs.

Dresser applauded Japanese craftsmen as having ‘done as much to improve our taste as even our schools of art and public museums … for these Japanese objects have got into our homes, and among them we live’ (quoted in Jones, 1993, p.89). Owen Jones, as Dresser’s mentor, was also a major influence on the designs for Minton, especially his publication the Grammar of Chinese Ornament, 1868. Many of the patterns illustrated in this book came directly from the Alfred Morrison’s collection of Chinese decorative art (see cat. 58).

Dresser’s connection with the firm lasted until the 1880s. During this time he supplied designs for both patterns and shaped but also acted on a purely consultancy basis. Although we cannot firmly attribute these designs to Dresser it can be said that none would have existed without his direction and influence. Dresser’s designs for Minton were exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition, 1867, and their ‘cloisonné ware’ featured at the Philadelphia Centennial, 1876, where it attracted much praise and its influence was far reaching. The firm were represented at all the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century.

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

15 Large ovoid vase, 1875

Bone china, decorated with applied elephant handles painted bronze, decorated Japanese-influenced patterns and fan-shaped vignettes, depicting a kingfisher and canary between oriental flowers, separate ceramic base is fashioned to imitate a traditional ebonised Japanese stand; printed globe mark just visible on the base

23¾ x 14 in · 60.5 x 36 cm

Literature: Jones, Minton: The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, p.102, London, 1993

‘I am slightly inclined to consider this a design by Dr Christopher Dresser. I believe he has the prudence and panache to design ceramic stands (beneath decorative vases). The failure of British manufacturers to make wooden stands so excellently demonstrated by most Chinese and Japanese art wares is an amazing omission. This has heavy Japanese inspiration and Takko, my wife, is Japanese.’
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

16 Scroll vase, 1871
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, with ribbon design, decorated with plum blossom and foliage, impressed Minton, with date mark for 1871
Height 6 in · 15 cm


‘A delightful vase heavily inspired by Japanese spill vases. I ascribe this to Dresser because of its quirky “al fresco” charm.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

17 Four-handled solifluer, c.1870
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with stylised foliage
Height 8 in · 20 cm

LITERATURE: Jones, Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, Shrewsbury, 1993, p.108, the same shape for Persian ware illustrated

‘This vase is unusual and in an Islamic style.’ JS
18 Fan-shape 'Persian' bottle with handles, c.1870
Porcelain, 'cloisonné', decorated with crane, foliage and Japanese-style geometric designs; impressed Minton, with illegible date mark; shape number 1472 · Height 9 in · 23 cm

Literature: Jones, Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, Shrewsbury, 1993, same shape illustrated, p.109 – Jones states this shape was designed by Dresser; Atterbury & Batkin, The Dictionary of Minton, London, 1999, p.106 design featuring similar crane illustrated, and p.145 related drawing of a crane and clouds after Dresser illustrated

I bought this for £900 from Joan Jones in the Minton museum – expensive! It is impossible to be sure that it’s Dresser but it is likely a pair with cat.19 (opposite). The attractive bases are designed as part of the body – saves making wooden stands, as would be made in Japan. To my mind this base idea is typical of Dresser’s zenzful ingenuity.

19 Fan-shape ‘Persian’ bottle with handles, c.1870
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with foliage and Japanese-style geometric designs; impressed Minton, with illegible date mark; shape number 1472 · Height 9 in · 23 cm

Literature: Jones, Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, Shrewsbury, 1993, same design illustrated, p.109 – Jones says this shape was designed by Dresser.
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

Pair of bottle-shape vases, 1873
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with high relief gilt bird heads, impressed Minton, date mark for 1873
Height 10 1/2 in · 26.5 cm
‘These are a very attractive pair of vases, probably by Dresser, with Islamic in inspiration.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

Pair of vases, in a typical Chinese shape, c.1861
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, with applied gilt ring handles; impressed Minton, date mark of the body for 1861 (?)
Height 10 in · 25.5 cm
‘These are a charming colour and decorated with floral sprigs which are beautifully graded to match the width of the vessel.’ JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

22 Bottle-shape vase with flute neck, 1870
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with peacock feather design; impressed Minton, date mark for 1870 and month mark N for November; shape number 1107
Height 8 3/4 in · 21.5 cm

Islamic inspired arabesque and diaper pattern bought from Andy Tilbrook in September 1988. 

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

23 Spill vase, 1870
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with foliage and Japanese-style symbol; impressed Minton, date mark for 1870 and month mark T for August; applied paper label inscribed 1103 shape / 1867 / Dresser · Height 6 1/2 in · 16.5 cm

This shape appears in the Minton estimate book for the Paris International Exhibition, 1867, decorated with designs by Dresser. Drawings relating to the pattern on this vase can be found in an album of Dresser tracings held by the V&A Museum [E.1499–1987].

“This is a neat spill vase of Chinese inspiration with nice ceramic feet.” JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

24 Spill vase, 1873
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with a mirrored square spiral and floral designs, impressed Minton, shape number 1276, date mark for 1873 and month mark Y for August
Height 7 1/2 in · 19 cm


This shape appears in an album of Dresser tracings held by the V&A Museum [E.1499–1987].

