



MEDIA RELEASE

SPLENDID | The Roger Brookes Bequest

Wednesday 28 September 2022 – Sunday 26 February 2023

*SPLENDID | magnificent; gorgeous; sumptuous; glorious; brilliant;
dignified; impressive; excellent; very fine.*

Since its inception, TJC has celebrated collectors and collections.

SPLENDID will welcome to TJC a most magnificent bequest from Mr. Clive Hele (Roger) Brookes (1929 – 2020).

The Brookes Bequest is a carefully considered connoisseur's collection of sumptuous sterling silver of outstanding merit due to the rigour involved in its distinguished selection.

This impressive collection was amassed over a period of time, initially by the bequestor's mother (Mrs. Betty Brookes (1900-1968), family gifts and bequests plus acquisitions by his father Sir Wilfred Deakin Brookes, CBE, DSO, AEA (1906-1997), and then added to in a deliberate and very focussed manner by Mr. Roger Brookes for over two decades.

As well as brilliant silver (ranging from the late 16th century to the mid-19th century), this extensive collection includes gorgeous ceramics, dignified furniture, glorious glass, excellent clocks and watches, very fine paintings including miniatures, and *objets d'art* predominantly of English origin.

The Brookes Bequest of English silver ranges from the late 16th century to the mid-19th century and includes in its vast array objects from ecclesiastical wares, argyles (gravy warmers), pap boats and porringers, tankards and trophies, to immense serving salvers and delicious strawberry dishes.

Notable early silversmiths include William Cawdell, the elusive communion cup maker 'IP' (formerly attributed to John Pickenyge), Matthew Boulton, Paul Storr, John Bridge and John Angell. The Brookes Bequest has a glorious roll call of women silversmiths, especially selected with TJC in mind. The makers include Hester Bateman, Ann Bateman, Susannah Barker, Elizabeth Cooke, Elizabeth Eaton, Rebecca Eames, Elizabeth Jones, Dorothy Mills, Elizabeth Oldfield, and Mary Rood[e]. There is a revealing selection of London Huguenot silversmiths including John (Jean) Jacob, Jacob and Samuel Margas, David Willaume I, and David Willaume II.

The Brookes Bequest will become a fundamental reference resource to increase the enthusiasms, knowledge, display, and interpretation of Elizabethan through to Georgian and Regency period, illustrative of stylistic development, technical production, and cultural issues especially through the medium of silver.

The Brookes Bequest is a lasting legacy of Roger Brookes' discernible enthusiasms as a collector.

TJC would like to acknowledge the oversight and appraisal of the collection by TJC Ambassador Mr. Andrew Dixon, long-term supporter of and adviser to Mr. Roger Brookes; Mr. Matthew Lafite, collection curator to Mr. Brookes; Mrs. Robyn Ives Independent curator and lecturer, as well as Mr. Andrew D. Brookes, Mr. John H H Brookes and Perpetual Trustee Co. Ltd. the Executors of the Estate of Mr. Roger Brookes.

Andrew Dixon was a long-term supporter of and adviser to Mr. Roger Brookes and worked with him for over 15 years to compile and coordinate information not only on The Brookes Bequest collection but also that of the Brookes family and the collection.

Since 2004 Dixon has helped curate the Brookes' collection at Heyington Place and Mathoura Rd in Toorak and record stories of Roger, his family, and the items in The Brookes Bequest.

This exhibition and accompanying publication are supported by a specified fund established from the Estate of Mr. Clive Hele (Roger) Brookes.

This exhibition is also supported by [The Friends of TJC](#) and TJC Ambassador, Mr. Andrew Dixon.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Kathryn Pappas | p 03 9416 2515
e. admin@johnstoncollection.org | w. johnstoncollection.org

SELECTED QUOTES:

LOUIS LE VAILLANT | Director | Curator

“Mr. Roger Brookes was collector and philanthropist, was an ardent supporter, an inaugural Ambassador and over time, came to consider that TJC could be the next home for his family’s collection.”

