



2. Edward William Cooke R.A., *The Antiquary's Cell*, 1835, oil on panel.  
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3. 'Elizabethan' Oak Armchair, one of a pair, nineteenth century, incorporating earlier elements, supplied by Samuel Luke Pratt to Sir James Kay Shuttleworth at Gawthorpe Hall, Lancashire in 1852.  
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# INTRODUCTION

The significance of the antique and curiosity trade in the history of collecting and indeed the history of art is now becoming much more evident and there has been a small but steady stream of investigations into the history of the trade in recent years. The late Clive Wainwright was greatly interested in the history of the trade and published some preliminary investigations into its development. Wainwright's chapter on 'The Trade' in *The Romantic Interior* (1989) and his published notes directing attention to the rôle that the trade played in the development of the South Kensington Museum (2002), were groundbreaking introductions and it is a great pity that he was unable to pursue this research further before his sad and untimely death in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Tracy also has published a study of the trade in ancient woodwork in the nineteenth century and included some information on the role that curiosity dealers played in these evolving interests.<sup>2</sup> There has also been a clutch of articles published in *Furniture History* and the *Journal of the History of Collections* directing attention to individual dealers and their history.<sup>3</sup> More recently, the 2006 issue of *Regional Furniture* emphasised the current interest in the history of the antique trade by devoting a whole issue to the memoirs of the twentieth-century antique and curiosity dealer Roger Warner.<sup>4</sup> Amongst some of the earlier studies into this trade the short article on the dealer John Coleman Isaac by Edward Joy and the two essays on the dealer Edward Holmes Baldock by Geoffrey de Bellaigue published in *Connoisseur* in 1975 stand out as still relatively unusual investigations.<sup>5</sup> My own research into the emergence of the antique and curiosity trade in the opening decades of the nineteenth century has revealed it to be a much more complex and diverse phenomenon that has generally been considered.<sup>6</sup> However, this introduction is perhaps not the place for a detailed commentary on the results of my investigations into the emergence of the antique and curiosity trade. Nonetheless, this introduction attempts to provide some further context for the dictionary entries that follow. It is hoped that this introduction to the *Biographical Dictionary of Antique and Curiosity Dealers* will provide a useful, if relatively brief, overview of the development of the trade in the nineteenth century. There is still much work to be done on the history of the dealer and the history of the trade in antiques and curiosities, however I trust that the *Dictionary* will prove its worth and that those, until now relatively obscure, names scattered amongst archive papers, invoices and other sources, can now begin to be granted their own biography.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRADE

As Krzysztof Pomian, Clive Wainwright and other scholars have demonstrated, there was already a sophisticated market for curiosities on the Continent by the early 1600s.<sup>7</sup> By the mid seventeenth century, shops that specialised in the supply of antiques and curiosities also began to appear with greater frequency in cities such as Rome, Venice, Amsterdam and Paris. The diarist and collector John Evelyn (1620–1706) recorded visiting a curiosity

shop called 'Noah's Ark' in Paris in 1644, 'where are to be sold all sorts of Curiositys, naturall & Artificial...'.<sup>8</sup> Given the activities of collectors like Evelyn, it seems likely that there would also have been some traders in London in the seventeenth century selling such objects, although as Wainwright noted, there is very little surviving evidence of their existence.<sup>9</sup> By the early part of the eighteenth century, dealers in curiosities had begun to make a more obvious appearance in London. Traditionally, these eighteenth century dealers sold a wide range of natural and artificial curiosities, objects that would be of interest to natural philosophers and antiquarian collectors and that would have comprised the exotic and the rare, objects from the realm of scientific endeavour and historical investigation.<sup>10</sup> For much of the eighteenth century, the curiosity trade mainly congregated within the boundaries of the City of London amongst the book and print sellers in and around the environs of St. Paul's cathedral.<sup>11</sup> The dealers' strategic location amongst the print sellers and book dealers demonstrates that the principal consumers of antiques and curiosities during the eighteenth century comprised the class of antiquarian collectors. By the middle of the eighteenth century, as Wainwright had previously indicated, the so-called 'Broker's Row' in Moorfields was already a celebrated haunt of the antiquarian collectors.<sup>12</sup> As this brief summary suggests, the trade in antiques and curiosities had of course already existed long before the trade emerged in the nineteenth century. It is certainly accurate to say however, that by the opening decades of the nineteenth century the antique and curiosity trade that emerged was a distinctive and a much more expansive phenomenon.

It is clear from the dictionary entries that the British antique and curiosity shop was concentrated to a large extent in London, but it would be inaccurate to suggest that the trade in Britain was solely a London phenomenon. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that a considerable number of dealers were operating in many other parts of the country even as early as the second quarter of the nineteenth century. From as early as the beginning of the 1820s there are curiosity dealers recorded in Liverpool (Ball; Abrahams), Leeds (Fenteman), Southampton (Goetz), and Hertford (Dew). By the late 1830s and 1840s, the presence of a number of curiosity dealers trading in locations such as Northampton (Walesby), Gloucester (Millard), Birmingham (Jacobs), Portsmouth (Elkins) and Manchester (Wolf), indicates the spread of the trade by the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Dealers in locations such as Brighton (Thatcher), Hastings (Reeves) (See figure 11) and the cluster of five curiosity dealers in Ryde on the Isle of Wight, also suggest that the association between tourism and shopping for antiques and curiosities, shells and fossils, was already well established by the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

Whilst London continued to be at the centre of the consumption of antiques and curiosities and was inevitably the preferred location of the most high-profile members of the trade, by the early 1840s there were also some very well-connected dealers operating outside the capital. Charles Redfern, trading in Jury Street, Warwick (see figures 4 and 5) during the middle of the nineteenth century, is just one example of a dealer located in the provinces who was well-known both in London and, as his dictionary entry indicates, as far away as the USA. The diverse locations of antique and curiosity shops is indicative of the wide geographical spread of the antique and curiosity trade in Britain by the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the large number of dealers listed in



4. Charles Redfern's antique shop, Jury Street, Warwick, 2009.  
*Photograph © the author.*



5. Charles Redfern's antique shop, Jury Street, Warwick, stained glass over-door, 2009.  
*Photograph © the author.*



the Dictionary who were trading during the first half of the nineteenth century contradicts Clive Wainwright's suggestion that 'even by the late 1840s there do not seem to have been large numbers of shops selling antiquities.'<sup>13</sup>

A significant aspect of antique and curiosity dealing in the nineteenth century was the relationship to the trade in second-hand goods. Indeed, dealers in second-hand goods still continue to operate alongside the more specialised dealers in antiques. The trade in second-hand goods is itself a highly significant one; in the nineteenth century, the markets for second-hand goods, particularly the markets for clothing and furniture, were much more important than they are now. The Dictionary entries contain several dealers who were, at some stage of their trading activities, classified as 'furniture brokers' and 'furniture dealers'. The anonymous 'Old Furniture Shop' photographed by John Thompson in London in 1877 (See figure 40), or the shop of William Schofield who was listed as a 'furniture dealer' at 36 Holywell Street in the trade directories in the 1840s, exemplify these practices.<sup>14</sup> Schofield's shop, illustrated in a watercolour by J.W. Archer, painted in 1847, (figure 1), like the 'Old Furniture Shop' some thirty years later, show the kinds of second-hand objects that a 'furniture dealer' sold in the period. The watercolour shows a jumble of furniture discarded by its owners, deemed either unfashionable or beyond practical use. To the left of the doorway is a mahogany wine cellaret dating from the 1790s, not yet a 'fashionable antique', and a number of other domestic and utilitarian objects, some contemporary, others twenty or thirty years old, are scattered on the pavement. It is clear from the illustration that Schofield was a dealer in second-hand goods and such practices remain at the margins of the more discrete trade in antiques and curiosities. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that dealers such as William Schofield would have sold antiques and curiosities when they had the opportunity and the inclusion of an entry on Schofield in the Dictionary reminds us of the continuing overlaps and relationships between the more specialised practices undertaken by antique and curiosity dealers and the practices of 'broking'.

Like other trades and professions, many nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealers produced distinctive business ephemera. We know, for example, that the dealer John Coleman Isaac produced a trade card, probably in the 1830s, proclaiming that he was 'Importer of Dresden China & Curiosities'.<sup>15</sup> The dealer John Hedge Wickham, trading from Wardour Street in the early 1840s, also produced a trade card indicating the range of objects that he sold, including 'antique furniture....armour, china etc.'<sup>16</sup> Several other dealers did the same and the examples of trade cards produced by William Neate (figure 34), Samson Wertheimer (figure 36), Bram Hertz (figure 35) and George Heigham (figure 39), clearly illustrate the range of pictorial conventions and publicity employed by the trade in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. It is also known that some dealers adopted the practice of the high-class furniture trade and attached labels to the furniture which they sold. A table supplied in 1837 to the Lucy family at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire, by the dealer James Robinson, who was trading from addresses in Oxford Street and Rathbone Place in the 1830s, has a label attached to the underside, 'Robinson.....Decorater and Furnisher a l'Antique'.<sup>17</sup>

As well as trade cards, a number of printed invoices from dealers survive in archives and collections. The illustration of similar printed invoices from the dealers Litchfield & Radclyffe (figure 37) and Thomas Woodgate (figure 38) suggest that 'stock' printed



6. Title Page from Horatio Rodd's catalogue, 1842.

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7. Plate 3 from Horatio Rodd's catalogue, 1842.

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invoices for members of the antique and curiosity trade already existed by the mid nineteenth century.

Other dealers produced catalogues of their stock, some of them elaborately illustrated. Horatio Rodd, for example, an antique and curiosity dealer trading in Great Newport Street in London in the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, is well-known for having produced such material during the period 1820s to 1840s, as the copy of the frontispiece and an illustrated page from his 1842 catalogue demonstrates (figures 6 & 7). One of Rodd's earlier catalogues issued in 1824, included a description of 'a set of six Antique High Back Chairs, very finely carved in walnut-tree, perfect but want new seats.....£7.7s.'<sup>18</sup> The chairs were not illustrated in Rodd's 1824 catalogue, although fortunately we do have an illustration of these chairs, as they were sold by Rodd in the same year and for the seven guineas advertised to George Weare Braikenridge (1775–1856), the well-known antiquarian collector.<sup>19</sup> Braikenridge installed the chairs in the lodge to Broomwell House, his home in Brislington, near Bristol, where they were sketched by the amateur artist W.H. Bartlett (1809–1854) in around 1825, (figure 19).

The trade also utilised evolving technologies as efficient business tools, both to improve communication with customers and collectors and also as part of sophisticated marketing strategies. In the early part of the nineteenth century, communication by letter was an important mechanism for communication as the letter from the dealer Gabriel Davies to his son Abraham in 1821 illustrates, (figure 8). Nineteenth-century dealers also regularly sent parcels of objects on approval, by post, to collectors. By the second half of the nineteenth century photography played a significant role in the circulation of information concerning antiques and curiosities. From the 1850s, for example, the dealer Samuel Mawson regularly sent photographs of objects to his main client Lord Hertford, as John Ingamells has indicated.<sup>20</sup> The collection of between 7,000 and 8,000 photographs that survive in the archives of the collector-dealer Stefano Bardini, are a testament to the importance of photography as a means of communication by the last decades of the nineteenth century.

