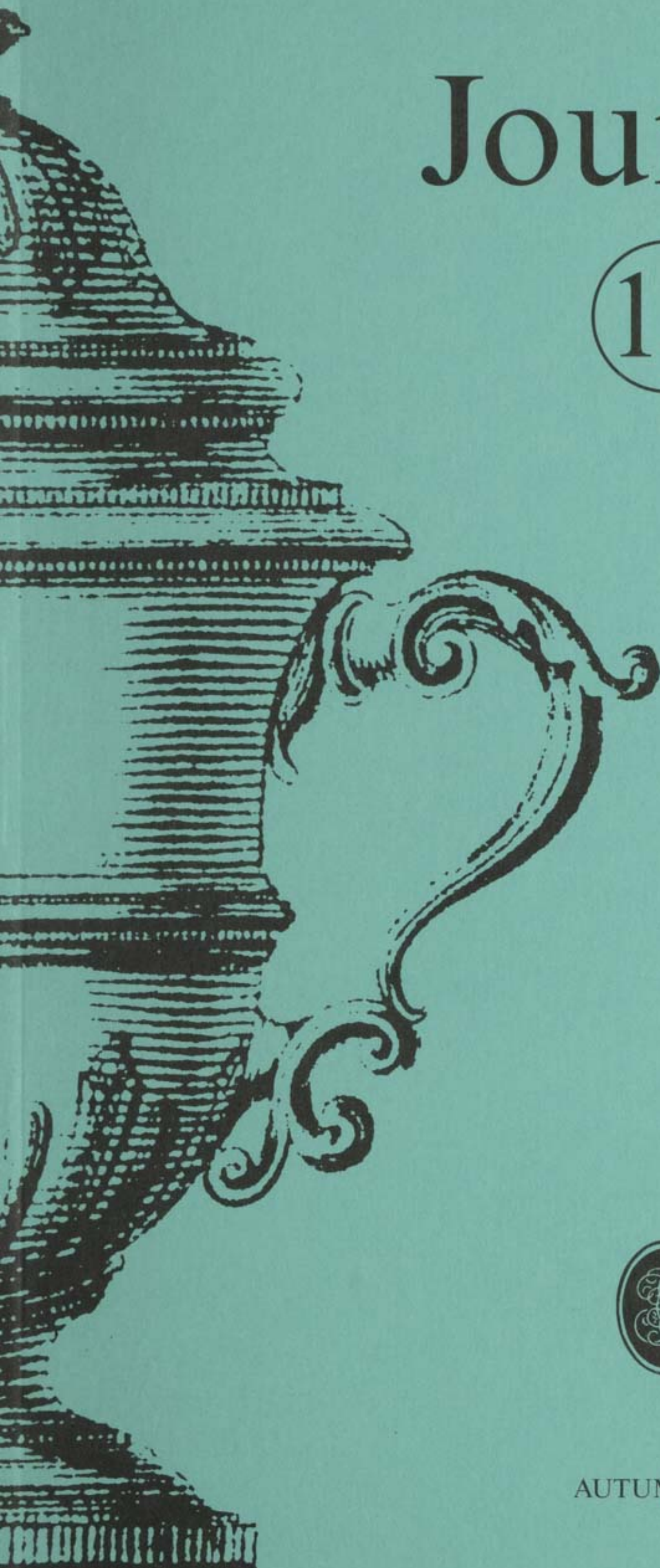


THE  
SILVER SOCIETY

# Journal

13



AUTUMN 2001



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THE SILVER SOCIETY  
JOURNAL is published by  
The Silver Society,  
a registered charity,  
no 279352.  
ISSN 0960-8745.

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Printed in England by  
Antony Rowe Ltd

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## *from the editors ...*

As a general rule, we begin the *Journal* with articles which have been the subject of talks to the Society in the preceding months. Sometimes it happens that a series of extremely successful evenings do not translate well from the spoken to the written word. This, coupled with the fact that in last year's bumper issue we caught up with arrears of unpublished lectures, resulted in there being only one, relatively short, paper to publish. When the file for this *Journal* was found to be empty at the beginning of the year, a message went out to members in the *Newsletter*. It is a testament to the liveliness of the Society and the hard work of the members who responded so splendidly to that call, that this issue includes such a range of writing and interest.