‘This is a neat spill vase of Chinese inspiration with nice ceramic feet.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

25 Bottle-shape vase, 1879
Porcelain, with gilt and enamel decoration, with pierced ‘Rice Grain’ pattern, impressed Minton, shape number 2194, date mark for 1879
Height 9 1/4 in · 23.5 cm

‘Rice Grain’ decoration is created by perforating patterns in unfired porcelain, when fired the glaze that has collected in the cut-out areas becomes translucent.

‘So quirky it must be the Doctor! Very rare simulated plique a jour and “rice grain”.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

26 *Spill vase*, c.1872

Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with Japanese-style textile design and foliage; base stamped with Mintons maker’s transfer

Height 8⅞ in · 22 cm


‘This vase I bought from Haslam and Whiteway.’ JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

27 Jardinière, 1876
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with two scenes: bamboo vase with foliage (verso) and hanging decorations (recto), impressed Mintons, date mark for 1876, month mark N for November, shape number 1329, transfer stamp Minton’s; 6⅛ x 7¼ in · 16 x 19.5 cm

LITERATURE: Jones, Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, Shrewsbury, 1993, p.120, same shape illustrated

‘This design is rich with Japanese ornament.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

28 Pair of five-finger tulip vases, 1868
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, impressed Minton, date mark for 1868 7 ⅞ x 8½ in · 18 x 21.5 cm


“These conjure thoughts of Dutch inspiration. I bought these for £900 from Haslam and Whiteway – expensive but very rare.” JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

29 Pair of vases, based on Japanese bronze shapes, c.1872

Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with birds, foliage and Japanese-style geometric patterns, impressed Minton, factory pattern number 137 (?), and illegible date mark; applied paper label inscribed W 3209A / PAIR OF MINTON CLOISONNE VASES / SOLD JUL

Height 31.4 cm · 31 cm


‘I vacillate on my views of buying pairs of vases or just one. If you have room, a pair each side of a mantelpiece clock is a spectacular vista but, if you are short of cash, one is better than none.’ JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

30 Teacup, saucer and side plate, 1872
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, saucer and side plate impressed Minton, date mark for 1872, month mark E May
Cup height 2 3/8 in · 6 cm
Saucer diameter 6 1/4 in · 18 cm
Side plate diameter 8 in · 20 cm


Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

32 Teacup and saucer, 1882
Porcelain, impressed Minton, date mark for 1882
Teacup height 2 3/4 in · 6 cm
Saucer diameter 7 3/8 in · 19.5 cm

‘I bought this from Haslam and Whiteway in April 1986, it is a delicious object with exquisite painting of Persian inspiration.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

31 Teacup, saucer and side plate, 1875
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, saucer and side plate impressed Mintons, date mark for 1875, month mark F for September, cup and saucer are shape number 6 1/4 in
Cup height 2 3/4 in · 7 cm
Saucer diameter 6 1/2 in · 17 cm
Side plate diameter 8 in · 20 cm

Literature: Jones, Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production, Shrewsbury, 1993, p.59, same design for teacup and saucer illustrated; Durant, Christopher Dresser, London, 1993, p.102

Although these are standard Minton shapes the decoration is a known Dresser design.
The same design for the teacup, saucer and side plate are held in the V&A Museum [c.1777A–1986].

‘This tableware is very beautiful designed with fabulous quality of work – magical dark blue in unused condition.’ JS

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

33 Teacup, saucer, side plate and dessert plate, 1872–73
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with gilt lily pads and stylised foliage; side plate impressed Mintons, registration mark: Class IV, 5th April 1872; dessert plate impressed date mark for 1873
Teacup height 4 3/4 in · 12.5 cm
Saucer diameter 6 3/4 in · 18 cm
Side plate diameter 8 in · 20 cm
Dessert plate 9 1/2 in · 24.5 cm

Literature: Halén, Christopher Dresser, Oxford, 1990, pl.99

‘Very pretty’ JS
34 Pair of jugs, c.1870
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)
Height 6 in · 15.2 cm
PROVENANCE: Richard Dennis; where bought by John Scott
‘The pair is more pleasing to the eye than one. They are a typical Dresser design. White, blue, gold and polychrome – perfection!’ JS

35 Three-footed rose bowl, c.1870
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with butterflies and Chinese-style geometric pattern
3¾ x 7¼ in · 9.5 x 18.5 cm
Harry Lyons was a great supporter of The Doctor. This piece was part of an exhibition at New Century, 69 Kensington Church St. I joined the queue at 9.20 am for 12 pm opening. I bought 14 items. I encourage dealers to have “first come, first served” sales. It is more fun and engenders a zest for collecting.’ JS

36 Pink pilgrim flask, 1873
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with butterflies and Chinese-style geometric pattern; hand-painted S1911, impressed date mark for 1873, shape number 2021, transfer stamp Mintons; saucer impressed month mark S September, applied label inscribed JS – 22
Height 6 in · 15.2 cm
‘This flask has a gorgeous pink field. One was sold to the Oslo Museum, the curator Wider Halen is a fellow Dresser enthusiast.’ JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

37  Dragon vase, 1876

Porcelain, 'cloisonné', decorated with a bronze-effect dragon in high relief and stylised foliage; impressed date mark for 1876
Height 17 in · 43 cm

'This very dramatic piece may be a little extravagant for the Doctor.' 35
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

38  Large 'renaissance' shape vase, c.1870

Porcelain, 'cloisonné', with attached wooden base, decorated with birds, dragons and geometric patterns

Height 18 in · 46 cm including base

The original drawing for the repeated hexagonal pattern is part of an album of tracings by Dresser, and his studio, in the V&A Museum [x.2499-1917].

