

Art Referees



The position of Art Referee was first established in the Department of Science and Art in February 1857 when Richard Redgrave, the Department's 'Superintendent of Schools' was appointed 'Art Referee and Inspector-General of Art Schools'; at the same date Lyon Playfair was appointed 'Scientific Referee and Inspector-General of Scientific Schools'. No definition of the referees' duties, other than to assist the Secretary of the Department, is recorded for this date.



In March 1863 the Board of the Department decided that, while Redgrave should continue to advise on acquisitions, especially modern art, John Charles Robinson should 'cease to be Keeper of the Art Collection, becoming instead the second artistic referee'.

The Art Referees' duties were defined as: '1. at home and abroad to recommend purchases or loans; 2. when directed, to negotiate purchases; 3. to report forthcoming sales in due time and indicate desirable purchases; 4. to report in writing, when required, on preservation and arrangement of Art Museum; 5. to furnish written descriptions of objects; 6. to attend Board when summoned; 7. not to give daily attendance or keep diary, except when claiming travel expenses; must have written authority for these; send monthly report of proceedings; all communications with him to be in writing; 8. to receive salary of keeper, but not allowance for house; 9. will compile catalogues when required, and be paid 1l. 1s per page' (archive ref. ED 84/35).

Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt's report on a 'spinette' (museum object 1121-1869), V&A Archive, MA/3/31, RP/1869/18491

Robinson continued the vigorous campaign of acquisition he had begun as Keeper, with purchasing trips to Belgium, France, Italy, and Spain, but by mid-1867 poor relations between him and the Department had resulted in a review of the position of permanent Art Referee, and in December 1867 the post was abolished and Robinson effectively dismissed. Redgrave's post was renamed.

From this time Art Referees were engaged on a consultancy basis. The initial list of Referees comprised: Samuel Birch, Edward Bond, Eyre Crowe, James Fergusson, Augustus W. Franks, Sir Francis Grant, Solomon Hart, J.C. Horsley, Owen Jones, Frederic Leighton, Daniel Maclise, C.T. Newton, Reginald Stuart Poole, J.C. Robinson, Matthew Digby Wyatt, S.M. Vaux. It is not certain that all of these were in fact employed. Names approved subsequently by the Board to advise them were G.C.M. Birdwood, John Everett Millais, Samuel Redgrave, Juan F. Riano, and J.W. Wild.

In 1882-4 reforms were introduced so that both Art and Science Referees could act collectively in committees, and should advise on purchases not only for the South Kensington Museum, but also for the Museums in Dublin and Edinburgh and for local museums receiving state aid. Their duties were defined as to advise on the quality, genuineness and price of objects offered for purchase, and to suggest possible acquisitions. The following were appointed in 1884: Sir A.H. Layard, Sir Frederic Leighton, William Maskell, William Morris, A. Morrison. J.H. Pollen, Edward Poynter, Lawrence Alma Tadema. Subsequently the following were also appointed: the Earl of Carlisle, George Salting, Walter Crane, F. du Cane Godman and William de Morgan.

The new Committee of Art Referees, also referred to as the Committee of Advice (Art Museum) met seldom, the last recorded meeting being in January 1897; the Art Referees continued to be consulted on an individual basis throughout this period and as late as 1912. The system of Art Referees was replaced only in 1913 with the establishment of a permanent Advisory Committee.

J.C. Robinson reports and Art Referee reports (archive ref. MA/3)



Between 1863 and 1868 J.C. Robinson produced a series of reports on proposed acquisitions to the Art Museum, which included his observations on the nature, condition, quality and price of each item, together with occasional sketches, sale catalogues, press cuttings and other documentation. The reports of consultant Art Referees, 1868-86, follow on. Most were authored by Matthew Digby Wyatt but there are also reports by John Everett Millais, Fanny Palliser, J.W. Wild, William Morris, George Wallis, William Maskell, H.B. Fortescue, C. Drury Fortnum, W. Chaffers, Richard Westmacott, Thomas Woolner, J. Marryat, Samuel Redgrave, Samuel Potter, Thomas Whitehead, Carl Engel and Archibald Gunn.

