



**THE RUSH SEATED CHAIR:**

**A celebration of past, present & future**

**A MARCHMONT HOUSE EVENT**

**14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

The rush seated chair has been the workhorse of seat furniture in the British Isles. Made from available natural materials, it was manufactured in several different regions with access to water where rushes grew and it appeared in a fascinating range of styles. However, it must not be assumed that the rush seated chair was an exclusively rural product.

Early in the industrial revolution, thousands of these chairs were supplied for use in mills, factories and cheap urban accommodation, making the rush seat chair one of the first eighteenth century mass produced articles.

At the other end of the social spectrum, late eighteenth century country house ladies ordered 'fancy' versions for their bedrooms and parlours to create a whimsical 'rustic' look and fashionable cabinet making firms added them to their pattern books. It is perhaps not surprising that this most democratic item of 'Everyman's' furniture became the subject of an 'Arts and Crafts' revival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, the rush seat chair arguably became one of the enduring icons of the arts & crafts movement.

Today there is a modest interest in the Arts and Crafts versions of the rush seated chair and some historical models are reproduced, but few modern chairs are made with rush seats for a variety of reasons including costs, scalability, limited rush sources, fashion & their perceived spartan comforts.

This symposium will investigate the rush seated chair in all its facets, from the material and the ways in which the rush seats were made, to the widespread variety of vernacular types. Discussion will lead to some of the talented architect/designers whose names became associated with their revival. The scope of the symposium will cover all contexts, from the urban to the rural; from the country house to the cottage.

Finally, we shall contemplate the place of the rush seated chair in the modern world. Why is it an interesting subject of study and does it really have a future in our lives today?

**PROGRAMME**

**FRIDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2018**

**DAY 1 – 14<sup>th</sup>**

WELCOME - Hugo Burge

David Jones - The Rush Seated Chair: An Overview

Felicity Irons - Rushes and Rush Seating

John Boram - The Origins of the 'Fancy' Chair

LUNCH - included

Simon Feingold- The Rush Seated Chair in the North West of England

Janet Pennington - The Sussex Chair

Terry Rowell - The Clissett Chair: origins and legacy.

TEA - included

Paul Holden - James MacLaren and the Rush Seated Chair

Angus Ross - The Mackintosh Rush Seated Chair Project, 2018

PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDE, BUT DELEGATES WILL HAVE THE OPTION OF STAYING FRIDAY DINNER (subject to availability & cost), STAYING THE NIGHT(subject to availability & cost), AND JOINING US ON SATURDAY MORNING (subject to buying a ticket)

**DAY 2 – 15<sup>th</sup> (Half Day)**

Welcome & Intro - Hugo Burge

Short Video – The Chairmaker + bonus clip

Fireside chat: Lawrence Neal, Paul Shutler & Hugo Burge – A Fire Side chat; A living tradition & the future

Lawrence Neal: looking at the differences between a Clissett, Gardiner, Neville Neal & Lawrence Neal chair

Mary Greenstead – Ernest Gimson & The Rush Seat Chair

SUMMARY & Wrap-up – David Jones

'CHAIR SURGERY' AND TOUR OF THE COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION OF RUSH SEATED (AND OTHER) CHAIRS AT MARCHMONT HOUSE.

Light lunch (included)

Walk down around old stables & future Marchmont workshops

**N.B. Please note that this schedule is not guaranteed, whilst it has been agreed, it is indicative and subject to change at any time. The organisers, Marchmont Farms Limited, will attempt to offer similar value but this cannot be promised.**