

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Allegations about the origins of the Hunt Collection were first touched upon in the Summer (2003) edition of the Irish Arts Review, when Erin Gibbons in reviewing The Hunt Museum Essential Guide criticized the Guide for the exclusion of provenance information about objects as well as the absence of biographical material about the creators of the Collection, John and Gertrude Hunt.

The allegations were more publicly and widely articulated on February 7th 2004 when the Irish Times ran the lead article on this story and also had two other features in the newspaper that day. More specifically on, February 7th the Times published details of a letter written by Dr. Shimon Samuel, International Liaison Director, Wiesenthal Centre Paris, to President McAleese. In this letter, Dr. Samuels requested that the title 'Museum of the Year' be suspected from the Hunt Museum. The Museum had been received the award a few months previously. The letter also made allegations about the origins of the Hunt Collection and the business activities of John and Gertrude Hunt. In addition to publishing this letter the Irish Times published details extracted from of an unpublished essay, written by Judith Hill in 1998.

The original letter from the Wiesenthal Centre to President Mc Aleese was referred by the President, within days of its receipt, to the Taoiseach, who in turn referred it to the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism. The Minister then wrote to the Museum on February 12th 2004 requesting that the museum *"takes action to satisfy itself in regard to the allegations made in the letter in so far as they relate to the collections"*.

In response to the Minister's request, the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project was established by an independent body, The Royal Irish Academy. The objectives of the Hunt

Museum Provenance Research Project, Phase 1, (May 2005 2 June 2006) were set down by the Royal Irish Academy Hunt Museum Evaluation Group (RIAHMEG). This group was established in May 2005 to investigate allegations made by the Wiesenthal Centre Paris into the provenance of the Hunt Collection. The RIAHMEG completed their work in 2006 and published their final report entitled The Hunt Museum Evaluation Group Final Report to The Royal Irish Academy June 2006. Contained in this report are the results of Phase 1 of the provenance research work carried out during 2005-6 (i.e. the online publication of the full catalogue of the Hunt Collection and Archive as managed by the Hunt Museum) and the report also outlines the results of the initial research. The Hunt Museum Evaluation Group Final Report to The Royal Irish Academy June 2006 is published on the archived press pages on the Hunt Museum website: www.huntmuseum.com.

In September 2006, an international expert, Dr. Lynn H. Nicholas, was requested by the Royal Irish Academy to evaluate the work completed by the RIAHMEG. The Nicholas Report was published in September 2007. In January 2008, the Hunt Museum was requested by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism to pursue the recommendations contained in the Nicholas Report; the results of this work are outlined in this report. The work was initiated in February 2008 and completed in May 2010.

It must be recorded here that the research undertaken and all results included in this Report are in the first instance, as a result of the recommendations in the Lynn Nicholas Report. All other research and results are to be considered additional research that was executed as a result of the publication of The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report, written by Erin Gibbons published by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, in December 2008. The significant additional areas of research are viewed as continuing research for the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project and as part of continuing provenance research work, and best museum practice.

The Nicholas Report made the following recommendations:

- Locate and review the files related to the circumstances surrounding the losses at the Collection Point, Schloss Celle, a repository used for storage of objects after World War II.
- Attempt to locate and review the records of the dealer Alexander von Frey.
- Review Irish Government archives to see if there is any relevant information in their collections.
- Notify specialists working in area of looting of Holocaust Era assets of any possible findings and ask them to place links to the Hunt Museum on their websites.

This report details the research results of this work. In addition, a section of this report deals with related significant provenance research issues. There are five appendices attached to this report.

This report is structured as follows:

Section 1: Contexts

Section 2: Schloss Celle

Section 3: Alexander von Frey

Section 4: Review of Irish Government Archives

Section 5: Significant Related Provenance Research Issues

Section 6: Summary and Recommendations

The Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project was co-ordinated, managed and implemented by Virginia Teehan from May 2005 until March 2010. The Chairman and Board of the Hunt Museum Ltd. ratified all decisions relating to initiation and work of the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project. Upon the recommendation of Nancy Yeide,^[1] (Head of Curatorial Records, National Gallery, Washington, DC, and external adviser to the RIAHMEG), an Expert Spoliation Research Adviser, Marina Mixon, was engaged by the Hunt Museum to advise and provide research guidance on methodology to the project. This extended guidance