### *The Trade in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*

The nineteenth century antique and curiosity trade emerged in response to the large quantities of material that became available as a result of the political and economic upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars. The economic consequences of the resultant political instability were the primary catalyst for the development of a vigorous market for antiques and curiosities on the Continent in this period. The wholesale dismantling of interior decorations and furnishings from palaces in locations such as Venice, and the removal of stained glass, interior woodwork and architectural elements from churches and chapels in Holland and in Belgium, particularly after the second invasion by the French army in 1794, provided a rich source of material for antique and curiosity dealers. For example, the buying activities of the Norwich glass painter and dealer in ancient stained glass John Hampp<sup>21</sup> are well known, and many other dealers and collectors travelled to the Continent during the periodic lulls in the conflict between Britain and France in the first decade of the nineteenth-century.<sup>22</sup> After the eventual defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 travel to Continental Europe was made easier leading to a rapid increase in the importation of antiques and curiosities, with regular





8. Letter from the dealer Gabriel Davies to his son Abraham, dated and inscribed 'Friday 19 Cheshwan 582' (December 1821).

© Hartley Library Special Collections, University of Southampton.

shipments arriving in Britain during the period after 1815 and scores of dealers involved in the trade.

The availability of material and the easing of communication routes to mainland Europe led to a rapid rise in the number of individuals involved in the antique and curiosity trade, as evidenced in the expansion of the numbers of dealers listed in the directories during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. The trade directories of the late eighteenth century and the period up to 1808, do not specifically list 'curiosity dealers'; the more common classification of 'broker' appears to have been the norm. The earliest specific reference to 'dealer in curiosities' in the directories is that of the dealer Thomas Gwenapp, who appears under this classification from 1806. As the markets expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century, the trade appears to have begun to adopt, progressively, more elaborate descriptive nomenclature for their business operations; as well as the ubiquitous 'curiosity dealer', we begin to see such classifications as 'ancient furniture warehouse', (Edmund Terry, Wardour Street), 'antique furniture dealer,' (Moses Kasner, Wardour Street), 'antique lace warehouse' (Miss Clarke, Regent Street, (figure 12)), 'Importer of Foreign Curiosities,' (Nathaniel Nathan, Wardour Street), 'Antique Repository,' (Thomas Gwenapp, New Bond Street) and even 'Furnisher a l'antique', (James Robinson, Oxford Street). From the 1820s onwards, the trade directories began to group dealers under separate and distinct category headings such as 'Ancient Furniture Importers' and 'Antique Furniture & China Dealers', a clear indication of the emerging social and cultural and economic significance of the trade in the period.

By the early part of the nineteenth century, the evolving business in Britain had also begun to expand beyond its original locations in the City of London and as the audience for antiques and curiosities began to broaden considerably, was moving into the West End. This expansion began to draw in many more participants and the various locations within the West End of London reflect the wide range of overlapping practices involved in antique and curiosity dealing. Several tradesmen chose established locations associated with complimentary trades such as furniture making, such as Tottenham Court Road, which attracted Moore & Co. 'Dealers in Foreign China, Ancient Furniture and Curiosities'. Other dealers chose distinctive locations devoted to retail. William Forrest, for example, a personality well-known amongst nineteenth century collectors, including A.W. Franks of the British Museum,<sup>4</sup> was located at 54 Strand for at least twenty years, from 1835 until 1855. New Bond Street, which was one of the primary locations for fashionable trades from the opening decade of the nineteenth century, was also the location of a number of important outfits. John Jarman for example, who traded in 'curiosities' and 'old china', was installed in New Bond Street by the late 1820s, later moving from St. James Street, Pall Mall, and the 'dealer in curiosities' Charles Askew, was located at 126 New Bond Street as early as 1826. Bond Street was also the location of the shop of the famous antique furniture dealer and cabinetmaker John Webb, who occupied premises at 8 Old Bond Street from 1825 until 1851, when he moved to Grafton Street. The two most famous dealers in ancient armour in the period, Thomas Gwenapp who opened a shop in New Bond Street by 1806, certainly the earliest curiosity dealer to open a shop in this important location and Samuel and Henry Pratt, who were trading in ancient armour from New Bond Street by the mid 1820s.

However, alongside the sight of the antique and curiosity shop in the new consumer spaces of the capital, the trade also continued to exist in less prestigious locations in and amongst less high-status traders. Seven Dials for example, an area to the north-west of Covent Garden which was a notorious slum by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, saw a rapid expansion of the number of dealers in the 1840s. In 1843, the writer and commentator on London, Charles Knight (1791–1873), described the area around Monmouth Street off Seven Dials, where he noted ‘old furniture, or curiosity shops, such as we find in Wardour Street, are a new species, and amongst the most interesting.’<sup>25</sup> The trade also continued to remain in locations such as the City of London, the conventional locus of the trade since the eighteenth century, something confirmed by *Dictionary* entries, which notes the presence of a number of dealers such as Moses Moses, Marcus Samuels and George Nightingale, in such areas in and around Leadenhall Street and Smithfield in the 1840s.

### *The Trade in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*

The consumption of antiques and curiosities during the second half of the nineteenth century was similarly shaped by broader social changes and the shifting demographics of collectors, as well as design-led cultural shifts such as the Arts and Crafts Movement particularly from the 1870s onwards, as scholars such as Stefan Muthesius and Lucy Wood have demonstrated.<sup>26</sup> The broader collecting preferences of the second half of the nineteenth century have also already been sketched by the historian Arthur MacGregor.<sup>27</sup> One of the most significant developments in respect of the expansion of collecting activities in the second half of the nineteenth century was the consolidation in the development of the public historical museum, most importantly perhaps with the emergence of the South Kensington Museum in 1853. John Charles Robinson (1824–1913), the first curator of the South Kensington Museum, drew attention to the impact that the emergence of the public historical museum had played in the democratisation of collecting even by the mid-1850s. Robinson wrote, ‘The establishment of public museums has rendered the taste for collecting almost universal amongst educated persons.’<sup>28</sup> The emergence of the South Kensington Museum gave a significant social and cultural sanction to the evolving interest in a wide range of historical material in the decades after 1850 and provided a further catalyst for the wider consumption of antiques and curiosities after mid century.

In relation to the development of the antique and curiosity trade, it is also important to note that in the decades after 1850 collectors also began to specialise to a much greater extent than earlier collectors and single type or class of object became a much more common collecting practice. For example, from at least the late 1850s collectors had begun to direct their attention to classes of small collectables such as eighteenth-century British ceramics from manufactories such as Chelsea, Bow and Lowestoft, as the journals of the voracious collector Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812–1895) clearly demonstrate.<sup>29</sup> Specialist dealers such as William Edkins in Bristol and Robert Carter in London, emerged in response to this specific demand.

This is not to say of course that the ‘specialist dealer’ only emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the opening decades of the nineteenth century there was already a number of dealers specialising in particular kinds of objects that keyed into the

collecting and furnishing preferences of the day. The changing descriptions that the dealer Thomas Gwenapp assigned himself in the trade directories indicates a desire to present his trading activities a progressively more specific character, which in turn reflect the evolving markets in the period. As early as 1807 Gwenapp described himself as dealer in 'old china', by 1810 as 'repository for antiquities' and by the eighteen-teens he is listed as 'dealer in ancient armour', a specialisation for which he became well-known in the period. No doubt the changes in classification and naming in the trade directories also signal attempts by the dealers to present a nuanced and discrete expertise.

The shifting patterns of consumption and the new kinds of dealer that emerged during the course of the second half of the nineteenth century in London have been discussed briefly by Clive Wainwright in a short descriptive account of the gradual drift of the antique and curiosity dealers as they began to move from areas such as Wardour Street and populate more fashionable locations such as New Bond Street by the 1850s.<sup>30</sup> However, whilst Wainwright appears to be generally correct in his assertion that the 'antiques trade as we understand it' began to emerge during the 1850s,<sup>31</sup> his assessment that the 'brokers had become antique dealers and their curiosity shops, art galleries' presents a rather too smooth and progressive account of the transition and development of the trade and consumption of antiques and curiosities over the period. As the dictionary entries indicate, even in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century, antique and curiosity dealers were located in a diverse series of commercial locations within London, some of which were already sites of discrete consumer activity of the kind associated with the New Bond Street in the 1850s. Yet despite this criticism of the smooth and progressive account of the evolution of the trade in antiques and curiosities, it does seem accurate to suggest that 'antique dealing' as we now understand it, is more properly a later nineteenth century phenomenon. Moreover, it is certainly legitimate to draw attention to the gradual drift in the conventional usage of the term 'antique' from an adjective to a noun over the course of the nineteenth century. Although we should note that the earliest trade classification of 'Antique Dealer' itself dates back to the late 1840s, (see the entry for Charles Lush, 1849).

The changing collecting practices in the period post-1850 are also reflected in the emergence of specialised publications. Texts began to appear that were specifically directed at the practice of collecting as a discrete activity itself. *The Adventures of a Bric-a-Brac Hunter*, written by Major Herbert Byng-Hall and first published in 1868, exemplifies this development.<sup>32</sup> However, what seems to be more significant is the role that the antique and curiosity dealer played in these evolving collecting knowledge structures. The china dealer William Chaffers was significant in this respect<sup>33</sup> and so, for example, was Frederick Litchfield, the son of the antique and curiosity dealer Samuel Litchfield, who published a text on ceramics that was explicitly addressed to collectors – *Pottery and Porcelain, a Guide for Collectors*, published in 1879. Frederick Litchfield is notable for publishing the first systematic text that discussed the history of English furniture, published in 1892.<sup>34</sup> As we can see, the role of the dealer in the expanding markets for antiques and curiosities was highly significant on a number of fronts, as facilitators in the circulation of goods and as creators of knowledge structures through which these objects were classified and understood.



### *The Continental Trade*

The relationship between the British trade and the Continental trade was highly significant throughout the whole of the nineteenth century and the *Dictionary* includes information on many of the most important dealers operating on the Continent in the period. As the Dictionary entries indicate, dealers located in Paris were a consistent resource for buyers throughout the period with major figures such as Charles Mannheim (perhaps one of the models for the dealer character *Elias Magus* in Balzac's novel *Cousin Pons*, published in 1848), the collector-dealers Frédéric Spitzer and Emile Gavet, the infamous faker Louis Marcy and Jacques Seligmann, all trading from the city during their careers. The trade was also notable for dealers in Italy, particularly in Venice in the first half of the nineteenth century, (Luigi Celotti, Pier Domenico Tironi, Antonio Sanquirico and Mr Zen). We are also fortunate to have a nineteenth century illustration of a Venetian antique and curiosity shop, William Merritt Chase's *The Antiquary Shop* (1879) (see figure 41). Florence was also an important location for the trade; it was dominated by the dealer-collector Stefano Bardini in the later nineteenth century, but was also the location of a number of well-known dealers, including the infamous producer of forgeries, Giovanni Freppa, and Tito Gagliardi, who was, according to the writer Herbert Byng Hall, 'the best dealer in Florence' in the 1860s. Germany also figures regularly as a trading location in the nineteenth century. Frankfurt for example was the home of the Goldschmidt dynasty and one of the locations for the dealer Lazare Lowenstein (together with shops in Vienna and London), who's famous 'Vienna Museum' was sold at auction in 1860, the sale catalogue of which was the first to be illustrated with photographs of some of the lots.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a number of well-known collector-agents such as Rawdon Brown, Thomas Miller Whitehead and Charles Fairfax Murray. These individuals often acted as intermediaries in the purchase negotiations between institutions such as the South Kensington Museum, the British Museum and the National Gallery in London and the wider trade, as well as also directly supplying antiques and curiosities to such institutions themselves. The second half of the nineteenth century also saw the appearance of dealer-collectors such as Alexander Barker, Stefano Bardini, David and Isaac Falcke (figure 15), Frédéric Spitzer, the Wertheimers and the Duveen dynasty. These traders present us with some of the most well-known names in the history of nineteenth and twentieth century dealing and collecting and illustrate that by the 1870s the antique trade was a truly international practice.

