

# Report on the Rushlight Fall Meeting October 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Sturbridge, Massachusetts

Just over forty Rushlight members began arriving late afternoon and early evening on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at the Sturbridge Host Hotel, our meeting headquarters for the weekend. Gathering in the hospitality room friends reunited, caught up on events over the past months, and shared their experiences and recent lighting finds.

Friday was a busy day. Events began with a 30 minute drive to Worcester to visit the Worcester Historical Museum. The museum has recently removed from storage, documented and put on display some of their lighting collection. Rushlight member Ed Klausmeyer assisted them in this effort. Several rare lamps are in this collection. Of particular note are two very early and extremely



Gallup Patent (Left)  
Schulze and Trull Patent (Right)

rare American Argand lamps. Both lamps were patented in March, 1831: by Lewis Gallup on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and by John Schulze and Joel Trull on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Both lamps applied "... the principle of the Argand lamp to the common wick lamp". Ed recounted the discovery of these lamps, described the details of their construction and passed them around for all in the group to examine.

After a few hours at the Worcester Historical Museum the group traveled to the Worcester Art Museum for lunch in their café. The museum has a fully restored, essentially complete, tiled mosaic floor which was recovered near Antioch. It dates back to approximately 500 AD. The tile floor, protected from being walked on, filled the entire central foyer of the museum entrance and depicted various hunting scenes of the time period.

After lunch the group traveled a short distance to the American Antiquarian Society. The Society collects and preserves pre 1876 American books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, periodicals, music, graphic arts, and related ephemera. We toured the library stacks, conservation laboratory, and a special room set up with original early lighting ephemera. The group was able to examine several lighting catalogues and related materials.

**EARLY LIGHTING**

The impetus for this exhibit was a meeting of the Rushlight Club scheduled for fall 2019 in Worcester County. Members were aware that the Worcester Historical Museum's lighting collection included some unusual, even unique, examples, as they were included in a 1923 publication, *Colonial Lighting*, by Arthur H. Hayward. In preparation for their visit, club member Edward Klausmeyer volunteered many hours of his time to review the museum's entire early lighting collection and write informed item descriptions. On display are some of his favorites.

The Rushlight Club was founded in 1932 for the study and preservation of lighting. It is one of the oldest organizations dedicated to a single aspect of material culture. Membership is international.



Mitchell Vane Catalog Page

Friday evening the group assembled at the Oliver Wight Tavern in Old Sturbridge Village for dinner and the annual membership meeting. Our guest speaker was Tom Kelleher, curator at Sturbridge Village. Tom's talk reviewed the history of Old Sturbridge Village and their lighting collection. He noted the influence early members of the Rushlight Club had on the collection. After his talk, member Bill Dixon presented to Tom an extremely rare John Miles patent lantern (with the original carrying case) as a donation to the Old Sturbridge Village lighting collection.

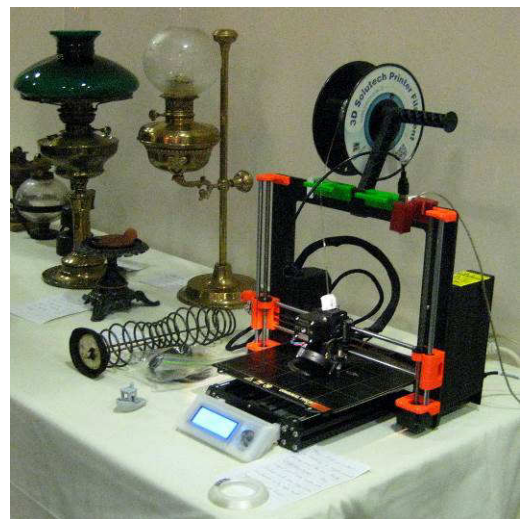
The membership meeting began with lighting the rush. Ed Klausmeyer did this in recognition of his work with the Worcester Historical Museum. Nominations Chairperson, Donna Schoenly, then presented the nominations for elected club positions. With the exception of one position, where no nominee was identified, those nominated were approved by the membership. Don Schoenly, our Program Chairperson for the past fourteen years, a past president and contributor to The Rushlight publication was awarded the Leroy Thwing Award. Don was given the award in recognition of his long service to the club and his advancement of the club's purpose of stimulating interest in the history of lighting.



Tom Kelleher (Left), Bill Dixon and the John Miles Patent Lantern

An auction was held of lighting ephemera that Bill Dixon collected over the years. The proceeds of the auction were donated by Bill to the club. Chuck Leib and Don Schoenly conducted a spirited auction and close to \$700 were raised to benefit the club.

The Show and Tell had a number of interesting items that their presenters shared with the members. Doug Schlicher showed a "betty lamp" that was comparable to the two shown on page 15 of "The Images of Historical Lighting from the Collection of Dr. Edward A. Rushford" that was published by the club in 2017. Brett Ewald presented a three ring binder full of lighting ephemera he has collected. Peter Brickell talked about moderator lamps and demonstrated his ability to produce some of their parts using a 3-D printer.



3-D Printer Making a Seal Used in Moderator Lamps

As usual a silent auction was held during the meeting. Many rare lighting devices and parts were offered for sale. Quite a few members found long sought pieces at bargain prices.

Saturday morning the group assembled in Old Sturbridge Village to view their lighting collection. Sturbridge has a fine and complete collection of early lighting housed in a period



Sturbridge Village Lighting Collection

building. Everything is well presented in display cases. The whole range of early lighting from candles to lard, whale oil to kerosene is organized by function or type of device. Of special interest is their display of early wood and tin candle chandeliers.

Following this the group was free to explore the remainder of the village on their own. Old Sturbridge Village is a living history museum and there is plenty to see, learn and enjoy. Some members began to leave late on Saturday while some stayed over and returned home on Sunday.

Once again the Fall meeting was a very enjoyable experience. Thanks to all who organized and participated in the event.

### Old Sturbridge Village Scenes



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