And so, deviating from the norm, this *Journal* begins with contributions from members with 'hands-on' experience of the craft. We would like to encour-

age other members to send in similar short pieces for publication either in the *Journal* or *Newsletter*. As a reminder of how current events affect our subject (for it is easy to get so absorbed in the past, as to forget the present), we then publish two short pieces on collections recently created for political use north and south of the England/Scotland border, before turning to India, where the forces of nature have seriously affected a once-thriving silver trade. Four articles follow on silver from areas that were once under British rule. Thereafter, a roughly chronological order is followed, the last two articles being on problem pieces of the kind we all secretly love because of the challenges they provoke. As always, we end with a selection of our regular features.

The file is once again empty and we look forward to receiving your contributions for the next issue.

*Vanessa Brett and John Culme*

### **In this Journal dates are written in the following styles:**

*Calendar year pre 1752, 1 January – 24 March:*  
1563/4

*Assay year (prior to 1975)*  
1563/64

*More than one calendar year*  
1563-67

### **Recent bullion prices:**

August 2001:

925 standard silver: 2.48 per ounce  
22 carat gold: £160.31 per ounce



# Our contributors

**Karel Citroen** has been a member of the Society since 1960. He is also an Hon Associate, the Goldsmiths' Company and Laureate, the Royal Netherlands Academy of the Sciences. Since 1993 he has been an assistant, the Rembrandt research project.

**Rachel Layton Elwes** is a visiting curator at the Gilbert Collection and a freelance curator and lecturer. Before coming to the UK she was assistant curator of decorative arts at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. She read American studies at Mount Holyoke College and was a McNeil graduate fellow in the Winterthur program at the University of Delaware.

**Christopher English**, OBE, is secretary to the trustees of The Silver Trust.

**John Fallon** is a retired architect who now works as a silversmith. His most recent book is *Marks of London Goldsmiths and Silversmiths 1837-1914*, published in 1992.

**Donald Fennimore**, senior curator of metals at the Winterthur Museum has been a member of the curatorial division there since 1971, when he graduated from the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture. In addition to *Flights of Fancy*, he has written *Metalwork in Early America* (1996), a catalogue of the copper and copper alloys at Winterthur.

**John Forbes** is a liveryman of the Goldsmiths' Company. He joined the staff of the Company in 1946 and was Deputy Warden (head of the assay office) 1953-83. His history of the London Assay Office *Hallmark*, was published in 1999.

**Henry Steuart Fotheringham**, OBE was chairman of the Society 1993-94. He was a member of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art from 1982-94. His researches into Scottish silver, its makers and marks, continues.

**Timothy Kent** is on the Council of the Society. He has written extensively on West Country silver and on spoons.

**Arthur Millner** is a dealer and consultant in the arts of India and the Islamic world based in London.

**Conor O'Brien** lives in Ireland and retired in 1998 from a career in the pharmaceutical industry. He has researched all aspects of old Irish silver for some three decades.

**Piers Percival** is a consultant ophthalmic surgeon in Scarborough. He is particularly interested in spoons and in sixteenth century goldsmiths.

**Anthony Phillips** is international director of silver for Christie's.

**Jeanne Sloane** is director of the New York silver department of Christie's.

**Eric Smith** was manager of S.J. Shrubsole Ltd in London 1956-75 and then director of the silver department of Phillips until his retirement in 1992. He is Hon president of the Silver Spoon Club. He is the author of numerous articles and catalogues, including the silver for the Holburne of Menstrie Museum, Bath (1996).

**Richard Smith** lives in Scotland. He is a descendant of the silversmith Thomas Sadler.

**Thomas Whipham**, CBE is the direct descendant of two eighteenth century goldsmiths, Thomas Whipham I and Thomas Whipham II, both Prime Wardens. He was admitted to the freedom of the Goldsmiths' Company by redemption in 1947 and elected to the livery in 1973.



# Members who make silver

Within the Society we have members who are professional silversmiths. One of these, Bryan Savage, talked to the Society in June about his work. He did a traditional apprenticeship of five years with Eric Holmes, then worked in London and Birmingham before setting up his own business. In addition there are those who might describe themselves as designer silversmiths; they are usually self-employed, having been trained at one or more colleges of art; at the June meeting last year three of them, who are not Society members, came to talk about their work. Many of this country's leading silversmiths have contributed to the collections made for 10 Downing Street and Bute House illustrated on pages 9–11.

There are also several members who make silver for pleasure, having studied part-time, very often at evening classes. Four of them write about their interest here.

