

Press Release Unveiled! Stunning Chinese screen to be revealed at Boughton House

For more than thirty years this magnificent piece of oriental art has rested unseen at Boughton House and on **Sunday May 2nd 2010** it will be unveiled for the public to view for the first time.



Thought to be nearly three hundred years old, the huge screen (20 ft / 6m wide and over 12ft / 3m high!) has panels incised and decorated in striking colours, with numerous figures on terraces and in garden landscapes, featuring pagodas, rockwork and flowering plants. It provides an extraordinary window into this period of Chinese society and is a striking and unusual example of skill and craftsmanship.



Folding screens were important elements of Chinese and Japanese households and were used for protection, concealment or as partitions. Some of the Coromandel lacquer screens as they are known have surviving inscriptions which tell us that they were usually made as birthday presents for distinguished individuals or as gifts to mark the retirement or promotion of high-ranking officials. It is likely this screen was made in 17th / 18th century, during the Kangxi reign (1661-1722); when screens started to arrive in Europe.

This type of Chinese folding screen is coated with pale clay followed by several layers of lacquer. The design is carved into the lacquer before paint is applied to the underlying clay, creating a textured surface with recessed colour. Gold may also be used, and other characteristic touches include a border framing the main design, and calligraphy.



They are called “Coromandel Screens” because they used to be gathered into shipments with other Chinese arts and crafts bound for Europe at ports along the Coromandel Coast in south-eastern India, where several European nations had trading stations during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Coromandel was a European interpretation of the Tamil place-name Cholamandalam.

A 300-year-old screen of this size fetched \$56,000 at auction in September 2008. Two years earlier, a slightly older screen sold for \$120,000.

**Boughton House is open to the public on May 2nd and 3rd, 2pm – 5pm
and 1st August to 1st September, 2pm – 5pm**

www.boughtonhouse.org.uk

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