### *Wardour Street, London*

As is well known and as the *Dictionary* entries clearly confirm, Wardour Street was a highly significant location for the antique and curiosity trade for much of the nineteenth century. Wardour Street appears consistently in the contemporary accounts of the antique and curiosity shop, it figures in trade literature, descriptive reports from visitors to the Metropolis and is a constant presence in letters and other exchanges between dealers, collectors, architects and designers. Indeed, whilst we can say that the emergence of the scores of antique and curiosity dealers throughout Britain during the nineteenth century was a development of considerable significance, Wardour Street completely overshadows the myriad of other individual locations in the biography of the antique and curiosity



9. James Winter's shop in Wardour Street, London, 2009.  
*Photograph © the author.*



10. Samuel Woollatt and Jacob Dantziger's shops in Wardour Street, London, 2009.  
*Photograph © the author.*

trade. During the period 1820–1870 at least 75 of the 124 shops on Wardour Street had at some stage been occupied by antique and curiosity dealers. In the 1830s and 1840s when the trade in Wardour Street was at its height over 40% of the premises in the street were antique and curiosity shops. A letter from the collector Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783–1848) to the Wardour Street dealer John Coleman Isaac sent in June 1831, illustrates the significance of Wardour Street as the centre of activity in the wider consumption of antiques and curiosities in that period, Meyrick wrote:

*I am extremely obliged to you for your letter because removed as I am from that world of curiosities, Wardour Street, it is only in this way that I can learn what fresh comes into the market.*<sup>36</sup>

However, despite, or perhaps more accurately because of the attention that Wardour Street attracted as the primary representative of the ‘world of curiosities’, this location also became a convenient shorthand for a host of problematic responses to the antique and curiosity trade. The street also became a signifier for the supply of fakes and forgeries and more particularly for the supply of spurious antique furniture made-up from pieces of ancient woodwork. This was a problem for commentators more especially after the mid nineteenth century when the notion of taste, good design and what counted for authentic ancient furniture shifted significantly from that of the earlier nineteenth century. In *Hints on Household Taste*, Charles Eastlake’s didactic text on design published in 1868, Eastlake directed his audience to avoid the inauthentic ‘ancient furniture’ that was still a central part of the collecting and furnishing markets in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Wardour Street was at the centre of these critiques. Eastlake wrote:

*I would especially caution my readers against the contemptible specimens of that would be Gothic joinery which is manufactured in the backstreets of Soho. No doubt good examples of mediaeval furniture and cabinetwork are occasionally to be met in the curiosity shops of Wardour Street; but as a rule the ‘Glastonbury’ chairs and ‘antique’ bookcases which are sold in that venerable thoroughfare will prove on examination to be nothing but gross libels on the style of art which they are supposed to represent.*<sup>37</sup>

One of the consequences of such criticisms was that by the third quarter of the nineteenth century Wardour Street itself, as Clive Wainwright suggested, came to denote objects of ‘questionable antiquity, as the phrase ‘Wardour-Street English’ implies’.<sup>38</sup> ‘Wardour Street Style’ was still a euphemism for spurious antique furniture in the 1920s and was used by the writer and dealer Herbert Cescinsky as an appropriate description of what he called the ‘atrocious productions’ of ‘Antique English Furniture; produced in the middle decades of the nineteenth century’.<sup>39</sup> As late as the 1960s the distinguished furniture historian Ralph Edwards could still refer to the ‘Wardour Street character of the furnishings’ at Kenwood, Hampstead, as an oblique criticism of the accretion of various pieces of furniture that were present at the house prior to the re-installation of the original Adam furniture in an exhibition at the house in 1964.<sup>40</sup> However, whilst we cannot deny that

such criticisms came to be associated with Wardour Street, it is also important to acknowledge the important role that the street has played in the history of the antique and curiosity trade and we should not let the significance of Wardour Street in this earlier period be diminished by the problematic narratives that emerged to tarnish its image.

## THE ANTIQUE AND CURIOSITY TRADE

### *Antique and Ancient Furniture*

A bewildering range of objects made up the stock of the nineteenth century antique and curiosity trade. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Ancient Armour and Weapons, Ancient Stained Glass, 'Raffael' and 'Faenza' ware, Nankeen china, Ivories, Venetian glass and a myriad of other objects that were sold under the catch-all categories of *objects of vertu*, *antiques* and *curiosities* dominated the trade. The sale notice for the auction of the stock of the dealer Abraham Davies in June 1822 illustrates the diversity of the stock of an early nineteenth century dealer:

*ancient armour, comprising several suits of the most elegant form and exquisite workmanship of the 15th and 16th centuries, costly weapons in cross bows, guns, swords, pistols, halberds, pikes; rare specimens of Dresden china, carvings in ivory and wood, antique cabinets, and bronzes....splendid china jars, an elegant India screen.*<sup>41</sup>

As the advertisement suggests, the range of ancient objects was also supplemented by a developing contemporary taste for objects that keyed into the evolving fashions, such as Old Sèvres and Old Dresden china, Old French Bronzes and 'Buhl' and Riesener furniture. By the second half of the nineteenth century the stock of an antique and curiosity dealer was in many respects the same, with the addition of examples of English porcelain manufactories, British eighteenth century furniture and decorative objects such as fans, textiles and rugs, perhaps complemented by some contemporary paintings and sculpture.

However, the market for ancient furniture and woodwork was perhaps the most extensive of all the kinds of material that were sold by the antique and curiosity dealers, at least during the first half of the nineteenth century. Interest in ancient furniture, as is well known, was an antiquarian obsession for individuals such as Horace Walpole (1717–1797) and during the last decade of the eighteenth century such interest was consolidating. The installation of ancient woodwork from the late 1790s at Plas Newydd (New Hall) by Sarah Ponsonby (1755–1831) and Lady Eleanor Charlotte Butler (1739–1829), the famous 'Ladies of Llangollen', is perhaps the most well known and has been the subject of several publications.<sup>42</sup> Antiquarian collections such as those of John Holmes of East Retford, Nottinghamshire, demonstrate how extensive the interest in such ancient woodwork became even by the late 1820s.<sup>43</sup> A description of John Holmes' house, published in 1828, illustrates how central such material was for contemporary antiquarian collectors:



*The interior of the library is wholly composed of very ancient carved oak, brought from distant places.....The book-stands, tables, desks, chairs and other furniture exactly correspond.*

The collections of the antiquarian George Weare Braikenridge (1775–1856) at Broomwell House, Brislington, near Bristol, some of which we know were supplied by the dealer Horatio Rodd, also exemplify this taste (figures 19 & 20).

Even at mid-century the demand for ancient furniture showed little signs of diminishing. A short article entitled ‘Ancient Domestic Furniture’, which was published in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in January 1842, illustrates not only the continued importance of the trade in ‘antique furniture’ in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, but also highlights the extent to which the antique and curiosity shop had become an integral part of the cultural landscape by as early as the second quarter of the nineteenth century:

*The prevalence at the present period, of a taste for Antique Furniture is most decidedly manifested, not by the examples which every one may happen to know of either ancient mansions, or modern houses in the ‘Elizabethan’ style, filled with collections of this description, but by the multitude of warehouses which now display their attractive stores...in almost every quarter of the metropolis.<sup>4</sup>*

The importance of the evolving taste for ‘ancient furniture’ and associated woodwork can be seen in the choice of locations of many antique and curiosity dealers, with many choosing to trade within the networks of woodcarvers and furniture-makers. Such locations placed them in an ideal situation in which to respond to evolving tastes and fashions for ‘ancient furniture’. Moreover, many of the dealers themselves emerged from the furniture-making communities and many continued to combine their rôle as furniture makers with that of assembling ‘ancient’ furniture made up of fragments of ancient woodwork and carvings. James Nixon and Sons, for example, who traded from Great Portland Street, were listed as ‘cabinet-makers’ in the trade directories but were also well-known in the period for the supply of ‘ancient furniture’ and other antique objects. The famous woodcarver William Gibbs Rogers of Great Newport Street and the cabinet-maker Wilkinson in Oxford Street, were both involved in the supply of ‘Elizabethan and Dutch carvings’ as the publications of John Claudius Loudon have indicated.<sup>46</sup> The role of the antique and curiosity dealer in this economy was significant, indeed, as Loudon indicated, the abundance of ancient carvings to be found in the curiosity dealer’s shops had the benefit of being relatively cheap in comparison to modern woodcarving techniques.<sup>47</sup> Loudon further suggested that ‘ancient carvings’ had the added bonus of supplying the important ‘emotional’ effects of old associations, something that modern carved work could not achieve.<sup>48</sup>

As well as the abundant supply of sixteenth and seventeenth century carved woodwork and furniture in Britain the trade imported vast amounts of carved woodwork from the Continent during the first half of the nineteenth century. Much of this carved woodwork ended up as elements in re-constructed ‘ancient’ furniture. For example, the famous dealer in ancient armour and antique furniture Samuel Pratt, supplied two ‘Elizabethan

Oak Armchairs', (figure 3) reconstructed using seventeenth century elements, to Sir James Kay Shuttleworth at Gawthorpe Hall, Lancashire in 1852. The dealer E. Terry of Thornes near Wakefield, supplied the collector Charles Winn (1795–1874) of Nostell Priory with 'sundry pieces of antique oak furniture' in 1834,<sup>30</sup> some of which certainly remain at Nostell Priory in West Yorkshire (figures 21–25). The curiosity dealer John Swaby of Wardour Street also supplied Winn with elements of ancient carved woodwork and probably also with 'antique' furniture, in the 1820s and 1830s. Swaby supplied 'several pieces of old carved wood' in May 1821,<sup>31</sup> some of which could have formed part of the reconstruction on the interior woodwork at Wragby Church, West Yorkshire, in the restorations undertaken by Charles Winn in the period 1825–1835, as Sophie Raikes has suggested.<sup>32</sup> Equally, they could have provided the material for the 'two large wooden seats or sofas of the time of Elizabeth or James' that the Rev Thomas Dibdin noted in the sub-hall at Nostell Priory in 1830, (figures 26 & 27).<sup>33</sup>

'An ancient oak sofa' similar to those at Nostell Priory, was also among the extensive collections of Mr Holmes of Retford and was illustrated in a short and little known antiquarian publication *The Antiquarian Bijou*, which was published in Scarborough by John Cole in 1829, (figure 28).<sup>34</sup> Like the Nostell Priory sofas, Mr Holmes' sofa is obviously assembled using ancient carved elements, some of which are probably of seventeenth century or indeed even sixteenth century origin, but the overall form that the object takes speaks more of the early nineteenth century than of any piece of furniture from an earlier period. The commentary that was placed alongside the 'ancient oak sofa' follows the conventional pattern of antiquarian interest in such objects at the time and draws the attention of the reader to the object's age, its size, its provenance and its contemporary aesthetic qualities;

*The carved oak sofa, of which we give a representation, is said to be of the age of James I. It contains two drawers under the seat in front; its length is seven feet, breadth 20 inches, and height at the back four feet. It was purchased at Scarborough in 1825, by Mr John Holmes of Retford, in whose collection it now is, and altogether forms a useful appendage to a room, whilst it displays a fine specimen of carving in days long since departed.*<sup>35</sup>

Such an object would be immediately dismissed as a 'fake' today of course, but in the first half of the nineteenth century at least, such objects did satisfy the requirements of many, but not all, collectors and furnishers. Indeed, there certainly were critical responses in respect of the 'authenticity' of ancient furniture that entered the markets during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Inevitably, the members of the antique and curiosity trade were portrayed as the perpetrators of these problematic practices. For example, the report of an auction sale, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in January 1842, suggested that much 'inauthentic' ancient furniture that was put up for sale was evidently the product of the trade. The anonymous writer commented wryly on an ancient 'closet', which was 'another evident composition of the curiosity dealers.'<sup>36</sup>

Clive Wainwright neatly encapsulates the assessment of the complex responses to the 'authenticity' of such ancient furniture in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Wainwright writes:

