

dealers' diary

"Battersea was ahead of the curve ...and it has remained flexible"

HELEN LINFIELD, of WAKELIN & LINFIELD

A dealer for over 45 years, who has exhibited since the first fair and is current chairman of the DATF Standards Committee.



ATG: How has the fair changed?

HL: It leans far more now towards the 20th century and less towards the "antique".

Painted furniture has continued to grow in popularity, despite us thinking the fad would pass, and here is the place to buy it.

ATG: What did you do before you became a dealer?

HL: I was an interpreter in French and Spanish. I fell in love with the stuff [antiques] while studying in Paris in the 60s.

ATG: Any other strings to your bow?

HL: Crazy about, and play a lot of, Real Tennis and love interior and garden design, which I do alongside the antiques business.

ALISON ROELICH, of ON-REFLECTION

Exhibitor for 10 years, dealer of 17 years.

ATG: What do you think has been the key to the fair's longevity?

AR: The fact that pieces are allowed to be exhibited on the basis of their appearance.

The fair is seen as stylish and interesting rather than fuddy-duddy, and people who care about these things are happy to see and be seen there, and probably the fact that the "ladies who lunch" can.

ATG: What did you do before you became a dealer?

AR: I've worked mostly in publishing and at home bringing up children, but becoming an antique dealer is the best and most satisfying paid work I've ever had. Alan, my husband, was in the Royal Navy flying helicopters for 20 years and then British Airways



flying passenger jets for another 22 before becoming a full-time antiques dealer.

ATG: Any other strings to your bow?

AR: I am a qualified herdsman (sheep) but am no longer prepared to go out to trim muddy, smelly, hooves and deliver lambs in the cold and dark...

SEVILLA HERCOLANI of JACKDAWES ANTIQUES

Exhibitor for 28 years.

ATG: Most memorable item sold at the fair?

SH: Ten panels of 18th century chinoiserie screens, sold to a palace on the Grand Canal, Venice.

ATG: What do you enjoy most about the fair?

SH: The friendly atmosphere and seeing friends again. Also I can bring Sty (my dog!).

ATG: What did you do before you became a dealer?

SH: Model, dress designer, interior decorator.



SUE NORMAN of SUE NORMAN BLUE & WHITE CHINA

First showed in 1987 (see photograph), has been dealing for 43 years.

ATG: How has the antiques market changed in the past 30 years?

SN: Fewer collectors, more people seeking decorative pieces for their homes.

ATG: What do you think we might see at a Battersea Decorative fair in 2045?

SN: 95-year-old exhibitors covered in rust alongside youthful good-looking ones.

ATG: What did you do before you became a dealer?

SN: Retail sales at Jaeger, Regent Street then Loewe, Old Bond Street, and lastly Argenta Design, Kings Road Chelsea. Then inspired by my mother's antique shop in Sussex to start my own at Antiquarius.



ATG: Any other strings to your bow?

SN: Keen music lover (my daughter is a professional drummer) – rock, jazz and classical especially piano fan. Garden and interior design.

GUY CHENEVIX-TRENCH of ANTIQUES BY DESIGN

Exhibitor for about 12 years.

ATG: How has the fair changed?

GCT: Quite a lot, with different stock, less brown furniture and more different, fun decorative items.

ATG: What changes have you witnessed in the wider art and antiques market?

GCT: A lot more recycling/upcycling going on.

ATG: Has the stock that you exhibit at the fair changed over the years?

GCT: Yes, more imaginative, creative and more attention to detail.

ATG: Is there anything you would like to see changed?

GCT: It would be nice if more of the hotel, restaurant and bar industry would consider buying [from antiques dealers].



ROSEY FORD of SERENDIPITY

An exhibitor for 18 years (53 times) and a dealer of 48 years.

ATG: Most memorable item sold at the fair?

RF: A three-pedestal dining table made from early oak iron-bound capstans with plate glass top, and a long mahogany three-pedestal formal dining table to a Japanese family who spoke no English. Everyone around cheered when the invoice book came out! Oh, and a Guess Your Weight fairground/pier machine.

ATG: What do you think we might see at a Battersea Decorative fair in 2045?

RF: '60s Ikea?! Or brown mahogany furniture



as everything comes into fashion again; cult computer and mobile phone stand from the '90s.

ATG: Any other strings to your bow?

RF: Interior decorator, organiser of large charity balls, breeder of black labrador dogs.

ROBERT YOUNG of ROBERT YOUNG ANTIQUES

Exhibited at the first fair in 1985 and stood there for a decade. Currently on the fair Standards Committee (vetting).

ATG: How has the fair changed?

RY: The fair has changed remarkably little and it still retains the fundamental, original ethos.

It was launched long before the digital age became relevant to the antiques market, at a time when there was still a widespread international appetite for 'serious' English antiques.

The Harveys recognised a gap in the market and an opportunity to showcase more informal continental pieces, along with textiles and decorative items from multiple cultures and to celebrate their inherent decorative qualities.

ATG: What do you think has been the key to the fair's longevity?

RY: It has always remained relevant.

The fair was ahead of the curve when it originally broke some of the rules of the traditional antiques market and it has remained flexible and sensitive to the market ever since.

ATG: Finally, a prediction – what do you think we might see at a Battersea Decorative fair in 2045?

RY: Mobile phones, parking meters, endless laptops, Brompton bicycles, spot paintings by Damien Hirst, first-generation polished concrete furniture, moon holiday flight memorabilia, retired working Quidditch sticks, retailer printed plastic bags.