ANDREW DIXON | TJC Ambassador and Advisor to Roger Brookes

“One of the leading collections of silver in Australia.”

“Roger Brookes had a very strong commitment to community engagement and service. Throughout his life, he made significant contributions to Australian society in business, education and arts, many vital community services, and philanthropy. Roger’s Foundation will benefit the community for years to come”

“The collection inherited by his mother Betty and subsequent gifts from various members of the Heal family must have been an influence and encouragement to Roger’s future confidence in collecting and later (in the late 1950s) seems to have sparked an interest in his father to research and seek out pieces which would further enhance the collection.”

DENNICE COLLETT | Consultant specialist, Decorative Arts at Gibson’s Auctioneers and Valuers.

“The generous bequest of works by master Huguenot silver makers in England from the early to later 18th century by the late Roger Brookes provides us with an opportunity to glimpse a transformative period of English silvermaking. Through just a few select pieces of silver we witness how Huguenot artisans made their mark in their adopted homeland, applying their skills and artistic language to peculiarly English objects, and meeting consumer desire for new and high-quality domestic tea and dining wares in particular in an era of both spectacular and social change.”

“For the most part the story of silver making has been explored through the accomplishments of men. Roger Brookes elected to gently redress this imbalance, acquiring works by notable women silversmiths intending them for TJC ... The quiet affirmative action of The Brookes Bequest has broadened the representation of women silversmiths within TJC, providing an opportunity to survey the contribution of women to the London silvermaking industry over the course of a century.”

ABOUT THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION

The Johnston Collection is a place where people meet art and artists.

The Johnston Collection (TJC) is a multi-award-winning and critically acclaimed museum that invites creatives from the broader visual arts and design communities to re-interpret the Collection through a regular program of re-installation and interventions of the permanent collection.

Since 1990, TJC has provided visitors, from near and far, with transformative exhibition and educational experiences to **discover, experience** and **engage** with artists, objects and ideas through dynamic temporary programs, lectures, workshops and tours based on its permanent collection.

This year we are enormously thrilled to welcome visitors with our **new opening hours**. We look forward to sharing all our exhibitions and events with you all from Wednesday – Sunday's, and especially **every Saturday and Sunday** (except public holidays) marking the fulfilment of the vision that noted Melbourne-born, London-based antique dealer William Johnston had dreamed of in the early 1970s.

TJC is comprised of nearly 1,500 objects mostly from the English 18th century and is regarded as one of most significant collections of its kind in Australasia.

ABOUT WILLIAM JOHNSTON

William Robert Johnston (1911-1986) was a 20th century collector, antique dealer, and property investor who amassed an extraordinary collection of 18th century English and Louis XV furniture, paintings, ceramics and *objet d'art* over his lifetime.

Johnston was born in Lilydale, Victoria in 1911, the only child of Robert Alexander Johnston, a bootmaker and Louise Friedrichs, a maid. Around the age of eight, William was given a Minton cup by his grandmother, Mary Theresa Friedrichs which became the first piece of his collection and provided inspiration for a career in antiques. After an early career in window merchandising in Melbourne, Johnston relocated to London to begin a fulltime business dealing in antiques.

He purchased *Fairhall* in 1952 with money made from the sale of antiques brought back from England. Originally named *Cadzow*, built in 1860 and extended ten years later, Johnston renamed it *Fairhall* and remodelled it to create the appearance of a late 18th century neo-Georgian-style townhouse.

In 1972, Johnston returned to live part-time in Melbourne, gathering his collection of 18th century English and Louis XV fine and decorative arts into *Fairhall* and other properties he owned in the area. At the same time, he opened Kent Antiques in High St, Armadale.

Johnston's house, collection and estate were bequeathed to the people of Victoria after his death in 1986 '*as a place of historical and educational interest,*' now administered as an independent

not-for-profit public museum by The WR Johnston Trust. *Fairhall* exhibition-house and garden was converted and presented in the English manner. The Trust also continues to acquire new works for the permanent collection.

ABOUT ROGER BROOKES