

Commonwealth Gifts made to the UK Parliament's House of Commons since 1950

There is a long tradition between Commonwealth Parliaments within the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to gift items to other Commonwealth Parliaments.

In the Parliament of the United Kingdom, the House of Commons Chamber was re-opened on 26 October 1950 following a restoration and repair project after damage was caused to the Chamber during the Second World War. A number of gifts were made to the Parliament of the United Kingdom from Commonwealth Parliaments. Twelve Commonwealth members gave special native woods grown in their country, and then sent the wood to Britain for fabrication. Two Commonwealth Parliaments provided the wood and also made the items that were gifted.



Prime Minister's table

Every former British Colony in the Commonwealth was represented by a gift of one piece of wood for the historic table in the Prime Minister's Conference Room. Pieces of driftwood were sometimes used, and all the triangular donations were made into a panel of inlay 1/8" thick set into the edge of the English oak top.

Wood floors

The parquet floors were made from Australian Walnut wood, *Juglans regia*, and like the Speaker's Chair, the wood came from Ravenshoe, Northern Queensland, Australia, but in this case, it was not a gift from that country.

Designer

All the designs for the overall architectural scheme, woodwork, furniture and fittings in the House of Commons Chamber were undertaken by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, OM, FRIBA (1880-1960).

Manufacturers

Joinery and furniture in the Chamber and gift tables, table lamp standards and oak inkstands were made by J.L. Green and Vardy Ltd., Islington, London (unless otherwise stated). The chairs, settees and telephone stools were made by Waring and Gillow Ltd., Lancaster (unless otherwise stated). The upholstery of green vaumol hide on the main benches in the Chamber are by Maple & Co. Ltd., London, W1.

The two silver gilt inkstands with stationery racks for the Clerks' Table were made by the Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company Ltd., London, W1. The remaining silver gilt inkstands and ashtrays were made by Blunt & Wray Ltd., London, W1.

Commonwealth gifts to the House of Commons

- **Australia*** - Speaker's Chair made from Blackbean wood, (Moreton Bay Chestnut), *Castanospermum australe*. Blackbean from Ravenshoe, Northern Queensland, Australia. Made by H.H. Martyn & Co. Ltd., of Cheltenham, England. The royal coat of arms and canopy were carved by Charles Gisborne, B.E.M. Canopy of silk damask with gold thread by Watts & Co., London SW.
- **Bahamas** - Minister's writing desk and chair, English oak, *Quercus robur*.
- **Barbados** - Minister's writing desk and chair, English oak.
- **Belize** (previously British Honduras)* - Minister's writing desk and chair in Mayflower wood *Tabebuia pentaphylla* and Royal Coat of Arms, English oak.
- **Bermuda** - Two triple silver gilt inkstands.
- **Botswana** (previously Bechuanaland Protectorate) - One silver gilt ashtray.
- **Canada**** - Table of the House in Canadian Oak, *Quercus* spp. Made by the Globe Furniture Company of Canada, Waterloo, Ontario.
- **Cyprus** - Members' Writing Room table, English oak.
- **Dominica** (as part of the Windward Islands) - One silver gilt inkstand.
- **Falkland Islands** - One silver gilt ashtray.
- **Fiji** - One silver gilt inkstand.

- **The Gambia** - Two silver gilt ashtrays.
- **Ghana** (previously Gold Coast)* - Minister's writing desk and chair in Mansonia wood, *Mansonia altissima*.
- **Gibraltar** - Two oak table lamps with bronze shades.
- **Grenada** (as part of the Windward Islands) - One silver gilt inkstand.
- **Guernsey** - Minister's writing desk and three chairs and arm chair, English oak.
- **Guyana** (previously British Guiana) - Four triple silver gilt inkstands.
- **Hong Kong** - One triple silver gilt inkstand.
- **India** - North entrance doors to Chamber, English oak.
- **Isle of Man** - One silver gilt inkstand and two silver gilt ashtrays for Prime Minister's Conference Room.
- **Jamaica** - Bar of the House in bronze made by Starkie Gardner Ltd., Merton, London.
- **Jersey** - Minister's writing desk and chair, English oak, and silver gilt inkstand.
- **Kenya*** - Minister's writing desk and chair in Olive wood, *Olea hochstetteri*.
- **Leeward Islands** - Six English oak table lamps with bronze shades.
- **Lesotho** (previously Basutoland) - Two silver gilt ashtrays.
- **Malawi** (previously Nyasaland) - One triple silver gilt inkstand and one silver gilt ashtray.
- **Malaysia** (previously Malaya) - Minister's writing desk and arm chair, English oak.
- **Malta** - Three silver gilt ashtrays.
- **Mauritius** - Minister's writing desk and chair, English oak.
- **Newfoundland*** - Six chairs for Prime Minister's Conference Room in Newfoundland Birch wood, *Betula* spp.
- **New Zealand*** - Two dispatch boxes in Puriri wood, *Vitex lucens*. Made by H.H. Martyn & Co. Ltd., of Cheltenham.
- **Nigeria*** - Furniture for 'Aye' Division Lobby in Iroko wood, *Chlorophora excelsa*.
- **Northern Ireland** - Two clocks for the Chamber by Gent & Co. Ltd., Leicester, and division clock on Clerks' Table by F.W. Elliott Ltd., London, EC1.
- **Pakistan** - South entrance doors to Chamber, English oak.
- **Sabah** (previously North = Borneo) - One table and five chairs for interview room in White Seraya wood, *Parashorea* spp.
- **St Helena*** - One Chairman's chair for Prime Minister's Conference Room in Iroko wood, *Chlorophora excelsa*.
- **St Lucia** (as part of the Windward Islands) - One silver gilt inkstand in Prime Minister's Conference Room.
- **St Vincent** (as part of the Windward Islands) - One silver gilt ashtray.
- **Seychelles** - Minister's writing desk and chair, English oak.
- **Sierra Leone*** - Minister's writing desk and chair in African Gold Walnut wood, *Juglans* spp.
- **Singapore** - One table and five chairs for interview room, English oak.
- **South Africa**** - Three chairs for Clerks' Table in Black (or True) Stinkwood, *Ocotea bullata*. Made by the Department of Public Works in Pretoria, South Africa.
- **Sri Lanka** (previously Ceylon) - Serjeant at Arms' chair, English oak.
- **Swaziland** - One silver gilt ashtray.
- **Tanzania** (previously Tanganyika)* - One table and five chairs for interview room in Iroko wood, *Chlorophora excelsa*.
- **Trinidad and Tobago** - Minister's writing desk and chair, English oak.
- **Uganda*** - Furniture for 'No' Division Lobby in Mvule wood, *Milicia excelsa*.
- **Yemen** (previously Aden) - Members' Writing Room table, English oak.
- **Zambia** (previously Northern Rhodesia) - Two pairs of bronze brackets for the Mace at the front of the Clerks' Table.
- **Zanzibar** (now a semi-autonomous part of Tanzania) - One silver gilt ashtray.
- **Zimbabwe** (previously Southern Rhodesia) - Two silver gilt inkstands with stationery racks for Clerks' Table in the Chamber made by the Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company Ltd., London, W1.

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**Two donors provided wood and also made the items before they were sent to the UK.

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