A printed catalogue is available in the Archive Reading Room. V&A Archive staff can search a database of the reports by name of art referee, source of acquisition, object number (when it has been recorded on the report), and registered paper number.

J.C. Robinson's ink sketch of La Gloria Portal of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, V&A Archive, MA/3/16, RP/1865/20695

Nominal files, 1863-1986 (archive ref. MA/1)

These files include other surviving referees' reports 1882-1912, filed separately for each acquisition; a list of these reports, together with file references, is appended to this guide.

Other records in the V&A Archive

- Committees of advice and reference etc., 1875-1913 (ref. ED 84/102)
- Memoranda of objects shown to Art Referees, 1902 (ref. A0580)
- Precs of the minutes of the Science and Art Department, 1852-1863 (ref. ED 84/35)
- Purchases by Officers on Visits Abroad, 1863-1902 (ref. MA/2/P7/1-5)
- Official visits abroad by keepers of the Museum with reports on foreign Museums, collections, 1861 – 1900 (ref. ED 84/205, including 'Mr Redgrave's Visit to Italy', 1860)
- Annual Reports of the Department of Science and Art
- Henry Cole: diaries: typed transcripts, 1822-1882

National Art Library, V&A

- Henry Cole correspondence: Department of Practical Art; Department of Science and Art; South Kensington Museum (letters etc. referring more especially to the Department and the Museum): (i) Richard Redgrave, 1834-1881 (Box 14) -- (ii) Philip Cunliffe Owen, 1871-1877; Lyon Playfair, 1852-1870; John Percy, 1862-1873 (Box 15) -- (iii) J.C. Robinson, 1852-1880; C.D.E. Fortnum, 1859-1871; A.W. Franks, 1867-1873 (Box 16), National Art Library pressmark: 55.BB
- Spielmann, M. H. 'Notebooks concerning the Select Committee on the Museums of the Science and Art Department, South Kensington', 1897, National Art Library pressmark: MSL/1964/1154-1155; includes reference to art referees

The National Archives, Kew

- The organisation of the Department of Science and Art: Memorandum to Sir Charles Trevelyan from Dr Lyon Playfair, Richard Redgrave and Henry Cole on the duties envisaged for professional advisers in science and art, 13 December 1856 (ref. PRO/30/29/23/15)
- Original minutes of the Science and Art Department (ref. ED 28), including ED 28/30, RP/1874/5981: 'Rules as to objects for purchase'

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

- Personal papers of Sir J.C. Robinson at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, include correspondence, notes and cuttings relating to his work for the South Kensington Museum and the termination of his employment as Art Referee.

Further reading

- Burton, Anthony. **Vision and Accident: the story of the Victoria and Albert Museum**. London: V&A Publications, 1999. National Art Library pressmark: 708.21 VIC/BUR
- Davies, Helen. 'John Charles Robinson's work at the South Kensington Museum, Part 2. From 1863 to 1867: consolidation and conflict.' **Journal of the History of Collections** 11, no.1 (1999): 95-115. National Art Library pressmark: PP.69.E
- Wainwright, Clive. 'Shopping for South Kensington: Fortnum and Henry Cole in Florence 1858-1859.' **Journal of the History of Collections** 11, no.2 (1999): 171-185. National Art Library pressmark: PP.69.E
- 'Draft letter from C. D. E. Fortnum to Sir Charles Robinson, 1897, commenting on the management of the South Kensington Museum and Robinson's treatment by the authorities.' **Journal of the History of Collections** 11, no.2 (1999): 271-273. National Art Library pressmark: PP.69.E
- **Report from the Select Committee on Paris Exhibition; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendix**. [London: House of Commons, 1867]: includes Richard Redgrave's evidence on the role of Art Referees, pp. 5-10.
- **Second report from the Select Committee on Museums of the Science and Art Department: with the proceedings of the Committee**. London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1897. V&A Archive, ED 84/31; National Art Library pressmark: 97.V.9

Access to the V&A Archive

The Archive and Library Study Room at Blythe House, which serves the Archive of Art and Design, the V&A Archive, the V&A Theatre and Performance Collections and the Beatrix Potter Collections, is open Tuesdays to Fridays, from 10.00 to 16.30, by appointment only.

