

# dealers' diary



Anna Brady reports

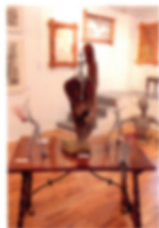
email: annabrad@atgmedia.com  
tel: 020 7420 6625

## Trio mark birthday with a new gallery

A YEAR on from opening their shop in Mero, Walton House Antiques - aka furniture dealers Nicholas Ashell, Adam Gallimore and Paul Gaffney - held a party to celebrate on Friday, April 19.

They were also celebrating the opening of a new in-house gallery which takes over part of the 2000 sq ft space in the pretty Withshire town. The plan is to hold a series of exhibitions of contemporary art and craft in this space, in order to keep things fresh and attract a different audience to the shop. The first exhibition, on until June 1, is *Taking Flight*, featuring the work of five artists but focusing on local artist Richard Hoare.

The Walton House crew tell me it was a fun evening, with over 200 visitors. The party continued on Saturday too with a jazz band. [www.waltonhouseantiques.co.uk](http://www.waltonhouseantiques.co.uk)



Right: works from the inaugural exhibition, *Taking Flight*, in Walton House Antiques' new gallery

# Folk art's simple appeal is a fine art to explain

Dealer Robert Young explains its genuine, honest charm

**"ONE of America's pre-eminent specialists told me many years ago 'folk art should draw you in and solicit a desire to touch it. Great folk art will also make you smile'. Many years later, I still haven't really found any better definition."**

Robert Young has struggled for years to put into words what attracts him to the particular mélange of folk art and vernacular furniture for which he and his wife Josayne have become so well known over the past 30 years, both in dealing and in designing interiors.

As he says, there is no definitive reference book for folk art, no chronology of style or development, and there are also no specific markers of quality. "In some cases the wholesale disregard of perspective, construction or composition can be the vital and magical ingredient."

But most of us have seen examples of the sort of derivative or imitative pieces which are "immediately conspicuous for a clumsy 'faux primitive' quality", and Robert laments how such pieces have stained the genre of folk art.

But genuine, honest pieces, those with that extra something, can truly hold their own. In a nutshell, the Youngs look for "extraordinary pieces with individuality and integrity".

"They need to be confidently and unself-consciously executed," says Robert. "They must reflect the hand of the individual who created them. They are best left alone, proudly bearing their scars and bruises and not sanitised by cleaning or clumsy restoration. So these qualities are uniquely subjective and



Left: an early 'lobster pot' form child's high chair, British, probably Welsh, c.1760, in solid ash and elm with traces of the original painted surface, 2ft 10in (86cm) tall, £7500 from Robert Young.



Above: a c.1850 English folk art sculpture of a pug dog, in hand-carved wood with much of the original painted surface, 8in (20cm) high, £2500 from Robert Young.

almost entirely visual. If you find pieces that satisfy most of these criteria and add in a touch of sound provenance you have the ground rules."

With the lack of established guidelines in this market for "good, better, best", Robert offers this advice for those starting out collecting folk art: "Tread boldly... driven primarily by an enthusiasm and sensitivity for the works that attract you. The only equipment you need is an 'eye' and the confidence to back it."

Context also plays a significant role

**"They are best left alone, proudly bearing their scars and bruises and not sanitised by cleaning or clumsy restoration"**

in how we see these objects. An ancient weathervane sitting in a farmyard or atop a barn may go unnoticed by most of us, but when taken and hung indoors so that its silhouette, scale and weathered surface are suddenly emphasised, it becomes a sculptural object that might as easily have been produced by an avant garde artist of the early 20th century and is equally at home among contemporary art or vernacular furniture of the same period.

This is certainly a field that you either get or you don't - in Robert's words, it's all about response - and indeed it is sometimes tarred with the 'shabby chic' brush. To understand what Robert is on about you must really pay a trip to Battersea (or at least to his website) for his 14th annual exhibition of antique folk art, which opens on Thursday, May 9 at 11am and runs until May 18 at 68 Battersea Bridge Road. As has been

Right: this English naive school depiction of a *Bird's Eye View of the Market Street Wymondham and its Vicinity*, complete with the bird whose eyes we are seeing through, embodies the sort of raw charm that folk art dealer Robert Young seeks out. The c.1850, 20in x 2ft 2in (51 x 65cm) framed oil on panel was formerly in a London private collection of folk art, was illustrated in James Ayres' book *English Naive Painting 1750-1900* and is now priced at £18,000 from Robert's annual exhibition.



normal for the past few years, works are available for sale now on receipt of the catalogue, before the show itself opens. Included are 80 pieces of furniture, paintings and objects ranging in price from £850 to £28,000. Large pieces such as trestle tables, stick-back chairs

and a Georgian nest of seed drawers, still with its original 'sugar bag blue' paint, sit alongside such folk art staples as weathervanes, decoy birds, naive portraits and love tokens, both British and continental.

There are also a couple of groups,

chosen for their sculptural appeal, of nine unusual Northern European washboards and five 19th century sheep bells from the West Country which, hung en masse, would no doubt make a graphic display. Such kooky selections are very much the Robert Young way.

## Edenbridge open weekend hopes to fly high

BIRDS, bees and butterflies are the theme for this year's Edenbridge Galleries Spring Open Weekend in Kent this Saturday and Sunday, May 11-12.

