

## SPEAKER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WORKS OF ART

### Annual Report to the Finance Committee

#### Financial year 2021/22

1. This report summarises the work of the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art in the 2021/22 financial year and is prepared for submission to the House of Commons Finance Committee and for online publication.
2. A Statement of Accounts for the same period is annexed to this report (**see Annex A**).

#### Work of the Committee

3. The Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art is a cross-party group of Members appointed by the Speaker to advise on the use and management of the Parliamentary Art Collection in the House of Commons. The Committee's role involves advising the Speaker on matters relating to the Parliamentary Art Collection, including the purchase of works of art, the safeguarding and care of the Collection, the acquisition of new works in line with the Acquisition Policy while ensuring purchases represent good value for money, and to advise officials on the decorative interiors of the House of Commons areas of the Parliamentary Estate.
4. The Committee is supported by a team of staff within the House of Commons Governance Office and curatorial staff from the Heritage Collections Team.
5. The following Members served on the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art during the period covered by this report:

Hywel Williams MP  
(*Chair until October 2021*)  
Dean Russell MP  
(*Chair since October 2021*)  
Simon Baynes MP  
Sarah Champion MP  
Theo Clarke MP

Chris Evans MP  
Patrick Grady MP  
Sally-Ann Hart MP  
Kim Johnson MP  
Barbara Keeley MP  
Mr Gagan Mohindra MP  
Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP

6. The Committee held ten meetings between April 2021 and March 2022.

#### Approach

##### Strategy and principles

7. The five aims of the Committee set out in its Engagement Strategy in March 2021 were central to its work in the 2021/22 financial year. These were to:
  - Diversify the Collection and its interpretation to better reflect the diverse population of the UK.
  - Advocate internally to increase understanding and the importance of the collections, their role and value by Members and staff within Parliament.

- Make a step-change in digital access to the collections for everyone, researchers as well as the public.
  - Develop a programme of public programming, exhibitions and engagement to make the Parliamentary Art Collection visible and accessible beyond Westminster.
  - Support the Speaker’s External Affairs programme.
8. The Committee’s aims were further supported by the eight guiding principles of the Heritage Vision and Strategy, which applies to the historic collections of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and sets out a collective vision for Parliament’s Heritage Collections to make them more inclusive and accessible, and to promote understanding of the work of Parliament by safeguarding its collections. The guiding principles are creating value; custodianship; participation with Parliament; engagement and inclusion; audience reach; advocacy; and Restoration and Renewal.
9. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the work of the Committee and the management of the Parliamentary Art Collection in this period. The year began with a focus on essential projects, though as COVID restrictions were eased over the following months, the Heritage Collections Team, with the support of the Committee, oversaw the gradual resumption of non-essential projects that had been paused at the height of the pandemic.

Access and engagement

10. Visitor access to the Parliamentary Estate continued to be severely restricted for most of this period preventing direct public access to the Collection and the ability of the Committee and the Heritage Collections Team to arrange onsite educational and engagement opportunities so online access and engagement took on an even greater significance.
11. Work progressed on the development of a new Heritage Collections website, launched in October 2021 with an improved search facility, accessibility, online exhibitions, images and information on works from the collections, along with ongoing work to improve the accessibility of collections video content published online. The Committee fully endorsed this project, recognising the role of the website in widening access to the Collection and in educating and inspiring diverse audiences about the history of Parliament and its collections. The new website brings together for the first time all of Parliament’s Heritage Collections: the Parliamentary Art Collection, the Historic Furniture and Decorative Arts Collection, and the Architectural Fabric Collection. The publication of online content for several topics on the history of Parliament and items from the Collection were prioritised and published on the newly launched website, with further content in development.
12. The Heritage Collections Team also continued to work with *ArtUK*, an online resource bringing together works from across 3,400 public collections in the UK, to widen access to the Parliamentary Art Collection.
13. Parliament’s social media channels were used to promote public understanding of the Collection and the work of the Committee and Heritage Collections Team. This included posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and video content available through the *Art in Parliament* YouTube playlist, which had an increasing number of views during the period.

The curatorial team also produced a series of films on the 2019 Election Artist commission and developed an online exhibition.

14. The Committee Media Officer, working alongside the curatorial team, responded to several press enquiries relating to the Parliamentary Art Collection in the 2021/22 financial year. In addition to social media posts and photography, the Media Officer also promoted the 2019 Election Artist commission to the media and the public.