*the question of genuineness was viewed very differently from today. If genuine pieces could be found, they were of course avidly bought and sold, but even these were frequently altered to suit dealers or collectors.<sup>16</sup>*

However, these 'reconstruction' practices do raise the issue of the notion of the authenticity of antique and ancient furniture and any discussion of the antique and curiosity trade would not be complete without at least a brief discussion of this problem. Given that these narratives play such a central rôle in the cultural biography of the trade itself, as the earlier commentary on Wardour Street has already suggested, it is important to draw some attention to these notions here. Indeed, it is curious how consistently 'authenticity' becomes an issue when the dealer makes an appearance in the biography of an object. Again, Clive Wainwright summed up the responses:

*It is a curious aspect of objects which have been in the hands of dealers that if they have ever been suspected of being fakes, or of having been in some way altered or improved, then this reputation clings to them however hard scholars try to dispel it.*

There remains a fascinating ambiguity about the dealer; they have often been perceived to have had considerable knowledge of the objects that they traded, but have also been consistently identified with a lack of genuine appreciation. Moreover, the idea that the persona of the dealer and the activities of dealing represent illegitimate practices persists in many areas of modern scholarship. For example, in his discussion of the activities of the collector William Hesketh Lever (1851–1925), 1st Lord Leverhulme, the founder of the Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight in Liverpool, the historian Arthur MacGregor contrasts the 'legitimate' collecting activities of individuals such as the famous collector Ralph Bernal (1783–1854) in the first half of the nineteenth-century with those of Lever in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. MacGregor observes that because a collector like Lever 'bought mainly through dealers' he 'attracts less admiration today' than earlier collectors like Bernal, who acquired their objects 'by dint of shrewdness and the exercise of connoisseurship.'<sup>18</sup> The assertion is of course inaccurate. Bernal frequented the dealers in the first half of the nineteenth-century just as much as Lever was to do in the later nineteenth-century, but it is the desire to distance the activities of the collector from any association with such commercial modes of acquisition that is of interest here. The enduring notion that the objects that the dealer sells are spurious and that the dealer has an inauthentic relationship with the collectable object and is therefore a dangerous threat to the legitimate practices of the collector plays a significant structuring role within the narratives on collecting. There is little doubt that several high profile members of the trade did produce what can only be described as intentional 'fakes'; Giovanni Freppa and his productions of fake Renaissance sculpture and Samuel Pratt and his fake 'ancient' armour are just two examples. However, one still needs to be cautious about allowing these incidents and their associated characterisations to colour the whole perception of the antique and curiosity trade.

## THE ANTIQUE AND CURIOSITY DEALER

*The Dealer and Exhibitions*

As this introduction has suggested, from the opening decade of the nineteenth century antique and curiosity dealers were playing a critical rôle in the wider distribution of knowledge of antiques and curiosities. We have already seen the dealers' rôle as both pragmatic facilitators in the exchange of antiques and curiosities and their activities as publishers of specialist and more general information on antiques and curiosities. The presence and the part played by the dealer in the exhibition culture of the nineteenth century was also highly significant. Indeed, several dealers had already begun to stage selling shows in the various exhibition halls in London by the opening decade of the nineteenth century. J.C. Hampp, for example, the Norwich glass painter and dealer in ancient stained glass, held a series of exhibitions in London during the 1810s which prefigured the sale of his 'collections' at various auction sales.<sup>60</sup> Many other curiosity dealers operated 'museums' in the opening decade of the nineteenth century. These were ostensibly selling exhibitions, collapsing the distinctions between the merchandising possibilities and the professed didactic purposes of public exhibitions. The Lower Brook Street Gallery, known as the *Oplothea*, (an Anglicisation of the Greek word *hoplothêkê*, or armoury), which was owned by the dealer Thomas Gwenapp senior, who was perhaps the most famous dealer in ancient armour during the opening decades of the nineteenth century, was well-known in the period as the location for exhibitions of ancient armour. The most important of Gwenapp's ancient armour exhibitions, staged in 1816, organised with 'very kind assistance from Dr. Meyrick' the armour expert, had an elaborate catalogue accompanying the displays.<sup>61</sup> Gwenapp expanded his exhibition programme during the 1820s and staged several exhibitions of ancient armour at the famous 'Gothic Hall' in Pall Mall. Such exhibitions often prefigured the dispersal of the collections, as the various auction sales of Gwenapp's collections of 'Military Antiquities' on the premises at the 'Gothic Hall' in the period illustrate. The dealers Samuel and Henry Pratt, who superseded Gwenapp as the most significant dealers in ancient armour in the period 1825–50 and are perhaps most famous for their involvement in the Eglinton Tournament in 1839, also staged several exhibitions of ancient armour and other objects during the late 1830s.<sup>62</sup> Pratt's exhibitions were held in a purpose built gallery annex to their shop at 3 Lower Grosvenor Street which was fitted out and designed by the architect and antiquary Lewis Nockalls Cottingham (1787–1847).<sup>63</sup> Pratt's exhibitions were again very elaborate marketing exercises accompanied by erudite catalogues and were widely reported in the press both in London and the provinces and inevitably led to dispersals at various auction sales.<sup>64</sup>

Amongst the dealers in ancient furniture and woodwork there were a number who staged exhibitions to draw attention to their stock. The famous carver and antique and curiosity dealer William Gibbs Rogers staged several exhibitions in the 1830s at his shop in Church Street, Soho. One was reported in the *Morning Post* in 1834 which described 'Roger's Collection of Ancient Carvings'.

*One room alone contains materials for inspection and study, which will repay an hour's indulgence. This contains twelve rich oak panels, of carvings of the finest description, the work of the celebrated Berge, bearing the date of 1730....*<sup>65</sup>

And another of Rogers' exhibitions included:

*several hundred figures in boxwood and oak....coffers and stands belonging to the Cenci...and a superb assemblage of the most elaborate carvings of Grenlin Gibbons [sic].*<sup>66</sup>

Such publicity strategies and associated selling exhibitions continued into the later nineteenth century, as the exhibitions staged in 1898 at the New Gallery, 121 Regent Street, London by the collector-dealer Stefano Bardini testify.

Perhaps less explicitly related to commercial exchange, but no less significant in relation to the evolving practices of the trade, was the consistent presence of the dealer at major public exhibitions during the nineteenth century. The London exhibitions staged at Marlborough House (the 'Museum of Practical Art') in May 1852 and the exhibition of 'Specimens of Historic Cabinet-work' at Gore House in May 1853, formed the genesis of what would become the South Kensington Museum and were organised by the Department of Practical Art under the Privy Council for Trade. The expressed purpose of these exhibitions was the improvement and promotion of good design by exposing the manufacturing classes to 'first-rate' ornamental art in the hope that this would raise the quality of British manufacturing.<sup>67</sup> The objects on display at Gore House comprised an array of 'ancient' furniture dating from the fifteenth century right up to the 1770s. The objects intended for display at the Gore House exhibition were photographed by Charles Thurston Thompson and bound in two volumes which remain at the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>68</sup> Many of the donors of the ancient cabinet-work included aristocratic and titled individuals, including Queen Victoria and Earl Amherst, donors whom are indicative of the desire of the organisers of such exhibitions to grant their projects important social and political sanction. However, the central part that the antique and curiosity dealer continued to play in the markets for antiques and curiosities in the period is illustrated by examination of the lists of donors of material to the exhibition. The catalogue for the Gore House exhibition indicated that of the 135 objects that were put on display over one quarter of the total were exhibited by members of the antique and curiosity trade. The dealer John Swaby, for example, exhibited several objects including a 'small oak table possibly English, 1520-30'<sup>69</sup> (figure 31); Henry Farrer, the well-known Wardour Street dealer, exhibited a 'napkin press, Flemish, 1600'<sup>70</sup> (figure 32); The Bond Street dealer John Webb exhibited amongst other things, a 'Venetian Mirror, 1700', (figure 33).<sup>71</sup> The catalogue also indicated that the dealers Samuel Pratt and John Webb played important organisational roles in the staging of the exhibition.<sup>72</sup>

At the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857 and the Leeds Exhibition of Works of Art in 1868, the dealer was also a consistent presence. The catalyst for the Manchester exhibition arose as a consequence of the prohibition of paintings from the Great Exhibition in 1851. Albert the Prince Consort, had suggested that the theme of the Manchester Exhibition should be art rather than industry, a purpose that reflected a

broad political and social project that was intended to promote interest in and wider access to, works of art proper.<sup>73</sup> The lenders to the exhibition reflected this narrower project, with objects owned by art collectors and art patrons comprising the most significant categories of objects. It is therefore not surprising that we can also note a significant presence of the antique and curiosity trade at the Manchester exhibition. The London dealers in art and curiosities Henry Durlacher, Isaac and David Falcke, Henry Farrer and the Warwick antique and curiosity dealer Charles Redfern, are all listed as lenders of objects to the 'Museum of Ornamental Art', which was also organised 'with the assistance' of several antique and curiosity dealers, including Redfern, William Chaffers and the armour dealer Samuel Pratt. The antiquary J.R. Planché, who provided the descriptive commentary on the displays of ancient armour as part of the 'Museum of Ornamental Art' at the exhibition, wrote:

*My thanks to Mr. Samuel Pratt of Bond Street, not only for the careful and punctual execution of the work he contracted to do; but also for the energy and loyalty with which he laboured to promote, by every means in his power the success of the exhibition.*<sup>74</sup>

The high profile presence of members of the antique and curiosity trade at these important social and cultural events in the early 1850s suggests the significant social status that was achieved by some members of the antique and curiosity trade by the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

### *The Identity of the Dealer*

The antique and curiosity dealer emerged as a specific social and cultural identity in the opening decades of the nineteenth century and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that by the third decade of the century the dealer was already a significant presence. We can see evidence of this in the illustrations in Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836). *Specimens* was first published as a single volume in 1836, but like many other antiquarian publications at the time, was originally published periodically in part form slightly earlier, appearing as separate illustrated sheets during 1832–35.<sup>75</sup> The text for *Specimens* was written by the eminent antiquary and armour expert Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and it contained illustrations by one of the most important antiquarian illustrators of the period, Henry Shaw (1800–1873). *Specimens* was the first publication to be devoted primarily to the subject of ancient domestic furniture and indeed remained the standard text on the subject well into the 1870s (it was republished as late as 1866) when it was superseded by the publication of John Hungerford Pollen's handbook to the furniture and woodwork collections at the South Kensington Museum which came out in 1875.<sup>76</sup>

However, the significance of the illustrations in *Specimens* is an important piece of evidence in relation to the evolving significance of the antique and curiosity dealer in the period. It will have been noticed that all of the illustrations of the objects in *Specimens* have declarations of ownership appended beneath each print. Such declarations had been rehearsed in scores of antiquarian publications throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, identifying the all-important provenance of the collectable object. In



the eighteenth century, in his *Description of Strawberry Hill*, the inventory of his collection that was first published in 1774, the antiquarian collector Horace Walpole appropriately called this 'pedigree'. In the preface to his catalogue Walpole set out the purpose of his descriptions:

*The following account...is given with a view to their future dispersion. The several purchasers will find a history of their purchases...an authentic certificate of their curiosities....well attested descent is the genealogy of objects of vertu.*<sup>77</sup>

The illustrations in *Specimens* do indicate that many of the pieces of ancient furniture are indeed stated to be in the possession of well known antiquarian collectors, or are cited to be in appropriately historically significant locations. For example, an ancient bed is said to be at 'Hardwicke Hall, a seat of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire' and a 'Napkin Press' was 'in the possession of Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, Goodrich Court', the author of the commentary in *Specimens* and one of the most famous antiquarian collectors of the period. However, what is highly unusual in *Specimens* is that several of the declarations appended to the illustrations also cite the historical objects to be in the possession of antique and curiosity dealers. A 'Cabinet, of the time of Elizabeth or James 1st' and an 'Ebony chair, formerly at Strawberry Hill'<sup>78</sup> for example, are cited to be 'in the possession of Mr Webb, Bond Street', (figure 16); a brass reading desk is 'in the possession of Mr Hull, Wardour Street', (figure 17); a 'table of the time of Henry 8th from Hill Hall, Essex', was 'in the possession of Mr Swaby (figure 29); and a pair of brass fire-dogs are 'in the possession of Messrs Samuel & Henry Pratt, Bond Street', (figure 18). As named individuals, John Webb, Edward & George Hull, John Swaby and Samuel & Henry Pratt, were amongst the most well-known antique and curiosity dealers of the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, even if the interested reader was unaware of the personal identity of these individual possessors the addresses associated with several of their names would have explicitly identified their locations as acknowledged places of commerce. John Webb and Samuel & Henry Pratt's location in Bond Street was an area associated with some of the most fashionable shops in London, and Wardour Street in particular was synonymous with the antique and curiosity trade during the period that *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* was published. This is the first time that any antiquarian publication had illustrated a corpus of objects that were cited to be in the possession of antique and curiosity dealers as well as in the possession of antiquarian collectors. We can see then that the importance of the illustrations in *Specimens* is that by the opening decades of the nineteenth century the emerging profile of the antique and curiosity trade was being drawn ever more explicitly into the public consciousness. In this sense *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* is an important document, marking the consolidation of the dealer as a discrete social and cultural identity.

