

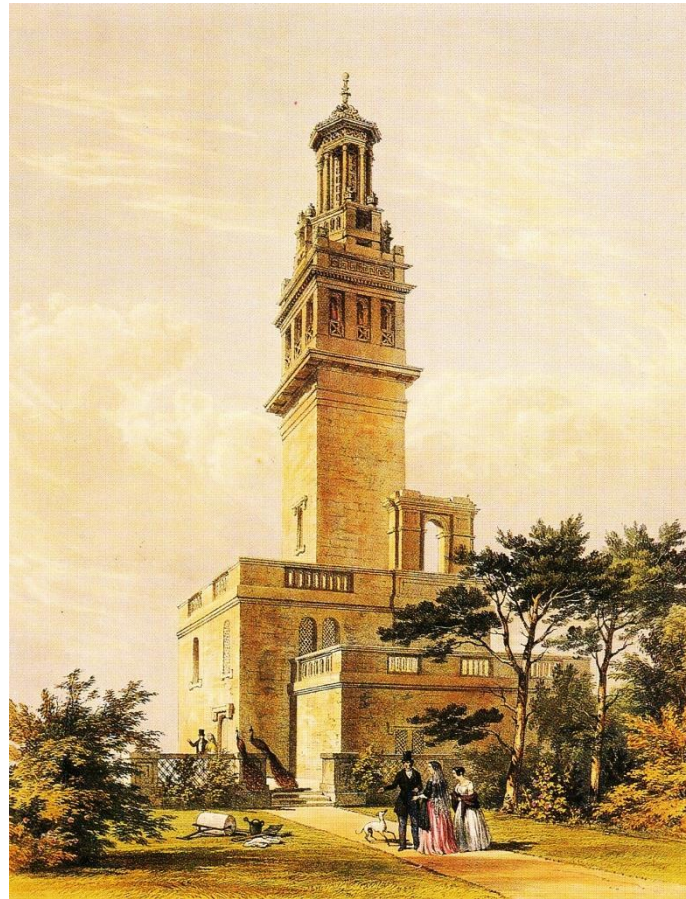


THE BECKFORD NEWSLETTER

NO. 60 MAY 2024



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY 27 JULY



AT LANSDOWN, BATH
BOOKING FORM ENCLOSED

BECKFORD LECTURE 2023

Forty-one members and guests attended the annual Beckford Lecture on 30 November when Dr Alicia Weisberg-Roberts lectured on 'Transport, Translation, Transition: William Beckford's Orientalism in Context'.

The lecture was followed by dinner to produce an excellent and thoroughly enjoyable evening

The lecture will be printed in this year's Beckford Journal.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

This year's AGM will be held in Bath on Saturday 27 July, to enable members to visit Beckford's Tower following the completion of the major restoration project.

We will meet in Kingswood School's Sports Pavilion, which is just across the road from the tower.

An agenda for the AGM and booking form are enclosed.

BECKFORD LECTURE 2024

This year's Beckford Lecture will be held on Tuesday 26 November when Prof Daniele Niedda will lecture on: "William Beckford's Use of the

Ancients in 'Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents'".

The lecture at the Travellers Club, London SW1 and will be followed by dinner.

Daniele Niedda is Professor of English at the University of International Studies, Rome. His main fields of research are British culture in the long Eighteenth Century and its reception in Italy, in particular William Beckford and Edmund Burke, and more recently Victorian studies, with special focus on Benjamin Disraeli.

He chaired the Beckford Roundtable at the ISECS Conference in Rome in July 2023 and recently spent time researching the Beckford Papers at the Bodleian Library whilst a Visiting Fellow at St. Catherine's College, Oxford. He is working on an Italian edition of *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*.

BECKFORD BOOKS FOR SALE

One of our members here in the UK has a collection of books by and relating to William Beckford which she would like to sell. Priority will be given to a buyer for the collection as a whole. The list is available as an email attachment from Beckford@gmx.com

FONTHILL OPEN DAYS 2024

OLD FONTHILL ABBEY GROUNDS

The grounds of Old Fonthill Abbey will be open to the public on Sunday 5 and 19 May from 10.30 – 4.30, giving the opportunity for visitors to enjoy bluebell woods, rhododendrons, lakeside walks and Abbey views. There will be a barbecue (with Buttlings bangers), homemade cakes and soup.