"A very pretty vase – I had a black base made to secure it." JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

39 Pair of vases, 1872
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with high relief owl heads and Chinese-style geometric patterns, impressed Minton, shape number 1390, and date mark for 1872 (?)
Height 7 ½ in · 19 cm
‘These very attractive vases come in various colourways. The Doctor likes animals and birds and fish but some types more than others.’ JS

40 Large pair of pink vases, 1868
Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, with swollen body and trumpet neck, decorated with a stylised foliate bands; impressed Minton, date mark for 1868 (?), month mark S for September; factory pattern number 1612
12 ½ x 8 ½ in · 32 x 21 cm
‘Lovely.’ JS
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

41 **Large moon flask vase, c.1874**

Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with stylised face on neck, dragons, foliage and geometric patterns on the body; shape number 1348

12 1/2 x 9 1/2 in · 32 x 24 cm

*LITERATURE:* Halén, Christopher Dresser, Oxford, 1990, pl.102, same shape illustrated. Jones, *Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production*, Shrewsbury, 1993, p.100, same shape with similar decoration illustrated, Jones attributes this design to Dresser.

The face on the necks of these vases was taken from Plate LXI in Owen Jones’s publication the *Grammar of Chinese Ornament* (1867).

‘These are much more handsome in a pair if you have the space and the cash. They are very grand, almost a direct copy of “Oriental” cloisonné vases.’ JS

42 **Moon flask vase, c.1870**

Porcelain, ‘cloisonné’, decorated with Japanese-style foliage and patterns; impressed Minton, applied paper label inscribed HW424 / MINTON CLOISONNE [sic] VASE

10 1/2 x 9 in · 26.5 x 23 cm

*LITERATURE:* Halén, Christopher Dresser, Oxford, 1990, pl.102, same shape with similar decoration illustrated; Jones, *Minton The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production*, Shrewsbury, 1993, p.100, same shape with similar decoration illustrated, Jones attributes this design to Dresser.
Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

43 Two-handled jardinière, 1870
Porcelain, 'cloisonné', decorated with stylised foliage and geometric patterns, impressed. Minton, date mark for 1870, shape number 1562
7¾ x 12½ in · 19.5 x 32 cm

Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire (maker)

44 Footed rose bowl, c. 1870
Porcelain, 'cloisonné', decorated with stylised foliage and faces, and Chinese-style geometric patterns, impressed with illegible marks
3¾ x 7 in · 9.5 x 18 cm

LITERATURE: Halén, Christopher Dresser, Oxford, 1990, pl.105, illustrated in situ in the John Scott collection
'This was bought from Tony Cross.' JS
Charles L. Eastlake 1836–1906

 Architectural cabinet, c.1867

Oak · 77 x 47 x 16 in · 196 x 120 x 40.5 cm

Literature: Eastlake, Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details, London, 1868, pl. I, frontispiece, a detail of a similar design with some additional carving, Gere & Whiteway, Nineteenth-Century Design: from Pugin to Mackintosh, London 1993, pl.128, p.116, a similar design

A similar cabinet by Eastlake was exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition, 1867. The following year a detail of that design was used by Eastlake for the frontispiece of his highly influential publication on interior design, Hints on Household Taste, a collection of his didactic musings, originally written for the Cornhill Magazine and The Queen. The purpose of the publication was to advise the ‘general public’, who had previously been overlooked in the discourse on contemporary design, on matters of taste. In his preface Eastlake explains the importance of the public: ‘without whose support, as every artist knows, all attempts in the direction of aesthetic reform would be hopeless.’

This cabinet illustrates many of the design principles Eastlake sets out in the text: the balance between functionality and beauty, the subservience of decoration and the bold use of fittings.

In the 1860s, Eastlake provided designs for Art Furniture Co., who are possible candidates for the manufacture of this piece. Later his designs for furniture were made by Jackson & Graham, his metalwork designs were made by Benham & Froud, textiles by Cowlishaw and wallpapers by Jeffrey & Co. Eastlake even designed jewellery which was exhibited by Howell, James & Co. at the great exhibitions of 1871 and 1872.
Attributed to James Hadley 1837–1903

ROYAL WORCESTER (MAKER)

46 Vase, moulded, painted and gilded to resemble bamboo with a modelled tortoise monkey and frog, c.1870
Porcelain, painted with enamels gilded and moulded, impressed maker’s mark
Height 8¾ in · 22cm
‘I bought this from Haslam and Whiteway in March 1993. I adore the mâté ivory glaze here. More animal games are depicted here (see opposite). Dresser must have been very popular with children – he had such a lovely feel for the grotesque and the humorous.’

47 Vase, decorated in the Japanese taste with a stork and bamboo plant, 1872
Porcelain, painted with enamels gilded and moulded, impressed and printed maker’s marks and dated 72
Height 11¼ in · 28.5 cm
‘This vase is decorated with very popular and attractive glazes.’