Further details of how to make enquiries and access the archives can be found on our homepage at

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-v-and-a-archive/>

TABLE OF ART REFEREE REPORTS ON NOMINAL FILES

<i>Name of Art Referee</i>	<i>File reference</i>	<i>File title</i>	<i>Registered Paper number(s)</i>
Armstrong, Thomas	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1901/88390; RP/1904/4845; RP/1904/7809
Armstrong, Thomas	MA/1/D1997	Duseigneur, G & Raoul	RP/1901/15385
Armstrong, Thomas	MA/1/B/3363	Buller, W	RP/1884/75; RP/1884/609
Armstrong, Thomas	MA/1/C713	Castellani, A	RP/1884/6429
Brock, Sir Thomas	MA/1/R1475	Rollin & Feuadent	RP/1904/8759; RP/1905/81933
Brock, Sir Thomas	MA/1/B1211	Berlin: Kunstgewerbe Museum	RP/1904/80897
Brock, Sir Thomas	MA/1/B3819	Ernest Brown & Phillips Ltd	RP/1905/20083
Brock, Sir Thomas	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1905/86009
Brock, Sir Thomas	MA/1/J794	Jorck, George	RP/1904/81261
Brock, Sir Thomas	MA/1/D1997	Duseigneur, G & Raoul	RP/1905/81848
Burne-Jones, Sir Edward	MA/1/D1995	Duruy, M & Mme George	RP/1886/8031
Carlisle, Earl of	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1898/16455
Crane, Walter	MA/1/A437	Allen, W H	RP/1898/40277
Crane, Walter	MA/1/B1403	Bing, S	RP/1899/26517
Crane, Walter	MA/1/T20	Tahtadjian, M	RP/1899/11001
Crane, Walter	MA/1/A848	Armstrong, Thomas	RP/1900/30749
Crane, Walter	MA/1/B2081	Bowes, James L	RP/1900/30753; RP/1901/10535
Crane, Walter	MA/1/D557	Dawson, Nelson	RP/1903/92142
Crane, Walter	MA/1/D1168	Dillon, Frank	RP/1903/89896
Crane, Walter	MA/1/D1168	Dillon, Frank	RP/1905/87868
Crane, Walter	MA/1/D1982	Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin	RP/1901/11271
Crane, Walter	MA/1/S2597	Henry Sotheran Ltd	RP/1901/13727
Crane, Walter	MA/1/S2595	Sotheby's	RP/1901/36361
Crane, Walter	MA/1/C1401	Christie's (Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd)	RP/1906/4491; RP/1906/5621; RP/1906/7960
Crane, Walter	MA/1/B3634	Burton, William	RP/1904/9471
Crane, Walter	MA/1/C428	Carfax & Co Ltd	RP/1904/17147
Crane, Walter	MA/1/W330	Wallis, Henry	RP/1906/19386
