

Queen Elizabeth II's wedding present attributed to Gillows of Lancaster

Whilst researching my Gillow book in 2006, I was put in touch with an architect who sent me a photocopy of a mahogany dressing chest. In 1947 it was given as a wedding present to the then Princess Elizabeth and her husband-to-be by the Royal Institute of British Architects. It was described in *The Architect and Building News*, on November 21, 1947: as an '...early Georgian mahogany dressing chest, with fitted drawer, column corners, and shaped legs'. My correspondent had a clothes press with several identical features which she asked me to research. There were three drawers in the bottom part, the top one of which was a fitted drawer. Clearly whoever made the clothes press also made Princess Elizabeth's wedding present. I identified the clothes press as made by Robert and Richard Gillow, cabinetmakers of Lancaster, probably for the West Indies merchants Inman and Satterthwaite in 1759 (see Stuart, *Gillows of Lancaster and London 1739-1840*, VI, pp. 48-51). The owner asked my opinion about an appropriate museum to house the press, and it can now be seen in the Judges' Lodgings Museum, Lancaster. I hope our late Queen Elizabeth II enjoyed using her Gillow dressing chest. A very appropriate wedding present for the Duke of Lancaster.

Susan Stuart



A Georgian dressing chest presented to our late Queen Elizabeth II on her marriage in 1947. Now attributed to Gillows of Lancaster circa 1760. *Photograph from 'The Architect and Building News' 21 November, 1947, photographer unknown.*



A mahogany clothes press on a set of drawers made by Gillows of Lancaster for Inman and Satterthwaite West Indies merchants c. 1759, which bears a striking resemblance to the late Queen Elizabeth's dressing chest. *Judges' Lodgings Museum Lancaster, photograph by Julia Tibbs, from Gillows of Lancaster and London, v.1 p.49.*