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## Ronald Grant

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The first atom-bomb was dropped the day I got married; six months later I was de-mobbed and with a small salary I had the task of setting up home. Finances were difficult but we all need a little luxury in life and we decided that we would have solid silver spoons and forks, preferably antique, for our table. Much of the little spare time I had was spent chasing round the antique and junk-shops of north London. When I eventually became a principal in General Practice and dragged myself out of debt I thought that it would be nice to drink from silver as well as eat with it. I bought some goblets but they were new, machine-made and not so good to use as I hoped; antique tumblers, I thought, would be much better. Such antique tumblers as I could find turned out to be thin, flimsy, repaired or far too expensive.

In the course of collecting flatware I began to wonder how silver was worked, so it was only a short step to decide to have a go at making silver beakers and later tumblers, myself. I signed up for metalworking evening classes, once a week, at Keswick, but that packed up after only two terms and I continued at Cockermouth for the next year. Evening classes only ran if a dozen or more 'students' signed up, so progress was slow, as dividing the two-hour session by twelve meant that one only got ten minutes of tuition per session if one was lucky. At Keswick we all started by making a copper ashtray; I still have mine, which shows clearly the change from the master's planishing marks to those of a first-timer. I graduated at

Cockermouth to gilding metal before daring to put hammer to silver. It took a whole term to raise my first pair of beakers.

Having absorbed the basic theory and practice I set up my own workshop in my cellar, buying a bottom stake and a beautiful old tinsmith's T-stake for a very small sum from the closed-down workshop of a local ironmonger; part of the bottom end of a tree-trunk from the men who were cutting down an old tree from the field opposite my house; converting an old washing machine into a revolving hearth for annealing and its motor into a polisher; polishing the end of an old tack-hammer for planishing. All I needed to buy were some boxwood mallets to make into raising hammers. My butane paint-stripper was easily modified as an annealing torch.

Immediately after retiring from full-time medical practice I spent two terms in art school, and was therefore aware that the approved approach to any artefact was to make a design first and then work to it. Silver to me was always tactile and the design was finished only when the object felt right in the hand and passed the test of being pleasing to use. This has been my criterion ever since.

A variety of shapes and sizes were turned out in the next year or two, some passing the tactile test better than others. It had not occurred to me until then that I was making objects which would last for many years and some would have to be given away or sold. Fortunately a friend asked if he could buy a pair, so I was in business! I joined a local guild of craftsmen and tried an outlet through a local art gallery, but nei-



1



2





3

ther was really successful. Not being dependent on sales for my livelihood I could work or leave it at any time, and irregular work suited my lifestyle.

When I had a little spare cash, I thought it would be nice to make a pair of tumblers in solid gold. So I rang up Johnson Matthey and asked for a pair of suitable circles. Gold was then strictly controlled. What courses had I passed; was I running a fully commercial enterprise? Having sold a few beakers, I could honestly say that it was a commercial business but I was unable to show any certificate. I sent them a pair of beakers to demonstrate my ability and they finally agreed to supply me with gold. I opted for their 22-carat DS alloy – soft as butter, lovely to work!

My most beautiful set of tumblers was a dozen for a special birthday. [3] 72oz of 22-carat gold, with the family crest engraved on each tumbler, in a specially made box, was quite a sight! I sometimes wonder what happened to them, but am a little too shy to ask.

And so it has continued. As I get older I have thought many times of giving up my metalwork; but then someone comes along and flatters me by begging for a suitable present for a birthday or a christening and I start all over again. As I write this I still have a dozen beakers and tumblers in production, but I am getting slower and lazier, and when I get these marked I may put my hammers away.

Michael Walford

In my working career I was a chartered engineer making heavy machinery mainly for the oil refining and steelworks industries. Sometime before my retirement



4 Mace, height approx. 25cm (10in).

I started taking evening classes run by the metalwork teacher at the local comprehensive school. Pressure of work built up and until 1982, when I retired, I made nothing.

I had always had an interest in Georgian silver and had made some modest purchases annually, mainly table silver, to complement an exquisite Georgian featheredge set of cutlery which had been a wedding present to my mother from her father. I guess it was in my genes, as my grandfather was a silversmith and had had a retail shop in Old Bond Street for all his working life. In 1982 I then applied and joined the Sir John Cass College in Whitechapel and started silver-smithing in earnest.

