



BATH DECORATIVE ANTIQUES FAIR

You're guaranteed to find the bizarre and the beautiful at this annual spring event

FEATURE **ROSANNA MORRIS** PHOTOGRAPHS **LYDIA EVANS**

A man is carrying two chickens from a fairground ride under each arm. Yes, chickens. 'They're to go in my dining room,' he says, nonchalantly, as if he's talking about a Georgian refectory table. But that's what you come to expect when you visit a decorative fair. Vintiquers here are in search of the unusual, the eccentric, the conversation-worthy. They are on the hunt for, say, a model aeroplane to hang from the beams of their converted barn; a stuffed budgerigar; a 1920s easel and palettes covered in paint; an old lobster pot; a giant disco ball – something that quite simply makes a statement.

And the dealers really deliver at the Bath Decorative Antiques Fair, which is held every

spring in the historic Georgian city. On entering, the first thing to hit you is the scent of spring flowers, and soon you realise why. There are vases of anemones on dressers, pots of auriculas on tables, primroses and moss adorning urns. Perfect for Easter, a kitchenalia stand has French chocolate egg moulds, madeleine trays, and other such implements for the chocolatier, including moulds shaped as a peacock, a stag and a squirrel.

The vibe here is calm and laidback. As lunch comes around and the aisles thin out, we find several dealers tucking into a feast of charcuterie, cheese and desserts in what looks like a beautifully decorated dining room rather than a shop stand. All that's needed are those chickens.

IN BRIEF

The annual Bath Decorative Antiques Fair takes place on 7th (trade only, £10) and 8th-10th March (£5) at The Pavilion, Bath, BA2 4EU. Turn to page 17 for a chance to win tickets to the fair, a shopping spree and a hotel stay. Plus 50 runners-up will receive free admission for two. 01278 784912; bathdecorativeantiquesfair.co.uk



POOCH OF THE DAY

Jasper, a nine-year-old Bedlington terrier cross, reclines on a 19th-century French *fauteuil* with original tapestry covering. He likes chasing rabbits and squirrels, and testing the upholstery at the Blanchard Collective near Marlborough, run by his owner Margaret Riordan.



Stephanie Bartlett was buying props for a Jubilee party and couldn't believe her luck when she stumbled upon this union flag for £120.



STYLE SEEKERS

A few chic vintiquers we spotted in Bath



Emma Chadwick found a pair of 1930s Grindley 'Creampetal' tea bowls for £35. She also bought a 1910 French bowl for £20.



Richard Fowler bought these fairground ride chickens for £250. 'I'm going to put them in my dining room,' he smiles. 'I love it here - there are so many unusual things.'



STALL STORIES

If you're after something a bit out-there – the fairground chickens on the previous page, for instance – young dealers James and Jade Gooch will be able to sort you out. Through their business Doe & Hope, they sell via an online emporium; at Debden Antiques in Essex; and at The Onion Barn in Blunham, Bedfordshire (by appointment). They have come west to try this fair and have booked for The Decorative Antiques & Textile Fair in London's Battersea. 'This is our first ever fair,' says James. 'Having seen how good it is, we want to come back every year.' Their cabinet of curiosities on our visit included an Austrian art deco fish tank complete with inhabitants, a fire hydrant and a Popeye and Olive seaside photo board, which they'd used for their wedding a few months before. Other quirky delights included the pins from an American bowling alley, a 1920s crystal ball and an album of circus photos. A chap in Leicestershire alerted them to a great hoard of stock from old fairgrounds and they scour the globe

for other items, such as a turquoise-painted Queen Victoria bust, frogs in formaldehyde and taxidermy bats in museum cases. 'It's all rather fun,' says Jade. We wholeheartedly agree. 07729 213013; doeandhope.com



Leanne von Arx was delighted with her 19th-century French mirror, which she picked up for £280.





Lynda Townsend-Bateson snapped up this 1950s glass fish vase for £125. 'I never say no to the Fifties,' she says.



Roadshow expert Paul Atterbury bought some library steps (£200) and a Cyril Hall rail book (£10). 'I always go home with a few things.'

March fair dates

Please check before travelling as fairs can be cancelled or postponed after we go to press

1st-3rd Wilton House Antiques Fair, Salisbury. £5.50. 01722 746700; wiltonhouse.com

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1st-3rd Luxury Antiques and Fine Art Fair, Harewood Pavilion, Harewood House, Harewood, nr Leeds. £5. 01797 252030; harewoodfair.com

2nd Birmingham Antiques & Vintage Bazaar, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham. Free. 01636 676531; b2bevents.info

2nd The Vintage Bazaar, The Corn Exchange, Devizes, Wiltshire. £1. thevintagebazaar.blogspot.com

2nd Lightwater Valley Antiques and Vintage Craft and Collectors Fair, North Stainley, Ripon, North Yorkshire. Free. 0871 720 0011; lightwatervalley.co.uk

2nd-3rd Derby Roundhouse Antiques & Collectors Fair, Pride Park, Derby. £5. 01332 830444; jaguarfairs.com

2nd-3rd Antique & Vintage Fair, Buxton Pavilion Gardens, St John's Road, Buxton, Derbyshire. £2.50. 07800 508178; unicornfairs.co.uk