However, besides the significance of the illustrations in *Specimens*, the emerging identity of the dealer was also noted consistently in contemporary *reportage* and commentaries on the market. For example, at the auction sale of the contents of Stowe which were sold in 1848 following the spectacular bankruptcy of the Duke of

Buckingham & Chandos, the writer Henry Forster directed attention to the explicit presence of antique and curiosity dealers at these important public events;

*During the sale scarcely any respectable persons could enter the mansion without being imported to entrust their commission to persons of this class (brokers): you were told that the applicant belonged to the 'London Society of Brokers'.....that it was no use to offer personal biddings as the brokers attended for the purpose of buying and would outbid any private individual.<sup>79</sup>*

Newspapers and journals such as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, also regularly reported the activities of the dealers at auction sales.<sup>80</sup> The publications of auction sale results, such as those of H.D. Burn following the Strawberry Hill auction sale in 1842 and that of Henry Forster at Stowe in 1848 provided a roll call of dealers, immediately recognisable through the conjunction of name and commercial location; 'Farrer, Wardour-street', 'Pratt, New Bond-street', 'Isaacs, Regent-street', 'Hertz, Marlborough-street', 'Forrest, Strand', 'Hull, Wardour-street'.<sup>81</sup> At all other major auctions sales throughout the nineteenth century, including the auctions at Hamilton Palace sale in 1882 and at the Fountaine auction sale at Christie's, London in 1884, the dealer was a significant presence and the trade bought a high proportion of the lots, either buying for stock, or as commission agents.

Of course, the presence of the antique and curiosity dealer was not only registered in such actual public events in the nineteenth century. The role and identity of the antique and curiosity dealer was also further embedded in the contemporary cultural consciousness through characterisations in the literary field. As characters, dealers enjoyed a consistent presence in a number of highly successful novels published during the first half of the nineteenth-century. In 1831, for example, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) introduced the anonymous old curiosity dealer in his novel *The Wild Ass's Skin*.<sup>82</sup> Balzac returned to the theme of the characterisations of the curiosity dealer in his later novel *Cousin Pons*, published in 1847, where the dealers Rémoncq and Elias Magus provided a negative counterfoil to the main character, the collector Sylvan Pons.<sup>83</sup> By the early 1840s the British public had been introduced to perhaps the most famous dealer, the grandfather of 'Little Nell', in Charles Dickens' (1812–1870) *Old Curiosity Shop*.<sup>84</sup> And of course *The Old Curiosity Shop* is famously still present (as we are led to believe) in Portsmouth Street, London (figure 42), a constant reminder of the significance of the antique and curiosity dealer in the cultural landscape.

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40. Ralph Edwards, exhibition review, 'Furniture in the Adam Style at Kenwood', *Burlington Magazine*, vol.106, no.737, August 1964, pp. 390–391 + 393.
41. *Morning Chronicle*, June 4<sup>th</sup> 1822. The auction was conducted by 'Mr Smallbone'.
42. See for example, Elizabeth Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, London, 1973.
43. The collections of John Holmes were eventually sold after his death on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1841. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume xvii, New Series, January 1842, p. 19.
44. John Cole, *The Scarborough Collector and Journal of the Olden Time*, Scarborough, John Cole, 1828, p. 109.
45. *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.xvii, New Series, January 1842, 'Ancient Furniture', pp. 19–23, p. 19.
46. John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, London, Longmans, 1833, p. 1039 and p. 1101.
47. *ibid.* p. 1102
48. *Ibid.*
49. 'Rec.d from Mr Winn for sundry pieces of antique oak furniture the sum of fifteen pounds', 11<sup>th</sup> March 1834; Winn Archive, WYL1352/A1/8/26/12, West Yorkshire archives.
50. 'Paid to Mr Swaby – No.109 Wardour Street £8.0.0. for several pieces of old carved wood.' May 4<sup>th</sup> 1821; *Ibid.* WYL1352/A1/8/26/1.
51. Sophie Raikes, 'A Cultivated Eye for the Antique: Charles Winn and the enrichment of Nostell Priory in the nineteenth century', *Apollo*, April 2003, pp. 76–80.
52. T.F. Dibdin, *A Biographical, Antiquarian & Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and Scotland*, London, 1838, volume.I, p. 140. Also quoted in Raikes, op. cit. p. 76.
53. John Cole, *The Antiquarian Bijou...Scarborough*, John Cole, 1829.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume xvii, New Series, January 1842, pp. 19–23, p. 22.
56. G.W. Braikenridge Archive, MS14182/HB/X/4.64, Bristol Record Office. Also quoted in Wainwright, 1989, op. cit. p. 58.

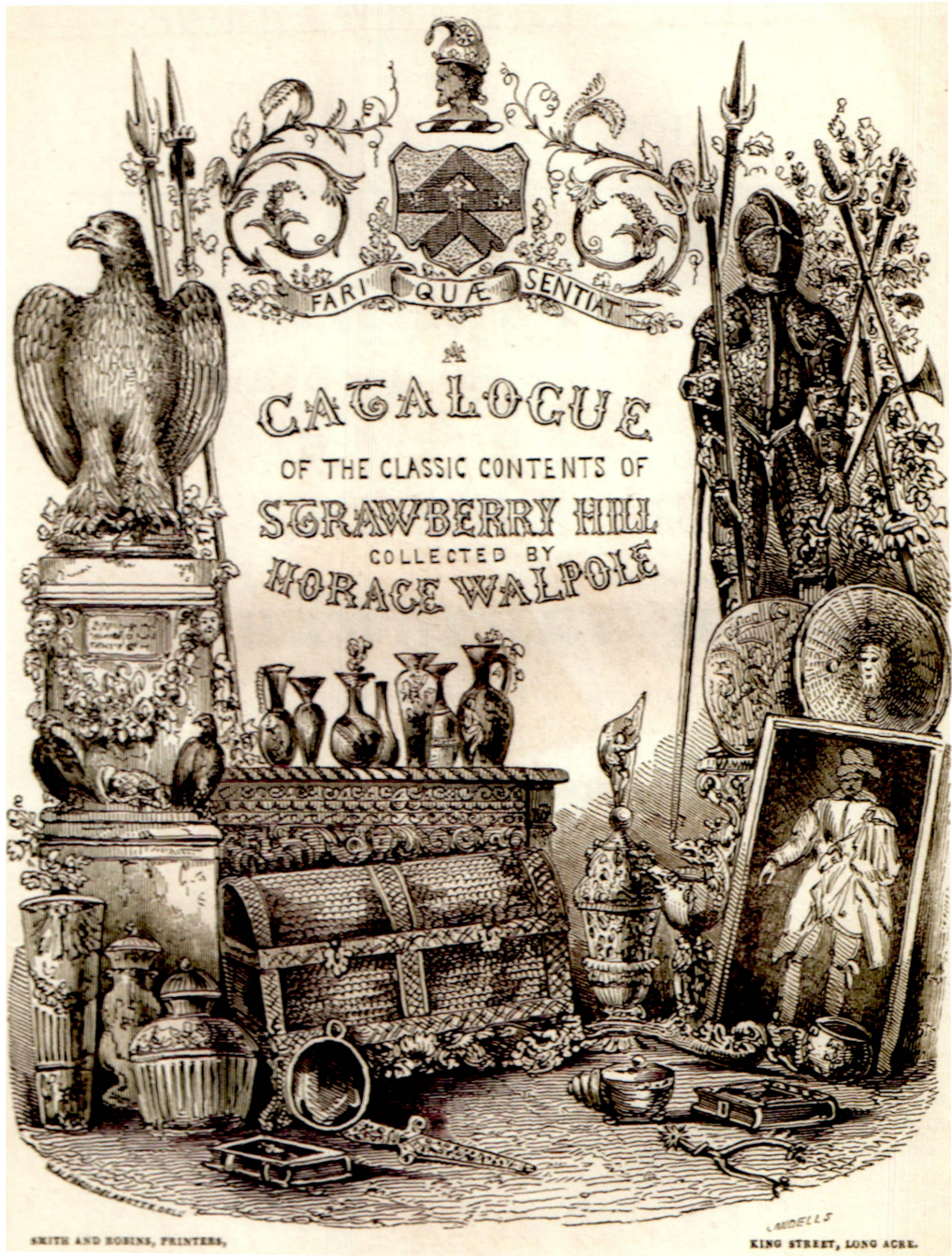
57. Clive Wainwright, *Apollo*, February 2000, op. cit. p. 41.
58. MacGregor, 1997, op. cit. p. 13.
59. See, for example, J.C. Robinson, 'On Spurious Works of Art', *The Nineteenth Century*, no.clxxvii, November 1891, pp. 677-698, pp. 691-696. K.N. Watts, 'Samuel Pratt and armour faking', in Mark Jones (ed.), *Why Fakes Matter, essays on the problem of authenticity*, London, British Museum Press, 1992, pp. 100-105.
60. Jean Lafond, 'The Traffic in Old Stained Glass form Abroad during the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries', *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters*, vol.XIV, no.1, 1964, pp. 58-67, p. 60.
61. *Catalogue of a Most Splendid and Instructive Collection of Ancient Armour, exhibiting at the OPLOTHECA....* 1816, p. ix.
62. For further descriptive accounts of the exhibitions of Pratt see Richard Altick, *The Shows of London*, Cambridge, Mass. & London, Harvard University Press, 1978) op. cit.p. 391 and Watts, 1992, op. cit. pp. 100-104.
63. For an extensive and detailed study of the architect Lewis Cottingham, see Janet Myles, *L.N. Cottingham 1787-1847, Architect of the Gothic Revival*, London, Lund Humphries, 1996.
64. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.ix, New Series, May 1838, p. 532. *The Times*, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1838, p. 3.
65. I am very grateful to Joyce Stephenson of Ontario, Canada, a distant relative of Williams Gibbs Rogers, who supplied this information.
66. Quoted in Altick 1978, op. cit. p. 397. Rogers was well-known for his admiration of the late seventeenth-century sculptor and carver Grinling Gibbons.
67. For a discussion of the Marlborough House and Gore House exhibitions see Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident: the story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London, V&A, 1999, pp. 26-39.
68. Charles Thurston Thompson, *Photographs of Furniture Exhibited at Gore House, 1853*, 2 volumes, 1853, V&A Print Room, X.180.
69. Ibid. V&A photograph 32.720.
70. Ibid. V&A photograph 32.634.
71. Ibid. V&A photograph 32.608.
72. *Catalogue...Gore House*, 1853, preface.
73. See Jules Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste: the politics of architecture and design in Britain 1550-1960*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1995, p. 250-2.
74. J.R. Planché, *Some Account of the Armour and weapons, Exhibited amongst the Art Treasure of the United Kingdom at Manchester in 1857*, London, Bradbury & Evans, 1857, preface.
75. For contemporary responses to the text see *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume ciii, February 1833, pp. 155-6; June 1833, pp. 544-5, and Volume I, New Series, January 1834, p. 87; April 1834, p. 419. For a useful summary of the text see Clive Wainwright, 'Specimens of Ancient Furniture', *Connoisseur*, vol.clxxxiv, no.740, 1973, pp. 105-13.
76. Published around the same time was Albert Jacquemart's *A History of Furniture*, (1876), translated by Mrs Bury Palliser, London, Chapman & Hall, 1878, but this text did not include discussion of British furniture, its main subject being French and Italian furniture of the 16th to 18th centuries. The equivalent study of English furniture did not appear until 1892. See Frederick Litchfield, *Illustrated History of Furniture*, London, Truslove and Shirley, 1892. For a discussion of the development of publications devoted to the history of British furniture see Muthesius, 1988, op. cit. pp. 231-55, pp. 241-2.
77. Horace Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole*, London, Strawberry Hill Press, 1774, preface.
78. It is interesting to note that the ebony chair was in the possession of John Webb at least 10 years before the dispersal of the collections at Strawberry Hill by Earl Waldegrave in 1842.
79. H.C. Forster, *The Stowe Catalogue, Priced and Annotated*, London, David Bogue, 1848, p. 102.
80. See, for example the reporting of the sales at *The Pryor's Bank* in Fulham, the property of the collector and antiquary Thomas Baylis which were sold in May 1841 and those of the Nottingham collector John Holmes at East Retford in October 1841, in *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xvii, January 1842, op. cit. p. 23.
81. H.D. Burn, *Aedes Strawberrianae*, London, H.Burn, n.d., 1842; Forster, 1848, op. cit.
82. Honoré de Balzac, *The Wild Asses' Skin* (1831), translated by Herbert J. Hunt, London, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977.
83. Honoré de Balzac, *Cousin Pons* (1848), translated by Herbert J. Hunt, London, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968.
84. Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, (1841), London, Chapman & Hall, n.d.. This story was first published as part of the serial *Master Humphrey's Clock* beginning in April 1840.



