

Charles Townley returns to Towneley Hall

12 March 2008

A celebrated bust of Charles Townley, the 18th-century art connoisseur has been saved from export and will return to Towneley Hall, Burnley on 6 March. It is to be unveiled at a reception at the Hall.

Image



Bust of Charles Townley by Joseph Nollekens

Marjorie Trusted, Senior Curator of Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London will give a short talk at the reception.

This Carrara marble bust was saved from being exported to Yale University in the United States thanks to generous benefactors after an energetic fundraising drive by Burnley Council.

Donations came from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (£178,000), independent charity The Art Fund (£93,750), The Henry Moore Foundation, The

Dilettanti Society (of which Charles Townley was a member), The Towneley Hall Society (Museums Friends Group), The Stocks Massey Bequest, and private donors.

The bust is particularly important and valuable as it is in the sculptor Joseph Nollekens' own hand, without the help of studio assistants.

Councillor Charlie Bullas, Burnley Council's Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation said: "We are more than grateful for these generous donations and proud that we have such a valuable piece of art housed at Towneley Hall for the people of Burnley to enjoy.

"We also hope that this internationally significant piece of artwork will attract visitors from across the country, and let many people know all we have to offer at the 'jewel in our crown.'"

Towneley Hall is now Burnley's Art Gallery and Museum but was the home of the Towneley family until 1901. Charles Townley (1735-1805) lived there all his life. Townley was a noted collector, a scholar and friend to artists. Unlike some art collections that were displayed far from the metropolis in country houses, his sculptures could be viewed at his town house in London.

Marjorie Trusted has been generous with advice and support. She says: "This exceptional sculpture, which earned a starred export stop, is the finest likeness of one of the most important collectors of his time, Charles Townley (1737-1805). It is by the great portrait sculptor Joseph Nollekens (1737-1823), his exact contemporary, who knew Townley well, and this lively and superbly carved bust encapsulates their mutual friendship and respect."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: "Charles Townley's collection of classic antiquities has been of immense importance to this nation's museums. We are delighted that such a lifelike sculpture of this great Lancastrian will now be on display in his hometown gallery."

David Barrie, Director of The Art Fund, said: "This beautifully crafted marble bust is of great national importance. At The Art Fund, our core purpose is to make sure such works stay in public hands, and we are therefore immensely pleased to have helped secure the work for Towneley Hall, where people will now enjoy it for generations to come."

Towneley Hall already owns Johan Zoffany's portrait of Charles Townley and his friends in the Park Street Gallery, Westminster, also funded by The Art Fund and

the Stocks Massey Bequest.

The bust will be displayed by the painting in the art gallery.

Notes to editors

Charles Townley of Towneley Hall

Spelling is *Charles Townley of Towneley Hall* by Joseph Nollekens.

Photographers are welcome at the reception at Towneley Hall at 7.15pm on Friday 6 March 2009 or in the afternoon to meet Marjorie Trusted from 3pm.

The Art Fund

The Art Fund is the UK's leading independent art charity. It offers grants to help UK museums and galleries enrich their collections; campaigns on behalf of museums and their visitors; and promotes the enjoyment of art.

It is entirely funded from public donations and has 80,000 members. Since 1903 the charity has helped museums and galleries all over the UK secure 860,000 works of art for their collections.

Recent achievements include: helping secure Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* for the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Gallery, London in February 2009 with a grant of £1million; helping secure Anthony d'Offay's collection, ARTIST ROOMS, for Tate and National Galleries of Scotland in February 2008 with a grant of £1million; and running the 'Buy a Brushstroke' public appeal which raised over £550,000 to keep Turner's *Blue Rigi* watercolour in the UK.

Further information

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