At the Cass, where I still am, now a part of the London Guildhall University, I took classes in silversmithing (smallworkers) with a view to taking the City & Guilds certificates. After succeeding with the Craft and Advanced certificates I then joined engraving and chasing classes. In order to provide myself with the basic shapes for chasing and engraving I set up a workshop at home in the passage close by the back door. Gradually my wife's gardening interests grew to the extent that I decided to move outside and converted a stable into a workshop with proper heating and a water supply, etc.

Before getting into my own outside workshop I had made the acquaintance of Douglas Lincoln, who ran regular classes at his home in Winchester. I attended these regularly over several years until in 1998 he



5 Pair of candlesticks, height approx. 30cm (11½in).



moved away. When this happened the group who had met in Winchester came to me instead. We all remain together and still meet at my house once a week. In addition we maintain contact with Doug Lincoln as he now takes a class at the Jewellery & Silver Society of Oxford (JASSO) who run a small workshop in Abingdon. Over the years I have attended classes at the Cass with David Murray, John Norgate, Stanley Reese, Wayne Parrott, Brendan Lawler, Frank Beck and Gavin O'Leary.

What do I make? Mostly beakers, tumbler cups, dishes, candlesticks, [5] rose bowls, chased wine coasters and boxes with engraved or chased lids. All are generally hand raised. During 2000 I was commissioned to make a mace [4] for a new City livery company. Over the years I have also had a number of commissions and have made several pieces of ritual silver for the Jewish community in Reading and also Hobart, Tasmania.

Several times I have submitted some of my pieces for the Goldsmiths' exhibition in March but have not as yet been a prize-winner. From my time at the Cass I now have achieved City & Guilds advanced silver-smithing, advanced chasing and I hope to have advanced engraving under my belt this year.

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#### Harry Heath

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This article has been prompted by a request from Vanessa Brett, addressed to members who have actually put a hammer to silver. The suggested title was 'Members wot make' but I have chosen to widen the scope to record how my interest in silver first arose and how that interest led me to want to learn how to make. I should here make clear that I am no longer one that makes but rather one that did make, for I have had to accept that the sharpness of the eye and the steadiness of the hand that I once enjoyed have ceased to be among my attributes.

My interest began some thirty years ago. I was still serving and had reached that level of one's own incompetence where it must have become clear to the Army's military secretary that the range of qualifications this author offered was making it difficult to find for him a desk that he could command without inflicting too much damage upon the efficiency of the service. I was sent on what was known as 'gardening leave'. So it was that I one day found myself in Epsom outside a hall where there was to be an auction. Looking around the artefacts to be sold, my eye was taken by four teaspoons with fancy patterns on the back of the bowl. I was assured that they were of silver and I acquired them for the cost of a bottle of wine. I had become a collector!

By dint of visits to libraries I learned that the marks on the stem were known as hallmarks, that the makers might be identified from a large tome written by a gentleman called Jackson, that the spoons had been made in the eighteenth century, that they were known

to collectors as 'fancy backs' and that the patterns on the reverse of the bowl were probably allusions to events of the period in which they were made. My interest burgeoned and I began to seek out not only more of these pretty things but also other spoons of that and earlier periods. My next appointment was to the Ministry of Defence in Berkeley Square. Lunch breaks could now be spent at the larger auction houses where those who were employed in the silver departments were always very helpful. I soon became confident enough to venture into markets where not infrequently I would find silver spoons whose provenance and/or quality was better recognised by me than by the seller. I still had little idea how a spoon had been made nor did such terms as forging, raising or planishing make much impact upon me.

It was my acquaintance with a professional silver-smith, who was prepared to apply his skill in minor work such as straightening a stem, that first aroused my desire to work in silver. I was fortunate to obtain a place on a part-time course at the Sir John Cass School of Art in Aldgate. On my first appearance I was put to work cutting a circle of gilding metal (an alloy with many of the workable characteristics of silver) with a guillotine prior to being instructed how this could be raised into the shape of a shallow bowl. Although the teacher must have recognised my inaptitude, he was kind enough to utter nothing but encouragement. After several essays with gilding metal, producing small items such as shallow bowls and napkin rings, I felt that I should venture into working with silver. I had realised that, if I was to progress, I should possess my own tools and not be dependent upon those provided (and competed for by my fellow students) at the school. So I became a customer of a tool shop in Hatton Garden where I acquired hammers for raising, planishing and forging, files, snips for cutting sheet, and other tools. For my silver and solder of various grades, I went to Blundell's in Wardour Street.