11. Reeves antique shop, Courthouse Street, Hastings. Anonymous ambrotype c.1850.  
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14. Title page from *A Catalogue of the Classic Contents of Strawberry Hill Collected by Horace Walpole*, 1842.

*Private collection.*



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OF  
THE MAGNIFICENT COLLECTION  
OF  
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introduction of so many Fine Works of Art;*

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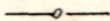
**AT THEIR GREAT ROOM,**

8, KING STREET, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE,

On **MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1858,**

*And Eighteen following Days (Sundays excepted),*

AT ONE O'CLOCK PRECISELY.



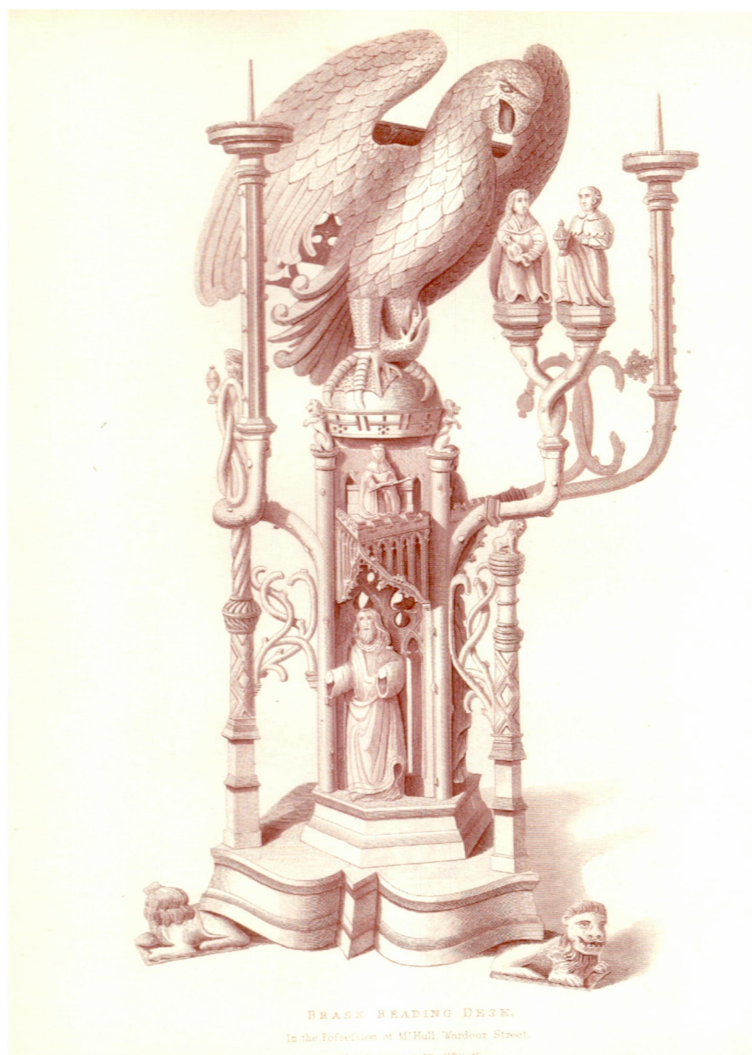
May be publicly viewed Four days preceding, and Illustrated Catalogues  
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15. Title page from *A Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Works of Art and Vertu*  
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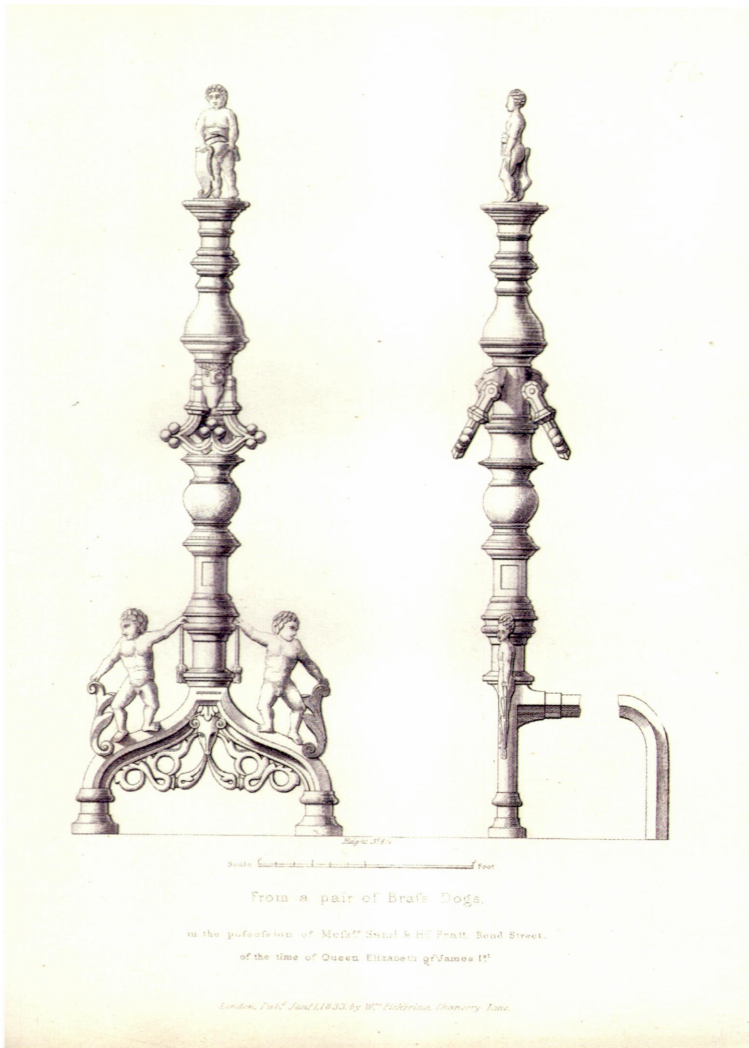


16. 'Ebony chair, formerly belonging to Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, now in the possession of Mr Webb, Old Bond Street'. Henry Shaw and Samuel Rush Meyrick, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, 1836, plate XIII. Private collection.



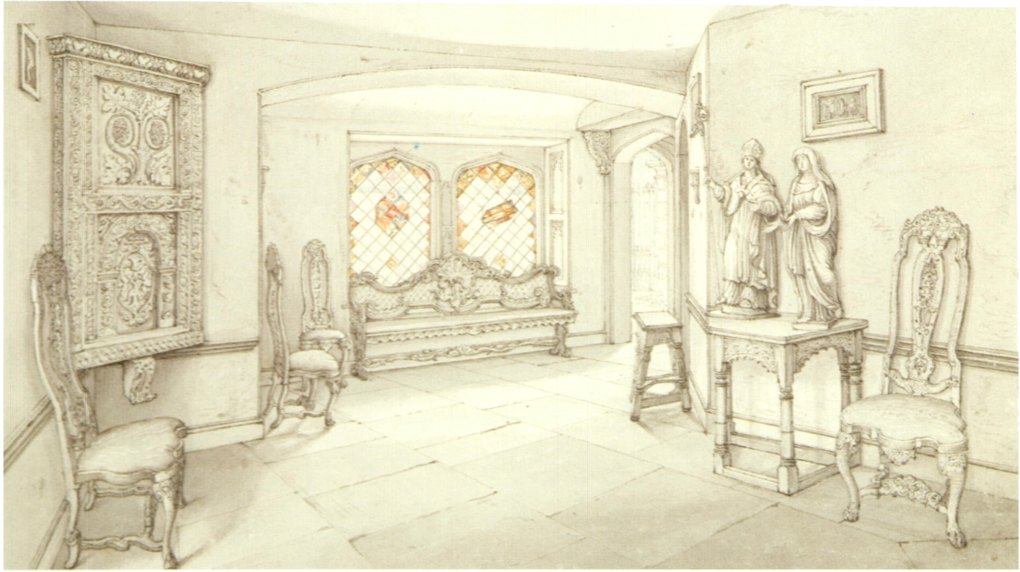
17. 'Brass Reading Desk, in the possession of Mr Hull, Wardour Street, date the latter part of the 15th cent.'. Henry Shaw and Samuel Rush Meyrick, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, 1836, plate XLV.  
*Private collection.*



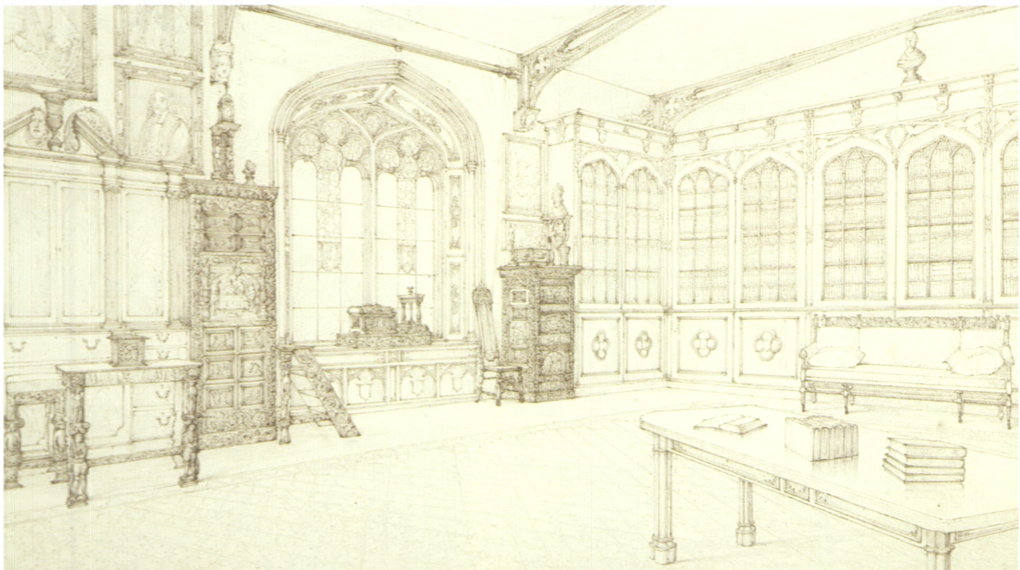


18. 'A pair of Brass Dogs, in the possession of Messrs Saml & Hy Pratt, Bond Street, of the time of Queen Elizabeth or James 1st'. Henry Shaw and Samuel Meyrick, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, 1836, plate LVI.  
*Private collection.*





19. W.H. Bartlett, *Interior of Broomwell Lodge, Bristol*, 1825, pen and ink drawing.  
© Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives.