48 Cup and saucer, the cup decorated with armed frogs hunting and the saucer with a snake eating a frog, 1874
Porcelain, painted with enamels gilded and moulded, impressed and printed maker’s marks and dated 74
Cup height 2¼ in · 6.8 cm; saucer diameter 6¾ in · 16.8 cm
Thomas Goode exhibited a collection of Royal Worcester Japanese-influenced porcelain at the International Exhibition London 1872. The Art Journal catalogue reported ‘they have suddenly become the “fashion” and the Works at Worcester cannot produce them fast enough.’

At the 1878 Paris Exhibition the company won a gold medal for its ceramics display, this style of porcelain being particularly commended. R. W. Binns, art director at Worcester, had been inspired by the Japanese ceramics, from the collection of Rutherford Alcock, shown at the 1862 International Exhibition, and encouraged staff at the porcelain works to use eastern motifs in their work as well as collecting Korean, Chinese and Japanese pottery himself.

‘This teacup and saucer are part of a series called “Snakes and Frogs”, depicting a delightful game of snakes in a pond with frogs and Masai short spears – an early joke of snakes and ladders. I bought this from The Fine Art Society. It is an exquisite design with lustrous iry toned colours.’

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Thomas Jeckyll 1827–1881
BARNARD, BISHOP & BARNARD, NORWICH (MAKER)

49 Sunflower andirons, c.1876
(design registered 11 April 1876)

Gilded brass, with iron support
32½ x 10½ x 20½ in · 82.5 x 27.5 x 52 cm


Thomas Jeckyll’s association with the iron founders Barnard, Bishop & Barnard, based in his native Norwich, lasted eighteen years. His greatest feat for the company was the Japanese Pavilion for the 1876 Philadelphia International Exhibition, which travelled to Paris in 1878, before being installed in a Norwich park where it remained until 1944. The Sunflower Andirons, alongside fire grates incorporating motifs from the Pavilion, were part of the display at both Philadelphia and Paris.

Most significantly, the Sunflower Andirons featured in the notorious Peacock Room, designed for F.R. Leyland’s house by Jeckyll, with mural paintings by James McNeill Whistler. This pair is the only known whose front section is made entirely of brass. The BBB catalogue from 1877 (no.880) shows the design available in iron or brass.

* D.J. King, Artistic Houses, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1883–4

‘Jeckyll is one of my favourite artists. I have six of his fireplaces around my home. He was strongly inspired by Japanese designs and adapted his metal products to suit British manufactured goods. I have always liked metalwork — it is sturdy and the moths can’t eat it.’ JS

BBB catalogue, 1877, advertisement for the design in various materials
Thomas Jeckyll 1827–1881
Barnard, Bishop & Barnard, Norwich (maker)

50 Hydrangea back chair, designed, 1878
Cast iron and carved oak, 32½ x 14 in · 82.5 x 35.5 cm

eXhibited: Paris, International Exhibition, 1878, a version;


The back of the chair is cast with Hydrangea stem panels, which was available in five variations according to the BBB catalogue: Chrysanthemum, Rose, Hydrangea, Honeysuckle and Shell. Jeckyll’s original drawings for the shape of the chair back, now in the V&A Museum [E.5454-1958 and E.5452-1958], were used for the cresting of his Japanese pavilion.

‘This is a beautiful little cast iron hall chair, my second one! no.1 was broken in three pieces by removers. We repaired it and gifted it to the Liverpool Museum, not to be sat upon.’ JS

Thomas Jeckyll 1827–1881
Barnard, Bishop & Barnard, Norwich (maker)

51 Ornamental cast-iron garden bench, designed, 1878
Cast iron with wooden slats, plaque stamped Barnard, Bishop & Barnard, Norwich on the front of the frame, bee cipher of the firm on each side
35 x 54 x 24 in · 90 x 138 x 61 cm

eXhibited: Paris, International Exhibition, 1878, a version;
New York, Bard Graduate Centre for Decorative Arts, Design History and Material Culture, Thomas Jeckyll: architect and designer 1827–1881, 2003 (151)

lIternature: Barnard, Bishop & Barnard catalogue, 1878 (registered) no.435; Soros & Arbuthnott, Thomas Jeckyll: architect and designer 1827–1881, New Haven, London, 2003, fig. 6–85; See also fig. 1–2, p.14, a version made for Great Eastern Railway, p.201 advertisement from Complete Catalogue of General Manufacturers, 1884 and p.218, figs. 6–45 and 6–46, contemporary photograph of the showroom at BBB, Queen Victoria Street, London

The original design for the back of this bench, to be used on the ‘top front edge’ of the pavilion, is in the V&A Museum [E.5451–1958]. The original advertisement for the ‘garden-chair’ in the BBB catalogue indicates it was available in two sizes, this version at 4ft 6in wide and a 6ft version.
Thomas Jeckyll 1827–1881
ROBINS & CO., DUDLEY (MAKER)

52 Wall sconce, designed 1875
Cast and chased brass, with registration mark, verso, for 2 October 1875
19 1/2 x 14 1/4 x 4 1/4 in · 49.5 x 36.8 x 10.8 cm

PROVENANCE: Andrew Mackintosh Patrick; The Fine Art Society, 2007; where sold to the John Scott collection


Soros and Arbuthnot have suggested in their definitive study of Jeckyll’s oeuvre that the design was adapted from a series of colour woodcuts by the Japanese print maker, Nakayama Sugakudo.