#### Diversity and inclusion

15. During this period, the measures approved by the Committee in July 2020 to review and update the Works of Art Collection to tell an inclusive history of Parliament through a diverse range of voices continued to form the basis of its approach. In January 2022, the Committee reflected on this work while recognising that it would continue to be a priority in the next financial year and beyond. The Committee was pleased to note its progress in the following areas:
  - The creation of a Collections Advisory Group to provide expert advice on matters relating to improving the diversity of representation of Parliament’s collections.
  - Its discussion of the approach and possible subjects or themes for a commission to mark the impact of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people on Parliament.
  - That the Collections Advisory Group would be consulted on the terms used in cataloguing and interpretation as a matter of priority. Guidance would be applied to the collections database following completion of this consultation.
  - The publication on the Committee’s website of five versions of a collections review document entitled *The Parliamentary Art Collection and links to the transatlantic slave trade*, which provides for the first time a comprehensive list of artworks relating to or depicting those who directly benefited from, supported or had links with the transatlantic slave trade. Future updates will be published biannually.
  - The publication on the Committee’s website of [a list of artworks](#) and [resources](#) which capture BAME history and achievements. A comprehensive formal audit of artworks will be published at the end of each Parliament.
16. In February, the newly formed Collections Advisory Group met for the first time. A specialist recruitment agency was used to recruit the external members of the Group based on principles of diversity and inclusion to ensure a recruitment process that was wide-reaching and identified potential members with a broad range of experiences and perspectives. The Collections Advisory Group will aim to explore the challenges and opportunities around how to make under-represented groups more visible in the Collections and ways to utilise the Heritage Collection holdings as a platform for inclusive public engagement with Parliament.

#### Estates projects and programmes

17. The Committee was attuned to the increasing challenges of caring for and managing the Parliamentary Art Collection in the context of an increasing number of capital projects taking place on the Parliamentary Estate, while recognising that they would help to secure

the future of the buildings (which include the Palace of Westminster), their interiors and the historic collections housed in them.

18. In November 2021, the Committee met with its counterpart, the Lord Speaker's Panel on Works of Art, to consider Restoration and Renewal, the proposed approach and the implications and opportunities for the Works of Art Collection along with the Parliamentary Estate Development Framework. An increasing proportion of the Committee's work is likely to be informed by and related to this programme of work in the years to come. The Committee awaits the final decision by the House on the future approach to R&R.
19. Among the active estates projects, in January, the Committee was pleased to hear of the early completion of the Cast Iron Roofs Programme, one of several works planned in advance of Restoration and Renewal. The Chair wrote to the project team commending them on the completion of a programme that will help to secure the future of the Palace and its historic collections for many decades to come.
20. During this period the Heritage Collections Team continued to respond to incidents affecting the Collection and oversaw the protection and moves of artworks during estates and maintenance projects, for which it provided regular reports to the Committee. These included the protection, monitoring or removal of artworks during works in the Palace and buildings on the Northern Estate during the summer and conference recesses.

## Acquisitions and commissions

21. The Committee was allocated £75,000 for its general acquisition fund during 2021/22, with access to a further £25,000 if required, subject to approval by the Director of Finance. Artworks purchased during the financial year were added to the Permanent Collection of Works of Art in the House of Commons.
22. The Committee's approach to the acquisition and commissioning of artworks for the Collection was based on addressing significant gaps of representation while also aiming to increase diversity of representation through artists, sitters and subjects.
23. The following artworks were acquired or commissioned during the 2021/22 financial year:

***Election Artist Commission: There Was a Time***– In March 2022, the Committee formally accepted the completed artwork produced for the 2019 Election Artist commission into the Parliamentary Art Collection. Artist Nicky Hirst was commissioned in November 2019 to undertake a residency and produce a permanent artwork in response to the 2019 General Election. For her research for the commission, Hirst followed the campaign trail and visited many regions of the UK. The finished work, a three-dimensional mobile sculpture entitled *There Was a Time*, reflects the electorate, politicians during the campaign and the electoral process and was installed in the Atrium of Portcullis House in April 2022. It is the first three-dimensional artwork produced for the Election Artist series, and the first mobile in the Collection.



*There Was A Time, 2019-20 by Nicky Hirst © UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor WOA S762*

**Diversity commission** – In June 2021, the Committee fully endorsed a proposal to commission a permanent and significant artwork for the Parliamentary Art Collection. The commission is just one part of the Committee’s efforts to increase diversity of representation in the Collection and will have a specific emphasis on the representation and contribution of BAME communities in the UK. The curatorial team is in the process of exploring options for the commission, which will be among the Committee’s priorities in the coming financial year.