3rd The Vintage Home Show, Chiswick Town Hall, Turnham Green, London. £4. 0113 345 8699; vintagehomeshow.co.uk

3rd Stamford Arts Centre Antique and Collectors Fair, Stamford Arts Centre, Stamford, Lincolnshire. £2. 07772 349431; fielddogfairs.com

3rd Ellesmere Antique and Collectors Fair, The Town Hall, Willow Street, Ellesmere, Shropshire. £1. 01948 710866

3rd Meadowbank Stadium Antique and Collectors Fair, London Road, Edinburgh. £1.50. 01764 654555; scotfairs.co.uk

4th Windsor Emporium, The Guildhall, High Street, Windsor. Free. 07900 285919; windsoremporium.co.uk

8th-10th Antiques & Fine Art Fair, Goodwood House, Chichester. £5. 01423 522122; gallowayfairs.co.uk

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8th-10th Luxury Antiques Weekend, Linden Hall, Longhorsley, nr Morpeth, Northumberland. £5. 01797 252030; lindenhallfair.com

9th Homemade Heaven & Vintage Style Fair, Knutsford Civic Centre, Toft Road, Knutsford, Cheshire. £1.50. 07887 767778; ilovehomemadeheaven.co.uk

9th Saltaire Antiques & Collectables Market, The Evans Room, Victoria Hall, Victoria Road, Saltaire, West Yorkshire. £1. 07985 181120; roseandbrownvintage.co.uk

10th Sandown Park Antique and Vintage Fair, Sandown Park Exhibition Centre, Portsmouth Road, Esher, Surrey. £3. 020 7249 4050; wonderwhistle.co.uk

11th IACF Swindon Antiques and Collectors Fair, RAF Swindon, nr Lincoln. £5 (after 10am). 01636 702326; iacf.co.uk

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12th & 26th Sunbury

Antiques Market, Kempton Park, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex. Free. 01932 230946; sunburyantiques.com

13th-17th Chelsea Antiques Fair, Chelsea Old Town Hall, Kings Road, London. £5.

01825 744074; penman-fairs.co.uk

13th-19th BADA Antiques & Fine Art Fair, Duke of York Square, London. £10 (£15 for two people). 020 7589 6108; bada-antiques-fair.co.uk

15th-17th IACF Shepton Mallet Antiques, Vintage and Collectors Fair, Royal Bath and West Showground, Shepton Mallet. £5 (Fri £10). 01636 702326; iacf.co.uk

16th All Things Vintage & Lovely Fair, The Palace Hotel, Babbacombe Road, Torquay. £1.50. 01803 213837; missivy.co.uk

16th Mainwaring's Seaside Brocante, St Mary's Hall, Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent. £1. 01227 773037

16th Market Harborough's Affordable Vintage Fair, Best Western Three Swans Hotel, Market Harborough. £1. judysvintagefair.co.uk

17th Midcentury Modern, Dulwich College, London. £7. modernshows.com

17th The Vintage Home Show, Victoria Baths, Hathersage Road, Manchester. £3. 0113 345 8699; vintagehomeshow.co.uk

17th Adams Antiques Fair, Royal Horticultural Hall, Lindley Hall, Victoria, London. £4. 020 7254 4054; adamsantiquesfairs.com

23rd Mad March Vintage Fair at the Castle, Bruce Castle Museum, Lordship Lane, Tottenham, London. £1.50. 020 8808 8772

23rd Vintage & Handmade Jumble Sale, The Village Hall, Rangeworthy, South Gloucestershire. Free. vintageandhandmade.co.uk

24th Pop-Up Vintage Fair, The Ridings Shopping Centre, Level 2 Cathedral Walk, Wakefield. Free. advintageous.co.uk

24th Kelvin Hall Antique and Collectors Fair, Kelvin Hall, Argyle Street, Glasgow. £1. 01764 654555; scotfairs.co.uk

24th Delightfully Vintage & Handmade Spring Market, North Bradley Peace Memorial Hall, North Bradley, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. £1. delightfullyvintage.com

25th IACF Newbury Antique and Collectors Fair, Newbury Racecourse, Berkshire. £5 (after 10am). 01636 702326; iacf.co.uk

29th-31st Antiques & Fine Art Fair, Scone Palace, Perth. £5. 01423 522122; gallowayfairs.co.uk

2-FOR-FREE

29th-31st The Cotswolds Decorative Antiques & Fine Art Fair, Westonbirt School, Tetbury, South Cotswolds, Gloucestershire. £5. 01278 784912; cooperevents.com

31st St Ives Antiques Fair, The Burgess Hall, St Ives, Cambridgeshire. £2. 01480 896866

Q&A

Who: Reem Nassar.

What: A Napoleon II chair upholstered in Cabbages & Roses fabric, £850.

Why: 'I'm going to put it in my bedroom. I'm refurbishing my house, changing it from something very serious to something much lighter using Swedish and French country furniture.'

Style file: 'My home is an Arts and Crafts house, all oak and dark colours, so I'm trying to make it more cheery. It's in Bedford Park in Chiswick, a suburb that was worked on by architect Edward William Godwin, a leading member of the aesthetic movement. I love shopping at decorative fairs - I recently bought a console table at the Battersea fair.'



Lorna O'Bryen paid £25 for six old handkerchiefs. 'My friend's initials are AB and she loves fine linen so I'll give this one as a present.'



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