Edenbridge Galleries is run by dealer and Antiques Roadshow specialist Lennox Cato and his wife Sue, and they will be serving Pimm's and canapés throughout the weekend as visitors look around the gallery's resident dealers.

Lennox himself will be showing a group of six early 19th century Chinese Trade gouache paintings on silk paper depicting exotic birds, while Derek Roberts of Derek Antiques has a porcelain parrot carriage clock.



Above: Turbridge Ware pottery box with moth motif, c.1850, £395 from Amber Antiques. Decorated with birds and butterflies, made for the export market. Edenbridge is, of course, not too far from Turbridge Wells and the gallery's resident Turbridge Ware specialists.

Amber Antiques is holding another exhibition of the Ken King collection to coincide with the weekend from May 11-25.

Mr King collected during the 1960s, specialising in topographical subjects, and this second exhibition of the collection continues the bias towards the topographical, with around 20 views.

However, in keeping with the birds, bees and butterflies theme, there is also a group of small Turbridge Ware boxes featuring butterfly and moth motifs. [www.edenbridgegalleries.com](http://www.edenbridgegalleries.com)

## Blame it on Rio if you have a hangover after Olympia 'carnival' ball

THE June fair season is almost upon us and with it another Secret Antiques Dealers' Ball, here to ensure that Olympia exhibitors once again feel suitably hung over as they arrive on their stands the next morning.

The event was started in 2010 by fair organiser Ingrid Nelson of The Antiques Dealers Fair Limited and has worked its way through James Bond, 'Glorious Gangsters' and the 'Casualties' themes.

This year, Ingrid has joined forces with Alexander Brown, who has taken on the bulk of the organising, and it will now be a bigger event and a proper charity fundraiser in aid of Marie

Cure Cancer Care. The theme is 'No Carnival' and the ball takes place on Friday, June 14, at The Hilton Olympia Hotel in Kensington High Street. It will take the usual format of a dinner dance with a charity auction.

Tickets are £75 per person, or £275 for a table of ten, which includes a cocktail on arrival and a three-course meal with wine.

There are also 30 bedrooms reserved at the hotel, priced at £125 for a single and £147 including breakfast.

For tickets contact Alexander Brown or Ingrid Nelson on [ab@alexanderbrown.com](mailto:ab@alexanderbrown.com) or [ingrid@edf.co.uk](mailto:ingrid@edf.co.uk)



- STEVE JORDAN  
jeweller, dealer and magazine editor, London  
[www.hairston.co.uk](http://www.hairston.co.uk)  
[sjordan@hairston.co.uk](mailto:sjordan@hairston.co.uk)
1. How long have you been involved with *Jewellery*? Since late 1974, I worked for a jeweller in East Angles and carried out my first valuation that year, although as the 'boy' my first task was to wash the windows. Can you imagine how odd it is in December on the Norfolk coast?
  2. Do you visit many fairs? I try to make a point of visiting international jewellery fairs at Earls Court and BADA. It helps me keep my eye in on trends and values.
  3. What was your first job? I left school at 17 and worked in a bank for a few months. I didn't fit in too well, long hair and denim slugs. Worse thing - one night I had a dream that I would work with clocks. The next day there was a job vacancy for a trainee at a local jeweller's in the newspaper. I also found out my ancestors had been clockmakers in Chertsmore.
  4. Best thing about being a specialist dealer? No two days are the same. My week can begin with working as a consultant to personal asset lending company Boro or jeweller Searle and Company in the Royal Exchange for a couple. Perhaps a trip abroad for an exhibition. The end of the week is generally taken up with home visit valuations in a topographic collection, an area in which I specialise. I enjoy my job - it's a passion.
  5. And the worst? Unreliable rates.
  6. What is your dream object? Family enough, I neither collect nor deal. I enjoy finding Arts & Crafts items though. Exemplar item by Alexander Fisher. Silver and shagreen box by John Paul Cooper. Anything by the Gaskins. Items that you appreciate the skills involved in the making, nothing mass produced.
  7. What is the biggest threat, in your opinion, to the jewellery trade at the moment? Quality. There are too many for the luxury market. Provide your USP. Raise your profile by writing events. Don't stand at the counter expecting customers to just walk in. These days are gone.
  8. Coldest pleasure? Chocolate and antiques. Not at the same time though.
  9. Any advice for those starting out as a specialist dealer? Three things for potential values: education, experience and continued professional development. Top one is quality as a gemmologist and diamond grader. Gain experience in a variety of sectors including retail jewellers and auction houses. Continue your development by attending lectures, courses and conferences. Don't stop learning.
  10. Red or white? The only red I have is beetroot juice. (Herbs, vegetables.)

If you are a dealer and would like to be featured in 10 Questions, email [annabrad@atgmedia.com](mailto:annabrad@atgmedia.com)

The Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 4BE  
Thurs 16th - Sun 19th May 2013  
Thursday 11am-7pm | Friday - Sunday 11am-5pm  
High Quality Antiques & Works of Art For Sale  
Leading Professional Dealers  
Exhibits Vetted for Quality and Authenticity  
For complimentary tickets go to [www.cooperevents.com](http://www.cooperevents.com)