The openings are in aid of aid of the Cure Parkinson's Trust and local charities. Entry donation, suggest £10 per adult. Polite dogs welcome. Unfortunately in the event of very high winds, if Stourhead NT closes, the Fonthill grounds will also close. Please check the NT website.

Old Fonthill Abbey, Fonthill Gifford. SP3 6SP on the Hindon Newtown lane.

FONTHILL HOUSE

The gardens of Fonthill House will be open by invitation of Lord Margadale on Sunday 9 June (in aid of Atlantic Salmon Trust).

There are woodland walks and formal gardens, which have been extensively redeveloped under the direction of Tania Compton and Marie-Louise Agius. There is a fountain by William Pye and other sculptures.

See the Fonthill Estate website <https://fonthill.co.uk> for more information. Fonthill House, Tisbury SP3 5SA.

GRAHAM CAVE (OCT 1942 – JAN 2023) – A MEMOIR



While a schoolboy at Kingswood School in Bath, Graham met the then bursar, Peter Summers. They were like-minded, and Peter fostered Graham's interest in heraldry, local history and books, particularly those about William Beckford. Peter played a key role in the making of a half-hour film about Beckford, featuring boys from the school at the time of the 1966 Bath Festival. Six years later he accompanied my wife and me to Fairford where he introduced us to Graham, then living in Bromley.

Before long Graham moved to Gwent where he managed a farm for many years. On retiring he bought a small house on Combe Down to look after his mother, but he yearned for the open spaces of the Lincolnshire Wolds. He bought a

house at Asterby and in 2013 he moved there to join his partner, Mary.

Graham was an early trustee of the Beckford Tower Trust, taking a great interest in the appearance of the Museum rooms. He made valued contributions to its newsletter. In 1986 he made contact with the 15th Duke of Hamilton's office at Lennoxlove, with the result that the Trust were able to buy three oil paintings of *objets de vertu* by Willes Maddox which Beckford had commissioned in about 1841.

With Graham we went on numerous outings, and he was much loved by our three daughters. Beckford was only one of his many interests, with another passion being the organ and we always enjoyed going to recitals with such a knowledgeable exponent. Indeed, one consolation of his later years was hearing the organ at Lincoln Cathedral. A further enthusiasm was steam trains, and he was involved in the restoration of a King Class locomotive at Didcot. Graham made friends easily and was always excellent company. It was a great privilege to have known him.

JON MILLINGTON,

WILLIAM BECKFORD'S POETRY

Beckford often used verses by other authors in his own work. The Beckford scholar Robert J. Gemmett in his editions of *Modern Novel Writing* and *Azemia* identifies the authors of many of these borrowings.

Now, in an article in *The Book Collector*, he has turned his attention to other poems which in the past have been attributed to Beckford.

Devendra Varma's made a collection of Beckford's poetry published under the title *The Transient Gleam: A Bouquet of Beckford's Poetry* (Wirral; Aylesford Press, 1991). In examining the twenty-seven poems in the volume attributed to Beckford, Gemmett reveals that eight are not by him. Three which appear at the end of *Al Raoui* are by Samuel Henley. Another is William Hayley's epitaph for the memorial to the poet William Collins in Chichester Cathedral. Others are by Charles James, James Bird and William Gifford. And one turns out to be by William Beckford of Somerley, Beckford's cousin.

Gemmett also examines the evidence surrounding the 'Ode' written on Beckford's visit to the Grande Chartreuse and concludes it

is a joint effort by Beckford and his tutor John Lettice. Beckford's earliest biographer Cyrus Redding wrote: 'the larger portion being those of the tutor, the pupil being, perhaps, not at the moment duly inspired'.

Gemmett ends his article with lines from the poem, which begins: 'Love is a soft involuntary flame' In 1976, when examining the Beckford Papers, he found the manuscript of this work, in Beckford's hand, signed and dated 13 May 1825. Beckford included the poem in his collection of 'tombstone tracings', *Epitaphs, some of which have appeared in the Literary Gazette of March & April 1823*, published in 1825.

Earlier, Beckford in a letter written in 1800. had dismissed his poetry as 'my Poetic Trifles' and himself as an infrequent cultivator of the Muse.

