

Tocheres reunited

29 August 2007

Temple Newsam welcomes historic candlestands back home.

Image



The four torcheres reunited to Temple Newsam House

The purchase of four spectacular ‘torcheres’, or candlestands, means an outstanding set of eight is complete again in its original Leeds home of Temple Newsam House.

The torcheres, by James and Anne Pascall, are superb examples of mid-18th century English decorative arts, and were commissioned specially for Temple Newsam.

Much of the house’s original furniture was either sold or retained for future sale by Lord Halifax when the council bought Temple Newsam for the city of Leeds in 1922. Four of the eight torcheres were bought back in 1976, but the remainder had passed into a private collection on the continent in 1961.

They were snapped up by a London dealer who knew their history when they reappeared at a Zurich auction in March this year.

They have now been returned to Temple Newsam, at a cost of £170,000, thank to grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (£60,000), The Art Fund (£55,000), the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund (£40,000) and the Leeds Art Collections Fund (£5,000).

Cllr John Procter, Executive Member for Leisure, said: "The return of these lovely torcheres to Temple Newsam is wonderful for several reasons- their exceptional quality, the fact they were made originally for Temple Newsam and the nature of their rediscovery and rapid return home.

"I believe many of the visitors who flock to the house will appreciate both their beauty and how fortunate Leeds is to have been able to re-acquire them."

Carole Souter, Director of NHMF, said: "The National Heritage Memorial Fund is delighted that this stunning collection will finally be reunited after 85 years of separation. Now future generations will be able to admire and enjoy them in their natural home."

Janet Davies, Head of Purchase Grant Fund, said: "We are particularly delighted to have supported this acquisition, as the V&A Purchase Grant Fund helped Temple Newsam to repatriate the other four torcheres from the set in 1976"

David Barrie, Director of The Art Fund said: "It's easy to imagine how impressive this opulent set of torcheres would have looked when they were first installed at Temple Newsam, and I'm sure they will have an equally startling effect on those who see them back on display at Temple Newsam today.

"Four of the torcheres were repatriated back in 1976, and The Art Fund was delighted to help buy back the remaining four and reunite the set after many years apart".

The torcheres were crafted in 1745-6 as part of the original set of eight candlestands, a suite of seat furniture, tables and wall lights. This had all been commissioned by Henry, seventh Viscount Irwin, for his new Picture Gallery at the house. All the furniture was made by James and Anne Pascall in London.

The stands then cost £26 per pair and actually feature in one of the exhibits in the Picture Gallery*. The seat furniture was bought back for the house in 1939 and a pair of tables was returned in 1947, followed by four of the torcheres in 1976.

The Picture Gallery, one of the greatest rooms from its era in England, was restored to its historic appearance in 1996. It now features many of the paintings which hung there in 1750, and- apart from two tables, now at Floors Castle near Kelso- all its magnificent furniture.

Notes to editors

The Tocheres

*The candlestands play a part in the story of Pan and Syrinx, as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is re-enacted in the Picture Gallery. The female busts are thought to represent Syrinx, a nymph who was pursued through Arcadia by Pan before escaping by jumping into the River Ladon and being transformed into a patch of reeds. Pan and a group of putti (cherubs) who observed the chase are also represented on tables from the same furniture suite.

The Art Fund

The Art Fund is the UK's leading independent art charity. It offers grants to help UK museums and galleries enrich their collections and campaigns widely on behalf of museums and their visitors. It is entirely funded from public donations and has 80,000 members.

Since 1903 the charity has helped museums and galleries all over the UK secure 860,000 works of art for their collections. In 2006 it offered over £5million to museums and galleries.

In January 2007 The Art Fund successfully led the public appeal to save JMW Turner's *Blue Rigi* for Tate. In April 2007 The Art Fund launched a new £5million scheme - 'Art Fund International' - aimed at developing the collections of international contemporary art in UK regional museums and galleries. In July 2007 The Art Fund was instrumental in putting together a unique funding package to ensure Dumfries House in Ayrshire was secured for the nation.

Independent of government, The Art Fund is uniquely placed to campaign on behalf of public collections across the UK. It was at the forefront of the campaign for free admission in 2001 and the campaign to save the Macclesfield Psalter in 2005.

The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund

The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund is a government fund, established at the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) in 1881 as part of its nationwide work. 2006 marked the Fund's 125th anniversary.

The annual grants budget, currently £1,000,000, is provided by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

The Fund supports the acquisition of objects relating to the arts, literature and history by regional museums, record offices and specialist libraries in England and Wales.

Each year it considers some 300 applications and in 2006-07 awarded grants to 115 organisations, enabling acquisitions of over £4million to go ahead. Visit the website at www.vam.ac.uk/purchasegrantfund.

Further information

Donna Cox, Media Relations, Leisure Marketing & Communications
Leeds City Council
Phone: 0113 247 8907
Email: donna.cox@leeds.gov.uk

Dervish Mertcan or Alison Scott, NHMF's press officers
Phone: 020 7591 6102 / 6032 Mobile: 07973 613 820.