**Portrait of Edwin Montague PC by Estelle Nathan** – The acquisition of a drawing of Edwin Samuel Montague (1879–1924), who served as the Liberal Member for Chesterton (1906–1918) and the combined county of Cambridgeshire (1918–1922) and held office in the ministries of prime ministers Herbert Asquith and David Lloyd George. The sitter was only the third Jewish MP to serve in the Cabinet.

*Edwin Montague PC by Estelle Nathan*

**‘Division’ by Adam Dant** – The acquisition of ‘Division’, a hand-tinted lithograph by 2015 Election Artist Adam Dant. Based on Dant’s research over several years, the print documents the locations of the surviving division bells in the Westminster area beyond the Parliamentary Estate and includes a depiction – the second work in the Collection to do so – of the scaffolding in place during the restoration of the Elizabeth Tower.

**'Westminster Hall' by Hubert Williams** – The acquisition of a drawing of Westminster Hall by Hubert Williams (1905–1989), made around 1930 and depicting building works to the central tower above Central Lobby and the roof of the Grand Committee Room in Westminster Hall. No other works in the Collection show the Palace of Westminster at that time.



*'Westminster Hall' by Hubert Williams*

**'Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP' by Liam Dickinson** – The acquisition of an oil painting of Sir Lindsay Hoyle when Chairman of Ways and Means by Liam Dickinson. Lindsay Hoyle (b.1957) was returned as the Labour MP for Chorley in 1997. In 2010, he became the first Chairman of Ways and Means to be elected by MPs by ballot rather than by nomination of the Leader of the House. He was knighted in 2018 and elected Speaker of the House of Commons in 2019.

**'Remains of the House of Commons After the Fire in November 1834' by George Balmer** – A watercolour drawing by George Balmer (d.1846) depicting the ruins of the House of Commons, including St Stephen's Chapel and the cloisters, after the fire that destroyed most of the old Palace of Westminster in November 1834. The drawing will complement three others, one of which is a study for this finished watercolour, by the same artist in the Collection.



*'Remains of the House of Commons After the Fire in November 1834' by George Balmer*

**Contemporary views of Parliament** – The acquisition of eight contemporary prints:

- ‘London, 2015’ by Idris Kahn OBE, a set of five prints depicting iconic London landmarks including the Palace of Westminster, the London Eye, Buckingham Palace, Tower Bridge and St Paul’s Cathedral, based on found imagery from postcards, photographs and advertisements from the 1930s onwards.
- ‘Parliament of Plants, 2022’ by Céline Baumann, which draws on Karl Anton Hickel’s painting ‘William Pitt addressing the House of Commons on the French Declaration of War (1793)’ on loan to the House of Commons from the National Portrait Gallery. By adding imagery of exotic plants, Baumann links the history of Parliament to prevailing global debates around climate change, particularly post COP26.
- ‘A Glimpse of Parliament, 2010’ by Karen Keogh, offers a more unusual view of the Palace from the South Bank of the Thames, through trees and the London Eye.
- ‘Magic Hour, 2013’ by Katharine Libretto, a print depicting the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Bridge from County Hall.

**June Mendoza gift** – The Committee’s acceptance of a generous gift of archival material from the artist June Mendoza relating to her painting ‘The House of Commons in Session, 1986’ (WOA 3232), a group portrait depicting the House in session. The gift included photographic studies of the sitters and other background materials which will be added to the Heritage Collections archive to enhance understanding of the commission and the artist’s process.

## Displays, exhibitions and events

24. The Committee supported the following displays, exhibitions and events in 2021/22:

**G7 Speaker’s Conference display** – The Committee was pleased to support a display of works from Parliament’s Heritage Collections at Astley Hall, Chorley, during the G7 Speaker’s Conference. The exhibition, ‘A Taste of Parliament’, which included several works from the Parliamentary Art Collection, ran from September to October 2021 and provided an opportunity for public access to the artworks on display and for regional engagement.

**‘Parliament buildings of the Commonwealth’ display** – The Committee approved a display in Portcullis House organised by the Heritage Collections Team and the Speaker’s Office to mark Commonwealth Day in March. The display included photographs from the Parliamentary Art Collection depicting the parliaments of numerous nations of the Commonwealth and was accompanied by an exhibition booklet and a web feature to allow public access.