Crane, Walter	MA/1/F1203	S M Franck Ltd	RP/1907/1899
Crane, Walter	MA/1/B2328	Brangwyn, Frank	RP/1907/1944
Crane, Walter	MA/1/L2281	Luker, Frank M & Mrs	RP/1907/3844
Crane, Walter	MA/1/R1609	Rosenbaum, J	RP/1907/5688
Crane, Walter	MA/1/W1039	Webster, Percy	RP/1908/698
Crane, Walter	MA/1/F200	Farrer, Revd E	RP/1908/1047
Crane, Walter	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1901/25753; RP/1903/11953; RP/1903/87279; RP/1905/86009; RP/1905/87274; RP/1905/88342; RP/1906/87157; RP/1907/2271M; RP/1908/1065
Crane, Walter	MA/1/L1036	Lenygon & Morant Ltd	RP/1911/5552
Crane, Walter	MA/1/R1475	Rollin & Feuadent	RP/1908/662
Crane, Walter	MA/1/D1997	Duseigneur, G & Raoul	RP/1900/90327; RP/1901/13097; RP/1904/85918; RP/1905/81848
Crane, Walter	MA/1/J794	Jorck, George	RP/1904/81261
Crane, Walter	MA/1/H117	Haité, G C	RP/1903/92729
Crane, Walter	MA/1/K569	Kierulff, P	RP/1900/89504
Crane, Walter	MA/1/F677	Fitzhenry, JH	RP/1906/6907
Crane, Walter	MA/1/G475	Gherardi, Virgilio	RP/1905/6903
Crane, Walter	MA/1/G2037	Guild of Handicraft	RP/1906/87008
Crane, Walter	MA/1/W583	Waring & Gillow (Contracts) Ltd. (formerly Gillow & Co.)	RP/1903/90011
Crane, Walter	MA/1/F1510	H. Fulgence	RP/1907/5577, RP/1900/90690
Crane, Walter	MA/1/I118	Indjoudjian, A. & M.M. Fréres	RP/1903/91719, RP/1907/5104
Crane, Walter	MA/35	International exhibitions: United Kingdom, Earl's Court, London	RP/1907/4463
Crane, Walter	MA/1/M3321	Myers, Major W.J. & Mr D.B.	RP/1900/20485
Crane, Walter	MA/1/H3526	Huth, Louis	RP/1905/8055
Crane, Walter	MA/1/F965	Forrer, Dr Robert	RP/1899/27885
Crane, Walter	MA/1/V401	Von Pirch, George	RP/1902/88301
Crane, Walter	MA/1/S3370	Stevenson, Miss G.	RP/1904/85662
Crane, Walter	MA/1M1003	Martin, Dr. F.R.	RP/1906/83964
Crane, Walter	MA/1/J340	Jenkins, Lynn F.	RP/1902/19583
Crane, Walter	MA/1S514	Sassoon & Co	RP/1902/82080
Crane, Walter	MA/1/J401	Jerningham, Charles E.	RP/1906/80505
Crane, Walter	MA/1/I320	Isham, Major V.	RP/1899/93624
Crane, Walter	MA/1/S298	Salvadori, Guiseppe	RP/1903/87913
Crane, Walter	MA/1/S298	Salvadori, Guiseppe	RP/1906/85432
Crane, Walter	MA/1/S298	Salvadori, Guiseppe	RP/1907/5618M