Jeckyll himself registered the design for this wall sconce on 2 October 1875, the original drawing is in the National Archives held by the Public Record Office (BT 45/39 no.194900). The design shows two alternative versions for the border, a simpler version for cast iron and this more elaborate design for brass. Although most of Jeckyll’s designs for metalwork were executed by Barnard, Bishop & Barnard, this design was manufactured by Robbins & Co. Jeckyll’s younger brother Henry, a brass founder, is known to have worked for them and is likely to have introduced the firm to Jeckyll’s designs whilst his brother was in confinement for mental health reasons.

Another version of this wall sconce is in the V&A Museum and was acquired with a generous contribution from John Scott.

“This is a very ‘Oriental’ superbly cast sconce,” JS
The design for this fire insert capitalises on the success of the Japanese Pavilion; the decoration derives directly from ink and wash drawings for brackets of the pavilion, now in the V&A Museum [E.5445–1958 and E.5442–1958]. From 1876 several variations of the fireplace inserts were made, with different birds, sometimes with a fan over the arched opening.

Superb sharpness in cast iron. The design is of Japanese inspiration and has been lent to many exhibitions including one in Japan. ‘

Jeckyll began designing these fireplace front panels in 1873 inspired by Japanese motifs and continued throughout the decade. Architects such as Norman Shaw incorporated them into their buildings, as well as the industrial designer Christopher Dresser for his architectural projects at Alangate, Halifax, and Bushloe House, Leicester. Jeckyll used cast iron and brass versions of this design in his work at 1 Holland Park, London, for the prominent collector Alexander Ionides. The stove fronts exhibited at the Paris exhibition of 1878 were described by the Furniture Gazette as ‘a large and varied stock of stoves, hearths and mantelpieces...of extremely artistic character.’
Attributed to Thomas Jeckyll 1827–1881

55 Aesthetic gong, c.1880
Cast iron and brass
$44\frac{1}{2} \times 26 \text{ in} \cdot 113 \times 66 \text{ cm}$

‘I bought this in an old shop off Meols Drive, Hoylake. Voysey designed houses here and gongs were de rigueur for the posh 1930s homeowners. I am confident of this attribution.’ JS

Attributed to Coalbrookdale & Co.

56 Overmantle cabinets and mirror, c.1880
Cast iron, bevelled glass and mirrorplate
$40 \times 62 \text{ in} \cdot 101.5 \times 167.5 \text{ cm}$

The backplates of the cabinets are cast with stylised foliage.

‘Probably designed by Thomas Jeckyll. I can’t find a maker’s name or number but I feel it must be Coalbrookdale. These cabinets are ideal for a display of small tiles and the mirror lightens the room.’ JS
Owen Jones 1809–1874

57 Fire screen, 1863

Inlaid various woods, with modern wallpaper insert (design by Dresser) · 48 1/4 x 26 3/4 in · 123 x 68 cm

Comparison between this piece and Jones’s work for Alfred Morrison at Carlton House Terrace strongly suggests it was designed for the interior. A posthumous exhibition of Jones’s work in 1874 included an ‘Inlaid Screen’ made for the boudoir and lent by Morrison himself; it is possible that the screen exhibited here was that same one.*

* Catalogue of Works by The Late Owen Jones, London International Exhibition, 1874, p.16, no.199

‘We have put in this screen a wallpaper sheet designed by Dr Christopher Dresser. Owen Jones bestowed great honour and encouragement to Dresser by including a Dresser design in his famous masterpiece The Grammar of Ornament.’

Owen Jones 1809–1874

58 Upright display case, 1863

Ebony veneer with ivory marquetry, with glass doors · 104 3/4 x 33 3/4 x 17 in · 266 x 85 x 43 cm

Provenance: Commissioned by Alfred Morrison, Fonthill House, Wiltshire, 1863


Alfred Morrison was a major collector of the decorative arts and patron of contemporary design who commissioned Jones to extend his home Fonthill House, built by his father James Morrison. This included new staircases, a drawing room, and an addition to the house for his collection of Chinese porcelain and enamels. This case was one of several designed to exhibit these objects, including some of the finest works from the Summer Palace, Peking. Morrison’s collection provided Jones with much of the material for his publication Grammar of Chinese Ornament, 1867.

Jackson & Graham, prestigious London-based decorators, manufactured the furniture for Fonthill and Carlton House Terrace, as well as other furniture by Jones. The firm were provided a ‘full-service’ for clients and were the first firm of their kind to employ in-house designers and skilled craftsmen from across Europe. Jones was the highest paid designer working for the firm and he was chosen to redesign their Oxford Street premises in 1869.

‘With this magnificent cabinet I squeeze a tiny connection with two nineteenth-century collectors of great renown – William Beckford and Alfred Morrison. Beckford built the fantastulous Fonthill and my readers may enrich their history of this
Celebrated as a designer and theorist more than an architect, Jones became a prolific advocate of formal rather than naturalistic pattern in modern design. At 23 he toured the Middle East and travelled to Spain the following year, in 1834. On his return he published the first of two seminal chromolithographic books Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra, using the hundreds of studies and plaster casts he had taken there. This publication remains one of the most influential treatises on Islamic architecture. He continued to exert his influence in design theory through his polychrome masterpiece The Grammar of Ornament, 1856, reproducing the ‘best’ examples of decoration from across time and cultures.

