

# Conference

## George IV: 'The First Gentleman of Europe'

Friday 6 March 2020

### Abstracts and biographies

#### 1. Desmond Shawe-Taylor

##### 'Europe's Liberator' – George IV and the Waterloo Chamber

The 'summer of celebrations' in London in 1814 marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the centenary of the Hanoverian Succession. London played host to the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Russia, and the newly-restored King of France. Early in his Regency, this was George IV's opportunity to play a part on the world stage. The idea for the Waterloo Chamber grew out of these celebrations, commemorating not so much that battle as the restoration of ancient regime Europe which took place at the Congresses of Vienna and Aix-la-Chapelle. This paper will propose a 'programme' for the Waterloo Chamber and examine the way in which Sir Thomas Lawrence's portraits conveyed George IV's vision of a restored Europe.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor is Surveyor of the Queen's Paintings. He is author of a number of works including *The Georgians: eighteenth-century portraiture and society*; *Bruegel to Rubens: masters of Flemish painting*; and *The Conversation Piece: scenes of fashionable life*.

#### 2. Philip Mansel

##### George IV and Louis XVIII: The first Entente Cordiale

Using newly discovered archives, Philip Mansel shows that George, Prince of Wales not only collected French royal art, but also gave the French monarchy political support. Driven by hatred of Napoleon, in 1808 he promised to restore the exiled Louis XVIII to the throne of his ancestors. Louis XVIII was the guest of honour at the first fete of the regency, in June 1811. In January 1814, with Castlereagh and Wellington, the Regent secretly supported a Bourbon restoration, and discouraged Britain's allies from making peace with Napoleon. In April 1814 he organised grandiose receptions in London for Louis XVIII on his way back to Paris. The Regent is a distant ancestor of the Entente Cordiale.

Philip Mansel is an art historian and author of works on courts and cities including *Paris Between Empires, 1814–1852*; *Dressed to Rule: Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth and King of the World: the Life of Louis XIV*.

#### 3. William Derham

##### "Fondest hope in our bosoms is rising" – George IV's visit to Ireland

This paper will examine the visit of George IV to Ireland in 1821. It will briefly look at the King's previous political involvement with Ireland, as well as previous royal visits to the island, as the context in which his visit took place. It will examine the visit itself and some of the material culture associated with it. Finally, it will look at the legacy of the visit, both politically and in terms of the precedent it set for subsequent royal visits to Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

William Derham is curator at Dublin Castle. He is the joint editor of *The Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle: An Architectural History*, and is author of *Lost Ireland: 1860-1960*.

#### 4. Kate Heard

##### **An idle spectator of the great events in Europe? George IV and the Napoleonic Wars**

Among the toys belonging to the young George, Prince of Wales were miniature guns, swords and cannon but, unlike his younger brothers, the prince was forbidden a military training and was only able to play at soldiers. As his friends and brothers went to war and Napoleon battled his way across Europe, stay-at-home George became increasingly frustrated at his inability to participate in the 'great events' unfolding before him. In response, he formed an important and diverse collection of military art, from historical weapons, to paintings depicting battles and military life, to a large library of military manuals and plans. This paper will examine George's response to war through the art which he commissioned, collected and enjoyed.

Kate Heard is Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings at Royal Collection Trust. She is author of *The First Georgians: Art & Monarchy 1714–1760*; *Maria Merian's Butterflies*, and *High Spirits: The Comic Art of Thomas Rowlandson* and is co-curator of *George IV: Art and Spectacle*.

#### 5. David Oakey

##### **Carlton House in a European Context**

Much has been made of George IV's longest-lasting home Carlton House's initial reliance on French projects, such as the Comte d'Artois's Château de Bagatelle. This paper will attempt to re-examine these comparisons, consider whether additional ones can be made with European courts further afield, and whether more generally early decorative decisions taken at the house by the youthful George demonstrated a desire to emulate a more French and/or European conception of princeliness. It will then reflect on how the evolution of the house over the subsequent decades represented George's changing relationship with both traditional and contemporary British and European court culture.

David Oakey is a curator for a private collection. He has previously worked at Carlton Hobbs and Royal Collection Trust.

#### 6. Flora Fraser

##### **Paying Court to the Prince, Regent and King: Female Royalty and Other Women at Brighton, in London, and at Windsor**

Flora Fraser explores the King's sometimes fond and sometimes troubled relationships with Queen Caroline, and of his six sisters, and other female relatives, notably his mother, Queen Charlotte and his daughter and heir, Princess Charlotte. Fraser further discusses the Prince's domestic existence with his 'wife', Mrs Fitzherbert, and the friendships, romantic and otherwise, he enjoyed throughout his life with aristocratic ladies and women of the Royal Household in settings of ever-increasing magnificence.

Flora Fraser and is an historian and writer. She is author of *Beloved Emma: The Life of Emma, Lady Hamilton*; *The Unruly Queen: The Life of Queen Caroline*; *Princesses: the Six Daughters of George III* and *The Washingtons*.

## 7. Kathryn Jones

### 'Brilliant and joyous': George IV and ceremony

The ambitious architectural schemes of George IV's life were designed to create impressive backdrops to the glittering ceremonies of court life. A natural showman, he was considered to greatest advantage when he appeared 'in show and state', when a contemporary noted he 'shines incomparably'. This paper will examine some of these ceremonies – the formal and increasingly informal and magnificent, alongside the spaces that were designed to contain them.

Kathryn Jones is Senior Curator of Decorative Arts at Royal Collection Trust. She is author of *European Silver in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen and For the Royal Table*. She is co-curator of *George IV: Art and Spectacle*.