Robert J. Gemmett, 'William Beckford's Poetry: with Notes and Observations about Misattributions'. *The Book Collector*. Spring 2024. (Vol 73.1).

IN THE AUCTION ROOM

Beckford's copy of Sacheverell Stevens, *Miscellaneous Remarks Made on the Spot, in a ... Tour through France, Italy, Germany and Holland*, first edition, 1756, sold for

£550 (Lot 26) at Forum Auctions, London on 27 April 2023. The book had been sold as Lot 2234 in the Beckford Sale of 1883.

Also at Forum Auctions on 5 July 2023, was another work from Beckford's library. Sir Henry Charles Englefield, *A Description of the Principal Picturesque Beauties, Antiquities, and Geological Phenomena, of the Isle of Wight*, 1816. Folio, in a half russia binding, possibly by Charles Lewis with gilt-edged L-shaped corner-pieces. It sold for (lot 158) £1,500. It had been in 1882 Beckford library sale.

A volume of engravings illustrating Luis de Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, Paris, Didot, 1817, with 23 proofs (in two states) from the edition usually called 'Morgado de Mateus' was sold in Lisbon by Cabral Moncada Leilões on 25 September 2023 (lot 307) for €1,000. This volume had been sold in the 1882 Beckford library sale.

Beckford's copy of Marie Gabriel Florens Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier. *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grece*. Paris, 1782 -1822. Two folio volumes bound in three, in a red half morocco and gilt binding by Charles Lewis. It was sold at Sotheby's in London on 21 September 2023 (lot 122) for £7,620.

A copy of *True Mannor and Forme of the Proceeding to the Funerall of ... Robert Earle of Essex and Ewe*, 1646. (Bound with *Elegie upon ... death ... of ... Robert Earle of Essex*. 4pp). The main work described and illustrated the pomp and ceremony of Essex's state funeral. Included in the 1883 Beckford sale, it sold at Forum Auctions on 30 November 2023 (Lot 130) for £2,800.

A pencil and watercolour view of Fonthill Abbey attributed to circle of John Glover, 'the property of a former museum keeper', sold at Woolley and Wallis, Salisbury on 5 September 2023 (lot 211) for £250.

A watercolour 'View at Fonthill, 1827' by Henry Ashton (1801 - 1872), an architectural caricaccio of a building with a tower showing shades of Fonthill, was sold by Dukes of Dorchester on 5 April 2023 (lot 58) for £1,600.

At Wooley and Wallis on 30 January 2024, a set of eight silver-gilt fiddle, thread and drop pattern teaspoons (London 1793 and 1798) the terminals engraved with the Beckford crest sold (lot 233) for £700.

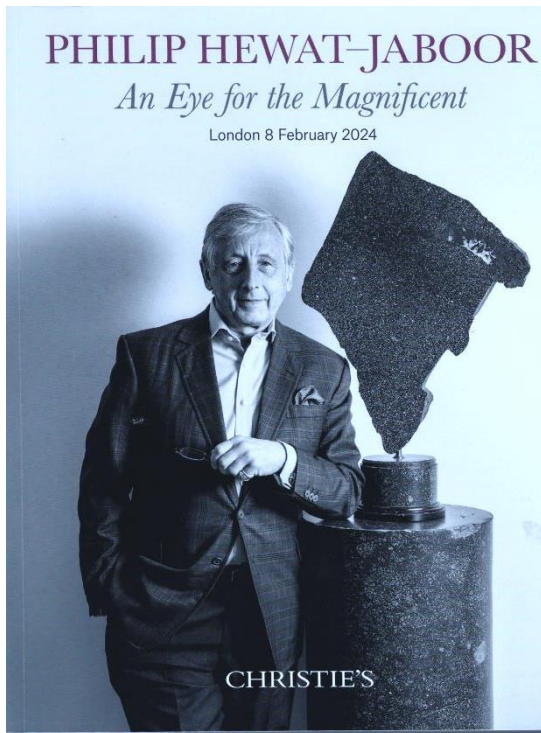


Hanging-cabinet c.1841

Sotheby's 'Royal and Noble' auction on 17 January 2024, included (lot 28) an oak, burr walnut and parcel gilt hanging cabinet, circa 1841, described as 'probably designed by William Beckford and Henry Edmund Goodridge, attributed to English & Son'. From a private collection, Somerset since the 1960s. With an auctioneer's estimate of £20,000 - 30,000, the cabinet was unsold.