Jones’s work for the silk weaving firm Warner, Sillet & Ramm is unusual for being credited to the designer at that time. There are sixteen known designs signed by Jones: five are in the V&A Museum and the rest remained in private hands including this piece. These designs were amongst the first modern original designs in silk bought by the firm who exhibited one in at the London International Exhibition, 1871. Several of his designs were exhibited by Jackson & Graham in 1873, including one being woven on a loom as a demonstration.
Owen Jones 1809–1874

WARNER, SILLET & Ramm ( MAK E R)

60 ‘Sultan’ textile, 1870–74

Jacquard woven silk
114 x 63 in · 290 cm x 160 cm


LITERATURE: A Choice of Design, 1890 to 1990: Fabrics by Warner & Sons Limited, London 1983, ill. no. 44, p. 75, the same design; Schoeser, Owen Jones Silks, 1987, the same design; Parry, The Victoria & Albert Museum’s Textile Collection: British Textiles from 1850 to 1900, London 1992, pl. 65, p. 58, the same design; Flores, Owen Jones: Design, Ornament, Architecture, and Theory in an Age of Transition, New York, 2006, fig. 2.18 and pl. 4.8, pp. 90–91, and 211, the same design in different colours.

The first recorded weaving of this design was 20 September 1870 and it was used by the designer that year as a wall covering in his scheme for James Gurney’s Billiard’s Room and the Drawing Room, Regent’s Park, London. Jones ordered specially varied colour combinations to suit the character of each room.

‘A masterpiece and in excellent condition.’ JS
**Armchair in the Reformed Gothic style, 1862**

*Designed*, c.1865 *Made*

Ebony inlaid with bone, re-upholstered in horsehair, brass feet

40 ¼ x 22 ⅞ x 22 ⅞ in · 103.5 x 58 x 58 cm

**Exhibited:** London, International Exhibition, 1862, a very similar design; Tokyo, Sezon Museum of Art, *Birth of Modern Design*, 1990 (15), one of the pair


Two carved armchairs, variations on this design, were exhibited in the Medieval Court at the International Exhibition, London 1862. An original drawing by Seddon (in the V&A Museum) shows that one, purchased by Myles Birket Foster, incorporated painted panels by Rossetti with whom he was a close friend.

‘These are beautiful solid ebony chairs, one with an embroidered seat worked by my dear, talented wife, Takko’. *JS*

**Settee in the Reformed Gothic style, c.1865**

Ebony inlaid, re-upholstered in linen, brass feet

28 x 73 x 28¾ in · 71 x 185.5 x 73 cm

This settee appears to be en suite with the chairs.

‘How I love ebony inlay!! Such brilliant carving renders copies impossible. This is a lovely wood with a finish like silk and weight similar to cast iron. An escutcheon awaits a good carver to incorporate the owner’s coat of arms.’ *JS*
Attributed to John Pollard Seddon 1827–1906
Gillows & Co., Lancaster and London (maker)
63 Side table, c.1865
Walnut, stamped Gillows Lancaster
28½ x 44 x 27 in · 72.5 x 112 x 68.5 cm
LITERATURE: Gere & Whiteway, Nineteenth-Century Design: from Pugin to Mackintosh, London 1993, pl.131, p.117
An similar table appears in contemporary, unpublished photographs of the bedroom at The Hill, Witley, family home of the artist Birket Foster. The work is attributed to Seddon based on documented pieces by the designer. Foster purchased at least one of Seddon’s chairs, with painted panels by D.G. Rossetti, from the Medieval Court at the London International Exhibition, 1862, where Seddon’s roll-top desk was also shown.

Attributed to Bruce J. Talbert 1838–1882
Cox & Sons (attributed maker)
64 Gothic Revival vase, c.1870
Brass and enamel
Height 15¾ in · 38 cm
PROVENANCE: Paul Reeves collection
‘A strong design with richly enamelled polychrome geometric panels, probably by Bruce Talbert’ 73
Bruce J. Talbert 1838–1881
Gillow & Sons, London (maker)

65 ‘Pet’ sideboard, 1876
Oak, inset with carved boxwood panels; brass hinges and fittings, inscribed EDENDUM BIBENDUM NEC TACENDUM OMNE BONUM DEI DONUM (Eat, drink, or be silent about all God’s good gifts); stamped Gillow & Co. 10134 in drawer
67 × 80 ¼ × 21 ½ × 25 ¼ × 167 cm × 68.5 cm

EXHIBITED: London, International Exhibition, 1871, similar design exhibited; Vienna, International Exhibition, 1873, similar design exhibited; London, V&A Museum, Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts, 1992–3 (H1), similar design


The ‘Pet’ sideboard is one of three designs for furniture by Talbert that attracted critical acclaim, including the Pericles cabinet (cat. 66) and the Juno cabinet. Versions of this sideboard were exhibited by manufacturers Gillow & Co. at the international exhibitions in London 1871 and Vienna 1873. Richard Redgrave, in his ‘Report on the Present State of Design’ marked out the sideboard at 1871 Exhibition for ‘special attention,’ praising its ‘simple form.’