My first serious project was a bowl of some 23cm (8in) diameter, based on a Jensen design seen in a shop in Bond Street. The shopkeeper was most helpful (perhaps mistaking me for a potential customer) in providing me with a photograph and the dimensions of the bowl. Little did I know that the 'S' curve of the sides was to be a rather difficult raising job for a beginner, entailing repeated courses with a raising hammer on one or more stakes and much annealing. With considerable help from the staff, the body of the bowl emerged to an acceptable shape. The next step was one that I have always found to be very pleasing – the planishing of the body to remove the dents of my heavy-handed raising and the creation of a smooth surface showing a regular pattern of planishing marks. It was at this juncture that I learned for the first time of the dreaded "firestain", a discolouration of the metal caused by excessive heating in the course of annealing and of the extent of polishing required to remove that discolouration. Later I was to learn that one could use a paste (I think it was called 'Argotec') that would



go some way to protecting the metal during annealing. There remained only the circular foot to be made and soldered on. "Only" did I say? This first job of soldering silver created an entirely new learning course. Shaping and soldering the ring foot, cutting 'stitches' to hold it central upon the base of the body during the soldering operation, and the control of the gas torch to set the solder flowing around the junction of foot and body without melting the solder already holding the ring foot together, was all too much for me. Before I had completed what was should have been a simple task, I had made a significant contribution to my box of offcuts and pieces of spoiled silver which was to grow over the coming years! I had learned that there is solder and solder and that in a job necessitating two or three soldering operations, the choice of solder of different melting points and the skilful control of the heat of the torch is critical. There still remained much to do. The piece was now ready for polishing but I was advised to leave this until it had been to the Hall for marking. Marking! Marking what? So it was that 'HWH in a rounded rectangle' entered the records of Foster Lane and is still registered there.

I still had not made a spoon. Soon I discovered what for me has been the most satisfying of all silver-smithing operations – the stretching and spreading of an ingot into a blank comprising a stem, sturdy shoulders and a flat bowl-shaped end of good gauge which can then be struck into a piece of lead with a spoon stake to produce a perfectly symmetrical bowl. I was once told that a commercially employed smith, in the days before machine stamping, would be expected to produce a spoon blank from an ingot in six minutes. I usually took a little longer! Over the years, as my tribe of grandchildren expanded, I have been able to signal the arrival of each with a spoon bearing granddad's hallmark. Whether these have been be treasured or lost I prefer not to know!

Chasing and engraving never came into my work. The only surface decoration that I used for spoon terminals and the flat rim of bowls was simple texturing. This required no more than a hammerhead cut with grooves (any old hammer could be used) to be struck on the terminal of a spoon (conforming to the longitudinal axis of the stem) or on the rim of a bowl (conforming to the line of a diameter).

As I gained experience, I went on to produce further pieces. These included bowls, tumbler cups, a coaster and a variety of flatware. A pair of salad servers with textured terminals, based upon a pair in stainless steel, bought during a visit to Copenhagen many years previously, gave me particular satisfaction. There was no stake in the School large enough to strike the bowls at one blow and these had to be shaped by raising over separate stakes to give the correct curvature. They are an example of the degree to which improvisation plays its part in the workshop. All that I made (apart from the grandchildren's spoons and a few pairs of cuff links) I still possess for, having created something, I

have been too immodestly pleased with my achievement ever to part with it.

Not the least benefit of my short experience at the bench has been an enhanced awareness of the difficulties faced by early smiths. For them no fluorescent lighting, gas torches or powered polishing wheels. So it is that when I view a hand-made piece, my interest centres as much upon the method of production as upon the artistic merits of the design or whether the maker had once run off with the vicar's wife!

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### John Fallon

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If ever a survey were to be conducted into how Silver Society members became involved in the world of antique and modern silverware, I suspect their answers would be as varied as the number of people interviewed. I first became fascinated with the contents of antique shops at the age of eleven but my purchasing power was limited to half-a-crown a week pocket money. Even so I managed to acquire a few treasured items, some of which I still possess: a nineteenth century German cavalry sword and a large silver sugar bowl, each bought for 5s; also, found in a chest-of-drawers for 1s each, four engraved gilt medals which subsequently turned out to be made of 9ct gold. Gradually my principal field of interest became silverware but, although I was conversant with Bradbury's pocket book of hallmarks, I was unable to identify the majority of maker's marks. This led me into many years of research and the eventual publication of my books on London makers' marks.