20. W.H. Bartlett, *The Library, Bromwell House, Bristol*, 1825, pen and ink drawing.  
© Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives.



21. 'Ancient Oak chair', nineteenth century, incorporating earlier elements, including a sixteenth century panel. Probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by E. Terry in 1834.

© The National Trust, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire.



22. Seventeenth century oak coffer, Yorkshire, c1670.  
Probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by E. Terry in 1834.  
© The National Trust, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire.





23. 'Ancient Oak Buffet', seventeenth century and later.  
probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by E. Terry in 1834.  
© The National Trust, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire.





24. 'Ancient Oak Buffer', nineteenth century, incorporating seventeenth century elements.  
Probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by E. Terry in 1834.  
© The National Trust, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire.



25. 'Ancient Oak Buffer', seventeenth century and later.  
Probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by E. Terry in 1834.  
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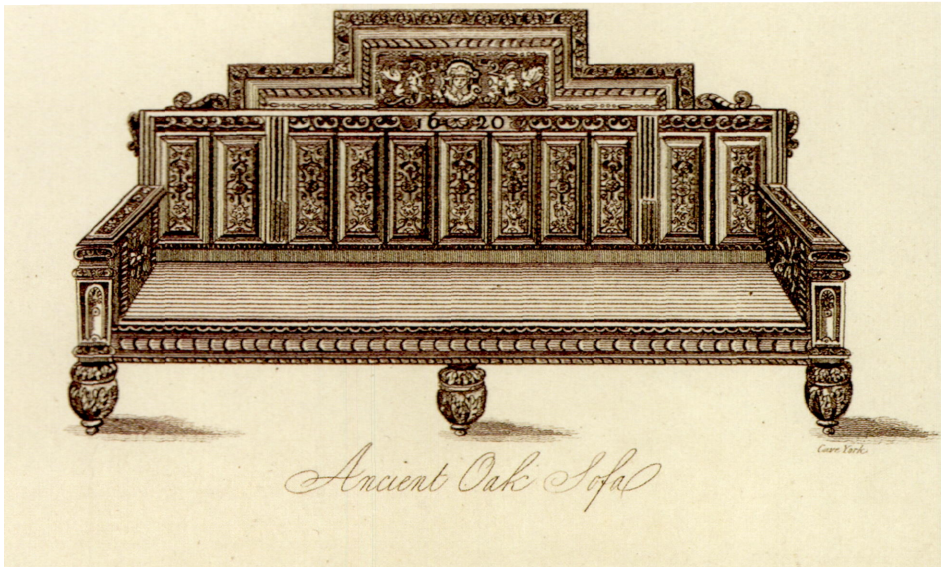




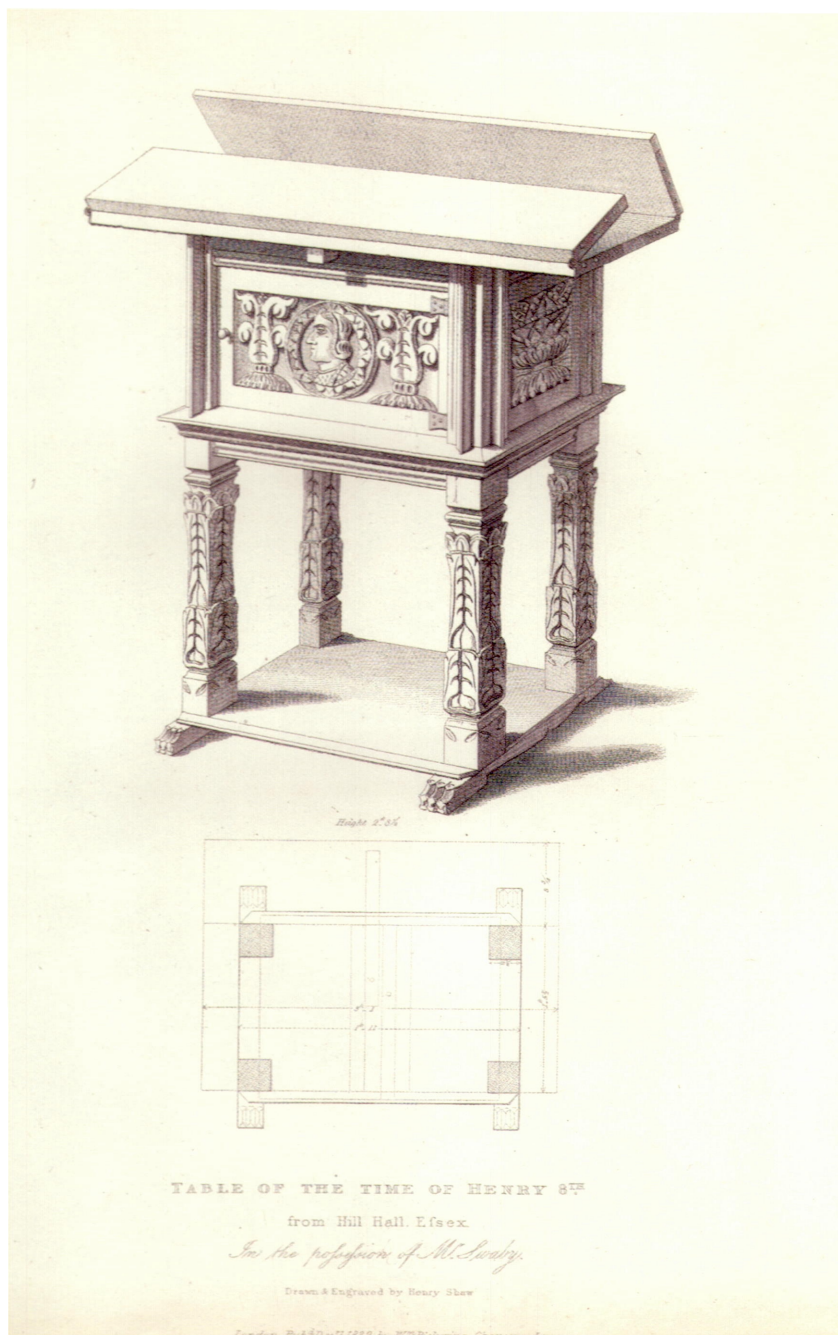
26. 'Ancient Oak Sofa', nineteenth century, incorporating seventeenth century elements. Elements probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by John Swaby in 1821.  
© The National Trust, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire.



27. 'Ancient Oak Sofa', nineteenth century, incorporating seventeenth century elements. Elements probably supplied to Charles Winn (1795–1874) by John Swaby in 1821.  
© The National Trust, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire



28. 'Ancient Oak Sofa, in the collection of Mr John Hudson',  
John Cole, *The Antiquarian Bijou*, 1829.  
© British Library.



29. 'Table of the time of Henry 8th from Hill Hall, Essex, in the possession of Mr Swaby'. Henry Shaw and Samuel Rush Meyrick, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, 1836, plate XIX. Private collection.

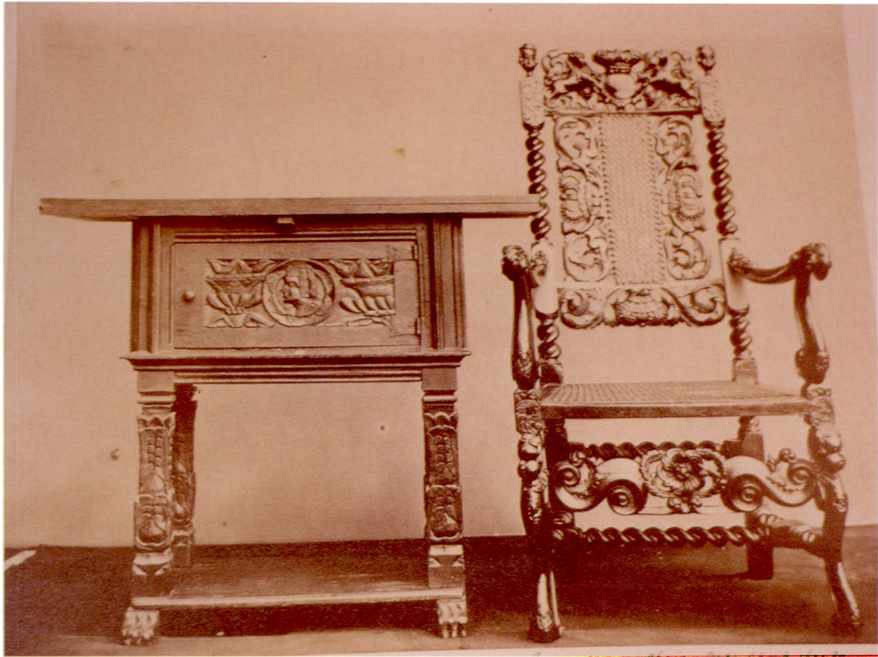




30. Ancient Oak 'Counting Table', formerly in the possession of John Swaby, incorporating sixteenth century elements.

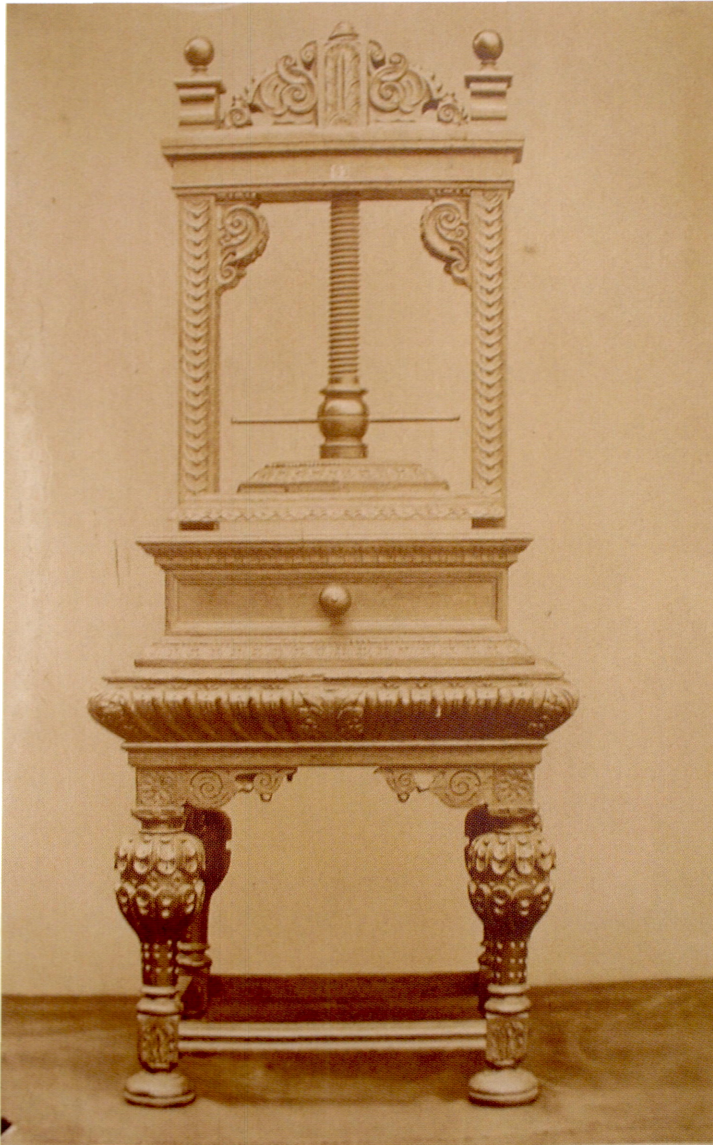
*By kind permission of Viscount De L'Isle from his private collection at Penshurst Place.*

*© Penshurst Place.*



31. Charles Thurston Thompson (1816–1868), 'Oak table and chair', furniture exhibited at Gore House, 1853, albumen print. The table was in the possession of John Swaby.