[1] Yeide, Nancy H., Akinsha Konstantin, Walsh Amy, AAM Guide to Provenance Research, American Association of Museums, 2001. Yeide is also author of *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice: The Hermann Goering Collection*, Laurel Publishing, 2009

and research was crucial to the Hunt Museum Project. The Expert Spoliation Adviser was engaged from February 2008 and continued working with the Project until March 2010. Her professional profile is contained in Appendix 1. Additional research work was carried out by Margaret Lantry, Information Management Consultant and Researcher. Margaret Lantry was engaged from July 2 September 2009. Her professional profile is contained in Appendix 1.

The most significant outcomes of The Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project has been the precedents which it has established in the development of professional methodologies as well as its contributions to scholarship. This success is directly related to the expertise and experience residing in the Royal Irish Academy's Hunt Museum Evaluation Group, the advisor to the RIAHMEG, Ms. Nancy Yeide and independent scholar Ms. Lynn Nicholas, and the consultants who supported the work of The Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project, Ms. Marina Mixon and Ms. Margaret Lantry as well as the wider internationally based provenance research community. My involvement with this project ends as it started. That is to ensure that the allegations were addressed in a just way and in a manner that conformed to international professional standards.

I thank the Chairman and Board of the Hunt Museum, the wonderful staff, docents and Friends of The Hunt Museum for their support and friendship.

Virginia Teehan

Conclusions

The results of The Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project demonstrate that there is no evidence to confirm that there is no overlap between any item in the Hunt Collection and the objects which were lost at the Schloss Celle repository. The research also demonstrates that there is no evidence to confirm that Felix Harbord was associated with the losses from Schloss Celle.

Research into the links made between Felix Harbord and the Bute family and a chandelier which hangs in the residence of the First Minister of Scotland, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh as outlined in *The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report*, by Erin Gibbons, clarified that the allegations made in *The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report* were based upon information published in an informal guidebook to Bute House, Edinburgh, which unfortunately contains inaccuracies. Research results indicate that the origins of the piece are unclear. There is no evidence to suggest that this item was a looted piece. The correspondence with the Marquis of Bute confirmed that the previous owners of the chandelier, the Bertie family, received the chandelier in good faith and has been happy to tell its story 2 a story which has, since 1989, occupied a prominent place in the most prestigious government-occupied property in Scotland. There have never been any attempts to hide the origins of the chandelier.

Research findings indicate that while there is information relating to Alexander von Frey's personal wartime activities, regrettably, there appears to be no evidence of the existence of his business or dealership archive as yet. As suggested by Lynn Nicholas, a dealership archive could potentially provide information about those with whom von Frey had business dealings. Such a resource would be central to the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project.

The Hunt Museum sought to identify the possible whereabouts of an archive which could contain information about the dealing activities of Alexander von Frey. All relevant known and

likely international archival repositories which may contain information about the business activities of von Frey were consulted.

Communication was made with international research experts to ascertain if they were aware of a von Frey archive, including France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Britain, The Netherlands and American sources.

Research was undertaken for this part of the project by consulting with the Art Loss Register and the following UK archives: British Library, UK National Archives, Imperial War Museum Library and Archive, Warburg Institute, the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum and The Tate Library and Archive. This research revealed that there are files in the UK National Archives which contain papers relating to Alexander von Frey and his dealing activities during World War II. These files have previously been viewed by the Spoliation Research Adviser; however, none of the files held at the UK National Archives contain his dealership archive. Such a resource, if it exists, would be central to concluding this phase of the research project.

In an effort to try to locate a von Frey archive, contact was made with international spoliation research experts including Germany, France, Austria, UK, Switzerland and the USA. To date, it was confirmed that it is unlikely that there is an Alexander von Frey dealership archive in existence.

No evidence was found in the files consulted to date that there is any item in the Hunt collection with a documented von Frey provenance, or that there is any evidence to date of any item in the Hunt Museum Collection having been subject to spoliation during the World War II period.