A ticket 'to admit one visitor on any two days' to the 1823 Fonthill Abbey sale was offered (lot 624) by Loddon Auctions Ltd in their ephemeral sale 20 - 22 March 2024. On the reverse was inscribed 'Fonthill Abbey 3rd and 4th Sept 1823 alone and disappointed'.

THE PHILIP HEWAT-JABOOR SALE



Objects once owned by William Beckford formed part of Christie's sale of Philip Hewat-Jaboor's collection held in London on 8 February 2024. Philip was a Vice President of the Beckford Society (2014 - 2022).



PORPHYRY VASES c. 1800 – 1810. Lot 17

A fascination for imperial porphyry and precious marble was reflected by a pair of porphyry vases (c.1800 - 1810) (lot 17) which sold for £176,400; a Breccia Africano marble column (lot 134) realised £110,880 and a 18th century Granito di Bigio vase and cover (lot 133) made £75,600.



ROMAN FLOOR MOSAIC. LOT 99

Antiquities included a Roman floor mosaic (lot 99) which made £100,800, a head of Bacchus (lot 98) realised £126,000; and a Roman cinerarium (lot 122) made £12,600.

Christie's title for the sale 'Philip Hewat-Jaboor: An Eye for the Magnificent' echoed that of the landmark Beckford exhibition inspired and organised by Philip at the Bard Graduate Center, New York and the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 2001-2002.

The London sale offered over 20 lots either commissioned by Beckford or from his collection, including glass, silver, ormolu, and porcelain.



PORCELAIN COFFEE-CUPS LOT 36

A pair of Paris (Dihl and Guerhard) porcelain coffee-cups and saucers (lot 36) made £23,940.



GILTWOOD ARMCHAIRS. LOT 97.

A pair of Roman giltwood armchairs, probably purchased by Beckford from the collection of Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's uncle, which were later in the Grand Drawing Room at Fonthill Abbey (lot 97) made £75,600.



BOULLE CASKET. LOT 47

A Louis XIV Boulle, brass and pewter-inlaid tortoiseshell casket (lot 47) realised £45,360. And a George III silver-gilt, coral and chalcedony tazza by James Aldridge, 1820, surmounted by a coral figure of Hercules (lot 44) made £32,760. [see back cover].

The sale also reflected Philip's interest in the collector Thomas Hope, about whom he curated the exhibition 'Thomas Hope: Regency Designer', held at Bard Graduate Center, New York and the V&A, London, 2008.

The final lot (186) was a large Coade Stone model of a recumbent lioness which had been at Thomas Hope's house the Deepdene, Surrey. It made £30,240.

Huon Mallalieu, gives an account of the sale in *Country Life*, 21 February 2024. Pp. 126 - 128.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY
CHRISTIE'S IMAGES

HENRY VENN LANSDOWN'S WATERCOLOURS
OF BECKFORD'S TOWER

In the first half of the nineteenth century Henry Venn Lansdown's watercolours of Bath were well known, and not only was he an accomplished artist but also highly skilled in making copies of his own work on request.

This probably explains why there are at least three very similar versions of his view of Beckford's Tower from the East showing cattle in a quarry in the foreground. All are about 10 inches high and 7½ wide, are unsigned, and at first glance they look identical. Among other minor differences, there are changes to the rocks in the grotto and in the width of the path in front of the Tower. Fortunately it is possible to identify a particular view by the presence, or not, of a hut one third of the way up towards the left. If it is there, the opening in the front will be either full or half height.