© Victoria & Albert Museum



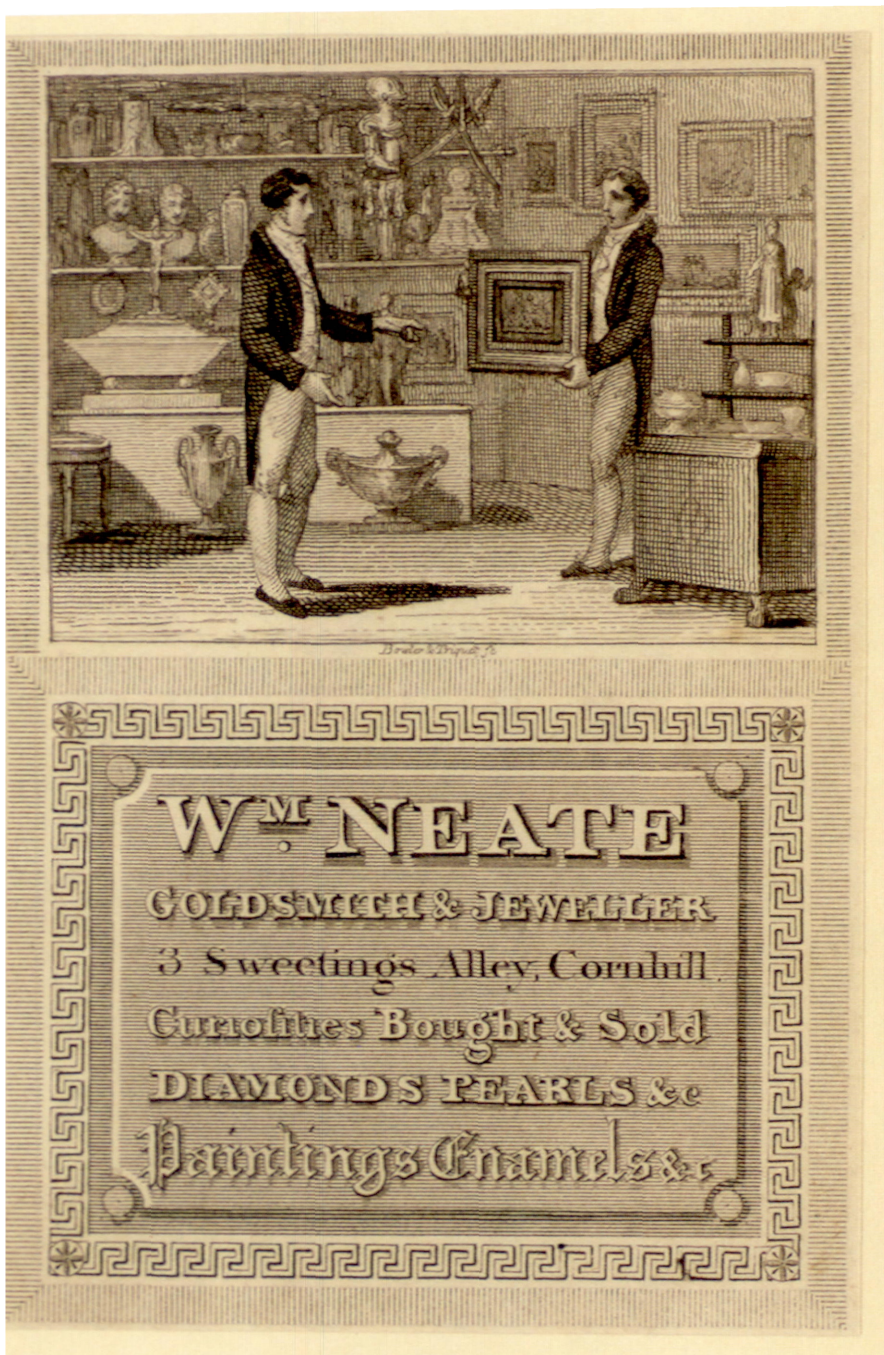
32. Charles Thurston Thompson (1816–1868), 'Napkin Press', furniture exhibited at Gore House, 1853, albumen print. The napkin press was in the possession of Henry Farrer.  
© Victoria & Albert Museum.





33. Charles Thurston Thompson (1816–1868), 'Venetian Mirror 1700 from the collection of John Webb', furniture exhibited at Gore House, 1853, albumen print.

© Victoria & Albert Museum.



34. Trade Card of William Neate, 1825-1835.

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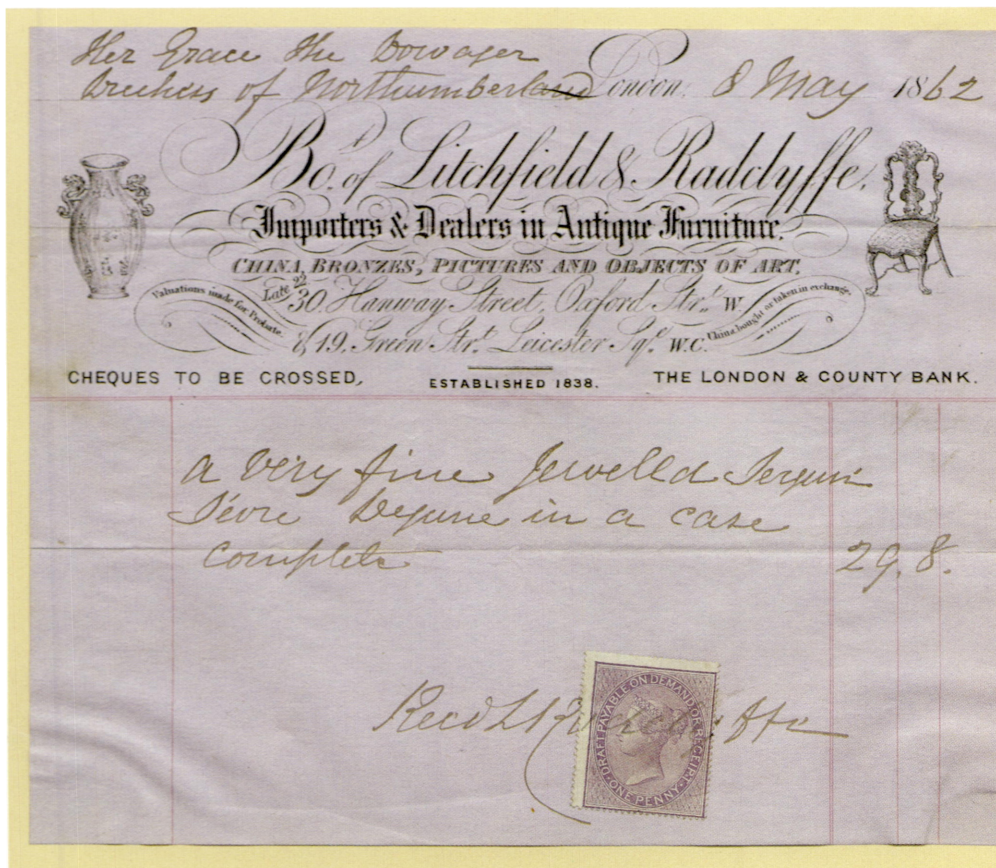
35. Trade Card of Bram Hertz, c1840.

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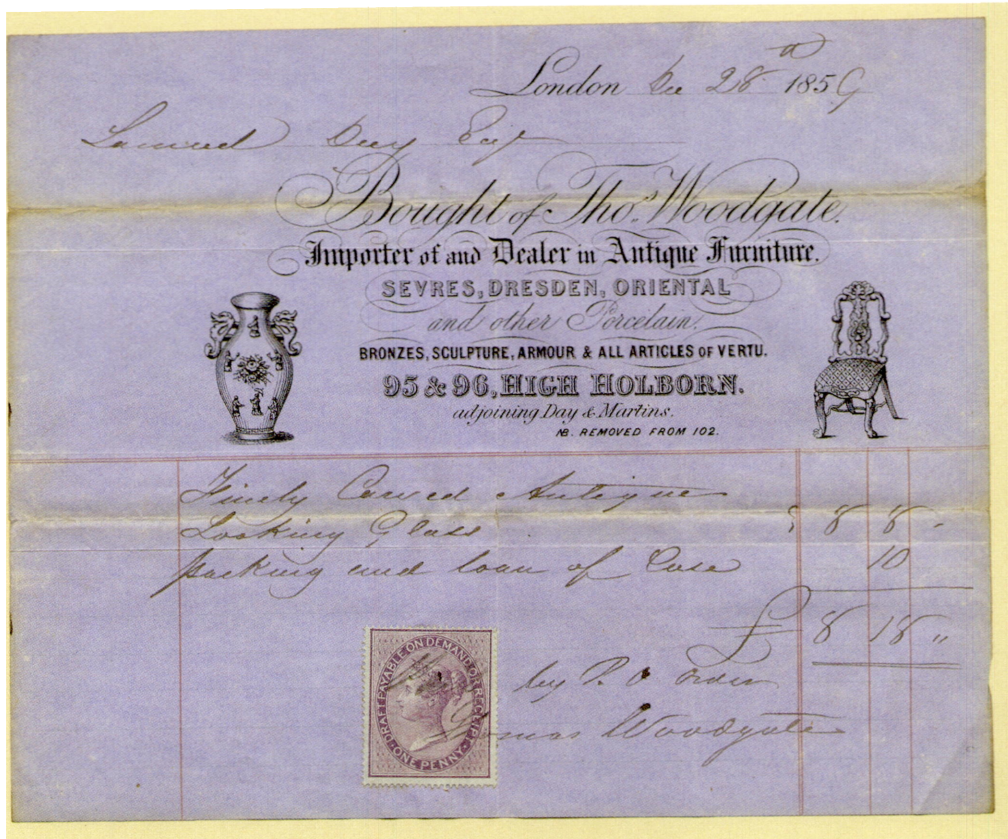




36. Trade Card of Samson Wertheimer, 1840-1850.  
© Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection.



37. Receipt from Litchfield & Radclyffe, dated 8th May 1862.  
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38. Receipt from Thomas Woodgate, dated 28th December 1859.  
© Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection.





39. Trade Card of George Heigham, 1860-1870.  
© Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection.



40. John Thompson (1837–1921), *Old Furniture Shop from Street Life in London*, 1877, photograph, Woodburytype.  
© Victoria & Albert Museum.





41. William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), *The Antiquary Shop*, 1879, oil on canvas.  
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