At the first glance we ascertain its use. The broad shelf, at a suitable height for dishes and other table requisites necessary to be ready at hand; the smaller nooks for condiments, the upper shelf for silver plate, the cupboards and drawers beneath, and the recessed shelf for less sightly objects, show it to be a sideboard, and not an ornament. Yet how agreeable are the decorative details—panels of boxwood, where in low relief are incised groups of fish, flesh, and fowl, alternating with geometrical forms; the boxwood and the oak, of which the structural part consists, have just enough contrast to be agreeable without the slightest pretentiousness; it is a work of much merit.

Importantly, the design features in Talbert’s second book Examples of Ancient and Modern Furniture where he says it was bought by the South Kensington Museum (V&A). This sideboard illustrates the understated approach to domestic furniture, which Talbert expounds in the introduction to the new book: ‘It seems the more sensible idea to have for our daily wants furniture which is not monumental. Let it be familiar in feeling without trying to be grand and pretentious…’ As Talbert himself explains the designs illustrated in this book point to a new direction in artistic taste. The “Pet” sideboard differs from the Pericles cabinet in its use of carving rather than inlaid designs and its use of bobbin-turned decoration, which align it with the new interest in Jacobean design. However, the two cabinets share Talbert’s favoured frame construction and therefore have tightly controlled horizontal and vertical planes.

Talbert was one of the most important of the commercial designers of the era, alongside Christopher Dresser. His relationship with the furniture firm Gillows is likely one of the most important of his career. A contemporary trade journal reported that Gillows ‘had some very able draftsmen who were somewhat slow in recognizing the merits of Mr. Talbert’s designs, but in a few years were able to follow his class of work very well.’ He was also credited with having ‘revolutionized [Gillows] style of work,’ some of his designs remained in production for more than a decade.


I love this sideboard: it is so English; so perfect for a dining room, used as shelving for Oscar Wilde’s blue and white oriental wares. The plaques are boxwood and possibly worked by Japanese craftsmen.”3
3. Ibid.
Bruce J. Talbert 1838–1881
Holland & Sons, London (maker)

66 Pericles’ Dressoir, 1866
Oak, inlaid with ebony and fruitwoods, carved and gilded; brass hinges and fittings. 128 × 113 × 130 in · 325 × 287 × 76 cm
Exhibited: Paris, International Exhibition, 1867

A successful and prolific designer, Talbert was described in one obituary as ‘probably the most original and remarkable furniture designer which this aesthetic age has produced’. A successful networker, he was part of a close group of designers working in a ‘reformed’ Gothic style at this time: Norman Shaw and William Nesfield were amongst his acquaintances along with lesser known but equally prolific and influential designers such as J.M. Brydon, John Moir Smith and Daniel Cottier. As with many of the successful designers of the nineteenth century, Pugin being a notable exception, Talbert acted more like a conductor than a soloist; often collaborating with peers, commissioning designs from other freelance designers and apprenticing young draftsmen and artists. His style developed as the fashion for more vernacular tastes evolved and the publication of his designs and work both during his life and after his death helped his name and influence spread.

Exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition, 1867, the Holland & Sons Cabinet is arguably one of Talbert’s finest pieces, certainly the most accomplished of his Gothic Revival designs for furniture. The Art Journal catalogue describes the cabinet, or ‘Dressoir’, as ‘certainly the most distinguished amongst competing Gothic works’ and G.W. Yapp described the ‘English Modern Mediaeval Work’ as, ‘thoroughly English … it’s construction is perfectly adapted to the nature of the [native] wood employed.’ It impressed the judges who awarded it silver medal for furniture design and manufacture.

Such dressers were originally designed for use in a banqueting hall to show off the host’s silver, silver gilt and gold plate, and to be used for serving of drinks. The cabinet’s large canopy is surmounted by a bas-relief depicting a scene from Shakespeare’s Pericles, hence the cabinet’s name; the shelves too are carved with quotations from the play. Inlaid panels depict fish and game, meat, crops and fruit – subjects deemed suitable for a dining room. Elsewhere conventionalised floral designs, gilding, decorative mouldings and brass fittings fill the surface. A contemporary engraving shows tapestry curtains to either side of the central doors that are inlaid and dated 1866.

Although slight variant of the cabinet appears in an engraving in Gothic Forms (plate 11), unlike the ‘Pet’ Sideboard (cat. 65), it is not known if any other cabinets were made to this design.

‘As magnificent a piece of furniture as one could hope for. I felt a little ‘glee’ as Gilbert and George were the underbidders. It sat beautifully in my hall for thirty-two years and gave me enormous pleasure. A particular delight is it’s warm welcome for Minton ‘cloisonné’ and myriad of other bright ceramics and odd odds and ends that I displayed on it.
After its display at the 1867 Exhibition, Paris, its subsequent history was raised. The cabinet found a recent home in the large wall of Caterham School in Surrey. The headmaster Steve Smith, against whom I played in the Rugby Varsity match in 1958, told me his sons played hide and seek in the base cupboards.’ JS

The dressoir illustrated in the Art Journal Catalogue of the Paris Universal Exhibition, London, 1867, p.60
Attributed to Bruce James Talbert 1838–1882
HART, SON, PEARD & CO., LONDON (MAKER)