VICTORIA ART GALLERY, BATH

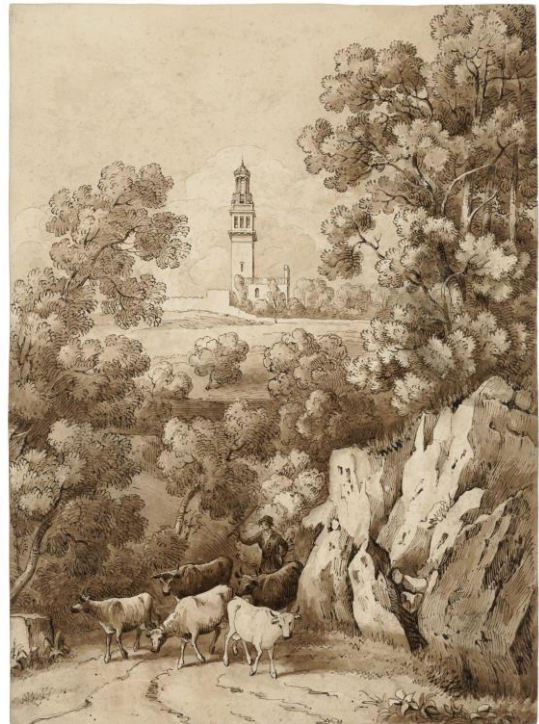
HUT WITH FULL-HEIGHT OPENING.

253 x 182 mm. Victoria Art Gallery, Bath. Accession No. 1926.19. Bought from E. Godfrey Brown of Tunbridge Wells (from whom the Gallery bought twenty-five other Bath views by Henry Venn Lansdown in 1926). It was reproduced almost full size on the cover of the 1996 edition of the guide to Beckford's Tower.



PRIVATE COLLECTION

HUT WITH HALF-HEIGHT OPENING.
257 x 189 mm. Privately-owned. One of five watercolours of Bath by Henry Venn Lansdown in Lot 316 in Dreweatt Neate's sale on 25 January 2006 in Bristol. Including buyer's premium, the lot sold for £253.18. This view appeared in the 2005 *Beckford Journal* article, 'Henry Venn Lansdown, 1804–1860', p. 27.



PHILIP HEWAT-JABOOR COLLECTION

NO HUT, JUST SHRUBBERY.
256 x 190 mm. Philip Hewat-Jaboor's copy. One of two paintings in Lot 46 in Christie's sale, 'Philip Hewat-Jaboor. An Eye for the Magnificent', on 8 February 2024 where it was attributed to Thomas Barker of Bath (1769–1849) and described as 'Pencil, pen and brown ink, brown wash on paper'.



J.C. BUCKLER, *FONTHILL ABBEY*.
PHILIP HEWAT-JABOOR COLLECTION
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY: CHRISTIE'S IMAGES

The other painting in Lot 46 was 'Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire, pencil and watercolour on paper view' by John Chessell Buckler (1793–1894). It formerly belonged to Ray Livingston Murphy of New York (1923–1953) and was subsequently in Sotheby's 'Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Drawings and Watercolours' sale on 13 November 1997, Lot 38, where it was bought by Philip Hewat-Jaboor for £5980. The catalogue noted that it was a conjectural view of Fonthill Abbey 'possibly based on a watercolour by Charles Wild in the Victoria and Albert

Museum. It shows Wyatt's 1799 design for the main spire.'

The two paintings forming Lot 46 in the recent Christie's sale sold for a total of £18,900.

JON MILLINGTON

BOOKS FROM ROGER LONSDALE'S LIBRARY

Books from the library of Roger Lonsdale (1934 – 2022) editor of *Vathek* in the Oxford English Novels Series (1970) and eminent scholar of eighteenth-century literature are being sold by antiquarian bookseller Christopher Edwards of Henley-on-Thames.

List No 90 (1740 - 1840: A - E) the third in a series of catalogues devoted to Lonsdale's library, contains a number of books by Beckford including a first edition of Beckford's first book: *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters* (1780). There is a group of early editions of *Vathek*, including the first edition (1786) and copies of *Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaca and Batalha* (1835), and *Italy, Spain, and Portugal* (1840).

Christopher Edwards, The Old Bakery, 12 Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2AU. Tel 01491 637701. E-mail: Chr.edwards@btinternet.com



This exotic work was described as a tour-de-force in the catalogue of the *William Beckford: An Eye for the Magnificent* exhibition (2001). Made of 'mamelated' agate, with a heraldically embellished silver-gilt mount and surmounted by a coral figure of Hercules. It was created for Beckford by the London silversmith James Aldridge, 1820. Beckford almost certainly gave directions to the silversmith with probably additional supervision from Gregorio Franchi.

Philip Hewat-Jaboor sale, Christie's 8 February 2024, lot 44.

Photograph courtesy: Christie's Images

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