As outlined in this report, the Hunt Museum pursued research in US and UK museums for provenance information. As part of this process, searches were made by consulting the UK Cultural Property Advice website² which is the central portal for recording provenance information on objects from the 1933 to 1945 period. The results for objects held in UK institutions with Hunt provenances are as follows: the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (2); the Courtauld Institute, London (2); the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (4); Glasgow Museums (The Burrell Collection) (24); and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (3). Details of the provenance can be seen online at the website.

Specific attention was drawn to a tapestry with a Hunt provenance held at the Glasgow Museum's (Burrell Collection) collection published on the Cultural Property Advice website. This item is of particular relevance because it has been revealed that it may be related to a known confiscated collection.

As a result of this discovery, the Hunt Museum conducted research into the Budge collection and the circumstances of the sales. Important archival documents were located and viewed as part of the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project. The Emma Budge Collection [3] is a very complicated and problematic collection and does appear to have been a confiscated collection.

[2] The website (www.culturalpropertyadvice.gov.uk) Cultural Property Advice was commissioned by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, UK (MLA), with funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in July 2005. Hopkins Van Mil carried out a wide consultation with potential users of the site and developed content for it based on the resultant discussions. Museum Documentation Association (MDA) project managed the publication of the site which was launched in February 2007.

[3] "Emma Budge, born Emma Ranette Lazarus (1852-1937), daughter of a Jewish merchant from Hamburg and an American citizen since her marriage to the naturalised American Henry Budge. In 1937 her heirs were violently prevented from taking up their inheritance and the Budge's Hamburg family home and art collection were confiscated by the National Socialists. After the collection was catalogued at the Berlin Museum of Decorative Arts, it was put up for auction by Berlin art dealer Paul Graupe on 4-6 October and 6-7 December 1937 at the Wittenberg Palace. Details from

Provenance Research pages on Staatliches Museum Schwerin (Schwerin State Museum). Formerly called the Mecklenburgisches Landesmuseum (Mecklenburg Provincial Museum). See www.museum-schwerin.de

As part of this research, The Hunt Museum researched, located and obtained a copy of an original annotated auction catalogue for the sales that were held at Paul Graupe, Berlin, with ascribed purchasers. This copy of the original sale catalogue reveals that a “J. Rosenbaum” was the purchaser of the tapestry *The Visitation* at the Graupe sale, not John Hunt as published on the Cultural Property Advice website. This information was communicated by registered letter to the Director of Museums and Galleries, Glasgow on November 11, 2009. This information has not as yet been published on the Cultural Property Website. It is recommended that this information be shared immediately with the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and the family heirs in order to assist them with their research for items lost from their collection.

The Hunt Museum, as part of the research, considered researching auction house records as a high priority. The Hunt Museum submitted enquiries on vendors and purchasers to both Christie’s and Sotheby’s on items purchased at their auction houses. This research was undertaken with the co-operation from the Senior Vice-President, Sotheby’s New York and Worldwide Head of the Restitution Department and the International Director of Restitution, Christie’s. Confirmation was received from both Sotheby’s and Christie’s that there do not appear to be any suspicious names or problematic circumstances with any of the items in question.

Extensive research was carried out to establish if there are references to John and Gertrude Hunt in official Irish records. The results of this research demonstrate that there appears to be little information on the official Irish records relating to John and Gertrude Hunt.

Information on the Craggaunowen Project [4] and Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare was also sought as part of this process. Those files which were identified as being relevant were all individually requested and examined.

It should be noted that, unfortunately, due to restrictions set down by some government departments, some files are not publicly available, such as those of the Revenue Commissioners and the Office of Public Works. A full outline of the analysis of the NAI findings and results of this work is included in Appendix 3.

One file relating to the Craggaunowen Project was found at NAI. This file was examined and a full transcription of the file is included in Appendix 4 of this report. This file, which spans the period 1973-1977, includes correspondence between John Hunt and Erskine Childers, President of Ireland, whereby John Hunt is seeking the President's support for the Craggaunowen Project which was then in its final stages of completion.

As a result of the queries about the Hunt's status as Irish citizens, it is confirmed that John Hunt was a British subject by birth. It is unclear from official Irish records when John Hunt was granted naturalisation or received Irish citizenship. A search of Iris Oifigiúil for the period 1938 to 1947 yielded no evidence showing that John Hunt was naturalised during this period. On the 1977 grant of probate of his estate, his domicile is entered as being the Republic of Ireland and his origin as Irish. In 1947, in response to a Dáil question, Gertrude Hunt is stated as being the wife of an Irish citizen.