67 Gothic mantle clock frame and garniture, c.1870
Wrought brass, inset with glass cabochons
Clock: 15 1/4 x 11 3/4 in · 38.5 x 30 cm
Candlesticks: 8 3/4 x 9 1/2 in · 22 x 24 cm

Attributed to Bruce James Talbert 1838–1882
HART, SON, PEARD & CO., LONDON
(ATRIBUTED MAKER)

68 Gothic mantle clock frame and garniture, c.1870
Wrought brass, inset with glass cabochons
Clock: 20 1/4 x 11 1/2 in · 51.5 x 29 cm
Candlesticks: 12 1/4 x 10 1/4 in · 31 x 27.5 cm


Talbert ran a large successful design studio, supplying work to many manufacturers across a number of industries. The larger of these two clock cases appears in the Hart, Son, Pead & Co catalogue in 1877, priced at £35 10s with an enamelled clock face or £31 with an engraved face. Hart, Son, Pead & Co became artistic metalworkers, specialising in ecclesiastical manufactures, after merging with Pead & Jackson in 1866 to 1867. The firm exhibited at all the Exhibitions from 1851 and were awarded prize medals that year and thereafter in 1862, 1867 and 1876. The firm produced designs for other prominent designers including Seddon, Burges, Butterfield and Waterhouse.

‘These are part of a garniture. The English trade did not appreciate this but in Paris Michael Whiteway saw a lady pushing along this clock and matching candlesticks. A “garniture” is much more valuable as well as being mellifluous! There are three sizes, large, medium and small designed by Talbert. I’ve been looking for a small clock and small candlestick for 40 years!!! These garnitures are the largest and medium garniture of the three sizes. The smaller of the two creates a grand effect on a mantelpiece with candles lit!’ JS
Attributed to Bruce James Talbert 1838–1882
J. & S. Templet on & Co., Glasgow (maker)

69 Paisley panel, jacquard-woven portière, c.1867

Woven silk and wool with passementerie decoration to top, and manufacturer’s marks woven to bottom left and right
140 × 70 in · 350 × 175 cm

EXHIBITED: London, The Fine Art Society, The Arts & Crafts Textiles in Britain, 1999 (6), the same design

LITERATURE: See Gere & Whiteway, Nineteenth-Century Design: from Pugin to Mackintosh, London 1993 p.94, for comparable portieres

Portieres were highly fashionable hangings produced by many companies of which Templet on was a leader in the market. Templet on’s woven hangings were an exceptional technological accomplishment, being made in one piece rather than constructed of several elements. The formula was a commercial success, though expensive, riding the wave of interest in ‘Art’ textiles. The firm first exhibited examples at the London International Exhibition in 1862.

‘Magnificent jacquard. Machine made. Superb design.’ JS

Hart, Son, Peard & Co. (attributed maker)

70 Candleholder, c.1875

Brass with red glass decoration
17 × 15 in · 43 × 33 cm

‘These candlesticks were designed to form part of a garniture, probably by Bruce Talbert. A garniture is vastly superior to a clock and two candlesticks.’ JS
Albert Auguste Adolphe Wilms 1827–1899
ELKINGTON & CO., BIRMINGHAM (maker)

71 Cloisonné vase on stand, 1873
Cloisonné enamel on gilt metal with bronze stand, impressed E&Co and date mark to base 1873; Elkington & Co to stand
Height 9¼ in · 23.5 cm

LITERATURE: Contributions to the International Exhibition at Philadelphia, London 1876, illustrates a group of Elkington cloisonné enamels closely related to this design.

Elkington & Co were consistently at the forefront of pioneering techniques and successful commercial patenting, and were one of very few western firms to successfully produce cloisonné enamel inspired by the works shown in the Japanese Pavilion at the 1867 Paris exhibition.

Albert Wilms, a renowned modeller and engraver, who had worked at many of the world’s top silver companies, was head of the firm’s design studio from 1859 to his death in 1899. He was responsible for some of the champlevé designs shown by European manufacturers at the 1867 Exhibition and set out to rival the fine Japanese enamels.

Elkingtons developed an electroform technique to produce their cloisonné enamels, using more westernised designs to satisfy European tastes. The results were shown at Philadelphia in 1876 to much acclaim and the V&A Museum bought an example [accession no.562–1877] direct from the exhibition, paying £13 10s. The process proved extremely expensive, however, and Elkingtons soon abandoned its manufacture, instead importing cheaper Japanese-made enamels.

‘A rich example of English cloisonné – grand with a very high quality bronze base.’ JS

72 Pierced vase, c.1880
Porcelain, pierced and glazed, decorated with grotesque dolphins and arabesques, impressed Brownfield, 2/81, 420
Height 10¾ in · 27 cm

PROVENANCE: Haslam & Whiteway; where bought by John Scott for £80 in 1977

EXHIBITED: The Aesthetic Movement and the Cult of Japan, The Fine Art Society, 1972 (90), same design

‘This is quite a masterpiece of production and fretwork with a fish scale pattern’ JS

W. Brownfield & Son (maker)
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detail of the Pericles 'Dressoir', 1867 [cat.70]

Back cover: Minton & Co., Stoke-upon-Trent,
Staffordshire (maker), Pink Pilgrim Flask,1873 [cat.37]

Inside cover: Owen Jones 1809–1874
'Stanhope’ textile design, 1872 [cat.62]