**London Blitz display** – In March, a display depicting the destruction of the House of Commons Chamber during the London Blitz in 1941 was installed on the Officials Corridor close to the Chamber.

**International Women’s Day 2022 lecture** – The Committee approved the subject for the annual lecture to mark International Women’s Day planned for March. The chosen theme of the lecture was Lucy, Lady Baldwin (1869–1945), and her role in campaigning for improvements in maternity care.

## **Collections management, conservation and research**

25. The Heritage Collections Team continued to oversee an active programme of collections care throughout the year. The following work was undertaken in this area:

- The Heritage Collections Team supported the opening of the Speaker’s State Apartments to the public for the first time at Easter 2022 through research and interpretation to provide a high-quality visitor experience.
- The Committee approved the trial re-glazing of two paintings by Francis Salisbury and Ernest Board in the East Corridor of the Palace of Westminster that had suffered from surface changes due to environmental conditions.
- Preventative conservation and cleaning work was carried out on 30 of the textiles on display in committee and meeting rooms in Portcullis House.
- A liquid moisture survey was carried out in the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft beneath St Stephen’s Hall following concerns over possible water infiltration and damage to the stonework and wall paintings. The survey found that no water infiltration had taken place, though further work would be carried out in due course to monitor environmental conditions and ensure the long-term preservation of the Chapel and its artworks.
- In Norman Shaw North, a major audit, inspection and location control of items in the Collection had been carried out ahead of the planned decant of the building as part of the refurbishment of the building. During the Easter Recess, 335 objects and 268 areas were audited with further work planned to address the conservation of artworks where necessary and the relocation of items.
- Work to improve digital catalogue entries for works in the Collection and the quality of information available online through the new Heritage Collections website saw improvements to records for hundreds of items.
- The Heritage Collections Team, in support of numerous estates projects and activities, oversaw the removal and protection of hundreds of artworks in a typical month.

## **The year ahead**

26. Looking ahead to the new financial year, the Committee expects to focus on work in the following areas:

- Continuing its work to diversify the Parliamentary Art Collection and provide improved interpretation.
- A focus on engagement to make the Collection visible and accessible beyond Westminster.

- Supporting the Speaker's External Affairs Programme.
- Building on the work of this year to improve digital access to the Collection through the website and other online channels.
- Working with the new Collections Advisory Group to ensure that under-represented groups are more visible in the Collection and their stories are reflected through its interpretation.
- Continuing to raise awareness within Parliament of the importance and history of the Collection.

*Sean Harris  
Committee Secretariat  
24 May 2022*

**Annex A: Statement of account for the financial year 2021/22 (as at 31 March 2022)**

Type	Title	Medium	Artist	2021/22 Expenditure	2021/22 Commitment	2021/22 Total
Commission	Portrait commissions provisional allowance			£0.00	£28,000.00	£0.00
Commission	Election Artist - fees		Nicky Hirst	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Commission	Election Artist - fabrication cost and expenses		Nicky Hirst	£10,511.64	£20,000.00	£10,511.64
Purchase	Portrait of Edwin S Montague MP	Work on paper	Estelle d'Avigdor Nathan	£350.00		£350.00
Purchase	'Division', hand printed lithograph	Work on paper	Adam Dant	£600.00		£600.00
Commission	Active commission			£12,000.00		£12,000.00
Purchase	Westminster Hall	Work on paper	Hubert Williams	£380.00		£380.00
Purchase	Portrait of Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP	Oil on board	Liam Dickinson	£4,500.00		£4,500.00
Purchase	London series	Work on paper	Idris Kahn	£14,400.00		£14,400.00
Purchase	Remains of the House of Commons	Work on paper	George Balmer	£4,500.00		£4,500.00
Purchase	A Glimpse of Parliament	Work on paper	Karen Keogh	£290.00		£290.00
Purchase	Magic Hour	Work on paper	Katharine Libretto	£350.00		£350.00
Purchase	Parliament of Plants	Work on paper	Celine Baumann	£470.00		£470.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>				£58,351.64	£58,000.00	£58,351.64
<b>Annual Budget</b>						£75,000.00
Agreed drawdown from Reserve [max £25,000pa]						00.00
<b>Total available funds</b>						£75,000.00
<b>Remaining Budget 2021/22</b>						<b>£16,648.36</b>