[4] Craggaunowen is an attempt to recreate aspects of Ireland's past with the restoration and reconstruction's of earlier forms of dwelling houses, farmsteads, hunting sites and early Christian eras. The concept was the idea of John Hunt who bought the land at Craggaunowen, near Quin, County Clare, restored the castle and began the construction of a modern museum display, including the reconstructed Crannog and Ringfort. He eventually gave the complex, with his hope for its future development, to the Irish people.

In addition to the review of the Irish Government archives, the Hunt Museum consulted the available official Irish and UK records were consulted and brief biographical profiles of John and Gertrude Hunt were compiled.

Recommendations

The Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project has made important progress and significant achievements, within the context of available resources, in realising the objectives set down by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in pursuing the recommendations made in the Nicholas Report. There is a requirement for additional resources to be made available in order for this vital research, which is central to professional best practice, to be continued.

Given that the Museum has, completed the recommendations outlined in the Nicholas Report, it is recommended that in line with professional best practice, that the Board of the Hunt Museum devises a Provenance Research Strategy which establishes clear direction, objectives and priorities for future work as well as a detailed Resource Plan.

It is recommended that select items from the Hunt Collection are referred to the Art Loss Register for checking against their databases. The ALR has one of the largest private databases of lost and stolen art, antiques and collectables. It is used by museums internationally as well as legal firms and private individuals to clarify ownership histories of objects. This process should be one of the next steps in evaluating the priorities for future work. The Hunt Museum, as part of the research, considered researching auction house records as a high priority. The Hunt Museum submitted enquiries on vendors and purchasers to both Christie's and Sotheby's on items purchased at there auction houses. Confirmation was received from both Sotheby's and Christie's that there do not appear to be any suspicious names or problematic circumstances with any of the items in question. It is recommended that research results obtained from the auction houses, regarding the ownership history of objects bought by

John and Gertrude Hunt are promptly published on the relevant pages of the Hunt Museum website, with confirmation from Christie's and Sotheby's. The research should be shared with the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and placed in the public domain as an immediate action.

It is recommended that the information provided by the Hunt Museum to Glasgow Museums and Galleries be updated on the UK Cultural Property Advice website. By publishing the information, these results can then be shared with international databases for research, and heirs searching their potentially lost collections.

It is recommended that the auction houses (all are listed on the relevant Provenance Research pages on the Hunt Museum website) from which John and Gertrude Hunt are known to have purchased objects are contacted as continuing research and that support is sought from them in order to provide further ownership history. It is recommended that the results of this research are published on the relevant pages of the Hunt Museum website and that the next stage of research for items purchased from European and US auction houses are pursued.

It is recommended that the archival collections of state bodies are continued to be reviewed for relevant holdings. Such agencies include: The National Museum of Ireland, The National Gallery of Ireland, The Arts Council of Ireland, Shannon Heritage Ltd. It is also recommended that the Office of Public Works is contacted directly to ascertain if access may be arranged to their archival collections. It is recommended that the research results from this work are appropriately published.

It is recommended that the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Projects informs the international provenance research community if any archives relevant to Alexander von Frey become known. The discovery of extant archival material relating to von Frey continues to be of high priority for the Hunt Museum.

It is strongly recommended that the Hunt Museum Provenance Research Project continues to pursue research, as detailed in Section 3, of this report as a continuing part of provenance research at the Hunt Museum.

It is recommended that the research and results received should be shared and communicated with the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and the international research community in order to assist any potential claimant families in the search for their art losses.

The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report was published in December 2008. It is recommended that *The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report* is, in the first instance, continued to be comprehensively evaluated for all references that are germane to the Hunt Collection as managed by the Hunt Museum Ltd. It is further recommended that allegations contained in this report about the origins and ownership history of the Hunt Collection are continued to be researched. In this context, it should be noted that a review has been conducted of the section of *The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report* which deals with Felix Harbord. The findings are published in Section 2 of this document. It is recommended that the review of *The Hunt Controversy: A Shadow Report*, once research is complete, and the information is compiled, that it should be published and placed on the public record.