

# Red Lodge

Saturday evening, 29 July

Red Lodge was a most agreeable venue for our final visit of the day and the society's wine reception. This 16th century banqueting lodge or garden loggia was built (c. 1577-85) for Sir John Younge in the grounds of his mansion. Neither its sister building, the White Lodge, nor the mansion itself still stand. The building was not substantially altered until the early 18th century, but it still retains some of the original interiors. The Great Oak Room still displays much of the fine oak panelling, a splendid carved porch and the original chimney piece.

None of the furnishings are known to be original to the lodge, apart from two iron firebacks, and the present contents were mostly collected from the 1920s onwards. The entrance is graced with a good but simple late 17th century north western panel-backed oak settle displaying the regionally significant pyramidal finials surmounting the back uprights.<sup>1</sup> Two brass miniature cannons keep guard and remind us of the importance of brass production in Bristol from the 17th century onwards. In the adjoining room is an iron-bound early 17th century three-lock oak chest (with a later top), and a fine pair of mid-18th century walnut English *sgabello* type side chairs. A large carved oak chest dating from the mid- to later 17th century (also with later top) shows distinctive regional decoration.<sup>2</sup>

In the parlour a good wing-back upholstered armchair from the early 18th century complements an unusual, probably mid-18th century, chest of drawers, possibly of walnut, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. In one room is a fine caned walnut and beech backstool with arms and horsebone legs, dating from the early years of the 18th century. Great interest was focused on a walnut chair with similar arms and legs, exuberantly carved to the back, arm terminals and stretchers. Much debate resulted in the conclusion that its origins were 19th century antiquarian. An important walnut veneered bureau cabinet signed by Peter Miller, c. 1720, is an excellent example of fine early 18th century craftsmanship.

Climbing the stairs to the piano nobile we entered the Great Oak Room where our president, Victor Chinnery gave a masterclass on 17th century oak furniture analysis. Several pieces were examined critically, to be assigned a Victorian or early 19th century date or even later. The classification of fake or reproduction suited several items, but many more were considered to be honest examples of antique furniture.

A fine oak chair table, c. 1640, with a well carved back and a drawer beneath the seat (legs re-ordered and reduced) was worthy of note.<sup>3</sup> A so-called Flanders or Nonesuch chest with fine Anglo-German marquetry decoration in various coloured woods retains its original

metalwork handles and tinned iron hinges, c. 1580-1630.<sup>4</sup> An oak tester bedstead with traces of the original floral painted decoration, c. 1650, is similarly notable, as is a late 16th or early 17th century oak panelled chest. This was both well made and well carved and proved to be a rare survivor despite being refinished.

It was a delight to see this treasure trove and to be able to examine the collection at close quarters. A great deal of gratitude is owed to Bristol Museums for this kind and informative access.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chinnery, Victor, *Oak Furniture*, Antique Collectors Club, 1979, Figs 3:134 and 4:151.

<sup>2</sup> See Hall, Linda, *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900*, Countryside Books, 2005, Fig 8:9 and Chinnery, op. cit., Fig 4:92.

<sup>3</sup> See Chinnery, op.cit., Fig 3:69.

<sup>4</sup> See Chinnery, op. cit., Fig 3:358.