Crane, Walter	MA/1/B2018	Bourgeois & Co. (Cologne)	RP/1903/92815
Crane, Walter	MA/1/B2018	Bourgeois & Co. (Cologne)	RP/1907/5695M
De Morgan, William	MA/1/D696	De Morgan, William & Evelyn	
Fortnum, C Drury	MA/1/F1014	Fortnum, C Drury	RP/1881/4087
Fortnum, C Drury	MA/1/B1403	Bing, S	RP/1875/5259; RP/1876/1411
Fortnum, C Drury	MA/1/B1533	Black, C C	RP/1869/40561
Fortnum, C Drury	MA/1/C713	Castellani, A	RP/1883/7803
Franks, Augustus	MA/1/H3073	Howell & James Ltd	RP/1880/3571
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/B1211	Berlin: Kunstgewerbe Museum	RP/1904/80897
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/D1997	Duseigneur, G & Raoul	RP/1901/23333; RP/1901/22407
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/J794	Jorck, George	RP/1902/6847
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/H515	Hagop Kevorkian & Co	RP/1902/8002
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/M1801	C Mellier & Co	RP/1906/19682
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/W1632	White Allom Ltd	RP/1905/10867
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/G475	Gherardi, Virgilio	RP/1905/6903
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/I118	Indjoudjian, A. & M.M. Frères	RP/1905/84704
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/V401	Von Pirch, George	RP/1902/88301
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/S3370	Stevenson, Miss G.	RP/1904/85662
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/J450	Jewson & Sons	RP/1902/4741
Jackson, Sir T.G.	MA/1/S514	Sassoon & Co	RP/1902/11617
MacQuoid, Percy	MA/1/B1182	Beresford, G C	RP/1920/4627
Maskell, William	MA/1/M1972	Meyrick, Lieut-Col A W H	RP/1871/1275
Mitchell, H.P.	MA/1/F677	Fitzhenry, JH	RP/1903/3221
Morris, William	MA/1/B1764	Bock, Dr Franz	RP/1882/6689
Morris, William	MA/1/M3315	Myers, Lindo	RP/1883/811; RP/1883/895
Morris, William	MA/1/M340	Magnusson, Mrs S E	RP/1884/407
Morris, William	MA/1/B3363	Buller, W	RP/1884/3567
Morris, William	MA/1/B494	Baron, Stanislas	RP/1893/64437
Morris, William	MA/1/R1314	Vincent Robinson & Co Ltd	RP/1893/27257
Morris, William	MA/1/D1995	Duruy, M & Mme George	RP/1886/8031
Morris, William	MA/1/M765	Marcy, Louis	RP/1894/118765
Morris, William	MA/1/M2848	Morris & Co & Mr & Mrs William Morris	RP/1886/4427
Morris, William	MA/1/C713	Castellani, A	RP/1888/6589
Morrison, A	MA/1/Y15	Yamanaka & Co Ltd	RP/1912/2977
Pollen, J H	MA/1/C1401	Christies	RP/1887/3817
Pollen, J H	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1898/16455
Pollen, J H	MA/1/F965	Forrer, Dr Robert	RP/1899/27885
Poynter, Sir Edward J	MA/1/P1374	Pinti, Raffaele	RP/1881/1855
Poynter, Sir Edward J	MA/1/W1669	Whitehead, Thomas	RP/1883/2993
Riano, Juan F	MA/1/R741	Riano, Juan	
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/S514	Sassoon & Co	RP/1902/12159
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/B795	Bazzani, Luigi	RP/1901/21247
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1900/14487; RP/1902/29727; RP/1903/86910; RP/1904/7809; RP/1905/87274
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/A	Agnew, Thomas	RP/1901/4189
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/C1401	Christies	RP/1905/9925; RP/1906/3276
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/B81	Bagshawe, W W	RP/1907/2866
Richmond, Sir W B	MA/1/I118	Indjoudjian, A. & M.M. Frères	RP/1905/84704
Robinson, J C	MA/1/R1277	Robinson, J C	RP/1881/6675
Robinson, J C	MA/35/71	Portuguese & Spanish art loan exhibition, 1881	RP/1881/3697
Salting, George	MA/1/B3676	Bushell, Dr & Mrs S W	RP/1899/4233
Salting, George	MA/1/D1979	Durlacher Bros	RP/1899/9169
Tadema, Lawrence Alma	MA/1/C1401	Christies	RP/1887/3817
Wild, J W	MA/1/S180	St Maurice, G de	RP/1883/6993
Wyatt, Sir M Digby	MA/1/B1844	Bond, Joseph	RP/1871/27159
Wyatt, Sir M Digby	MA/1/B1844	Bond, Joseph	RP/1875/3797
Wyld, CH	MA/1/F677	Fitzhenry, JH	RP/1903/84028, RP/1903/84331, RP/1903/85161, RP/1903/86235
Wyld, CH	MA/1/J401	Jerningham, Charles E.	RP/1903/93203

Contact details

V&A Archive, Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, London, W14 0QX

Tel: +44 (0)20 7942 2340

Contact us online at <http://vam.altarama.com/reft000.aspx>