In parallel with my research I developed an interest in the manufacture of silverware and, as a result, I attended my first silversmithing course at West Dean College, Chichester, in 1977. Since then I have produced a wide variety of domestic articles, including boxes, bowls and jugs of various designs, sauceboats and tureens, wine goblets and ewers, tankards, teapots and coffee pots.

All these articles were hand raised from silver sheet by much hammering interspersed with annealing. Hammering was always the silversmith's traditional method for raising silverware but, with the introduction of spinning and machine stamping, this procedure has become uneconomical for multiple production work. Even so, it still remains a viable alternative for the production of individual objects. Raising silver sheet into circular or oval shapes which closely follow the profiles on one's design drawings, is not as easy as it looks. The ability to hammer the silver sheet over a mandrel or stake, so that the metal flows into the correct shape, is an acquired skill most satisfying when achieved. The coffee pot [6 & 7] weighs 35oz and took approximately 240 hours to make by these traditional methods. Obviously this would be uneconomical in today's manufacturing world, where profit is paramount. The pot was constructed as follows.





6

The pedestal foot commenced as a silver disc (125mm x 1.1mm thick) which I hammer raised into its final shape and soldered onto a circle of rectangular wire to form a plinth. The main body (265mm disc x 1.1mm) was again raised by hammering over various shaped mandrels. With each round of hammering the silver work-hardened and had to be annealed in order to make it malleable again. The concave collar and lower portion of the lid evolved from a 150mm disc of which only a 25mm wide band around the perimeter was raised to form the collar. The remaining flat central area was cut out and raised separately to form the lower portion of the lid. The lid's upper portion was a separate disc raised to exactly the same diameter as the lower portion so that when I turned it upside down, I was able to solder it onto the matching edge of the lower portion. On top of this composite lid, I soldered a circle of beaded wire and a domed disc. This was topped with a pine cone finial cast by the 'lost wax process' from a wax model which I carved myself.

The lid was attached to the coffee pot by a 'secret' hinge typical of the late eighteenth century. It was made in the usual way with silver knuckles cut from



7

thick-walled tubing having a small diameter spindle-hole. Once the hinge had been assembled and soldered onto both the lid and the main body, the curved portion of each knuckle standing proud of the surrounding lid was filed down to create a continuous flat top across both the hinge and the surrounding lid, thereby creating the 'secret' effect. Producing the curved spout was an interesting challenge. First I made a mould for each half of the spout out of two blocks of beechwood, each profiled to the curved central line of the proposed spout. In one of these curved faces I gouged out the shape of the spout's lower half and likewise the spout's upper half in the other block. Over each gouged recess I cramped a 50x175mm strip of silver and gradually hammered each strip into its recess using various shaped metal punches. After much hammering and annealing the strips took on their required shape and the two halves were then soldered together. The ferrules were two strips of silver hammered into circles and seam-soldered, whilst the handle I carved out of a surplus piece of American black walnut skirting board from a property in Grosvenor Square.

After polishing the completed coffee pot, I decorated it with bright-cut engraving typical of the 1790s. Engraving is another specialist craft requiring much care and concentration since any slip of the graver can cause considerable surface damage, proving difficult to erase.

Overall, my efforts produced a reasonable reproduction of a late eighteenth century coffee pot. It blends in well with antique silverware of the period and, at the same time, it gives me considerable satisfaction to know that I produced such a piece with my own hands.



# The Bute House silver collection

The Scottish Goldsmiths Trust was established in 1999 by the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of the City of Edinburgh to promote and support the education of the art and craft of Scotland's gold and silversmith heritage.

The Trust assists art colleges in giving their students experience working with precious metals. It promotes the understanding of the history of hallmarking and sponsors exhibitions throughout the world. It is also responsible for the Millennium Collection for Bute House which will be used at the official residence of the First Minister in Scotland. The collection will be exhibited throughout the world when not otherwise in use.

The collection has been made by fifteen Scottish designer/silversmiths. When Michael Laing, Deacon of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths, handed the collection into the ownership of the Scottish Goldsmiths Trust earlier this year, he commented that 'the silver works and is functional, [it is] to be used and enjoyed at the most influential table in Scotland ... it reflects a confident, modern and exciting Scotland'.

The silversmiths, and the pieces they have made for the collection, are as follows:

Malcolm Appleby	Table centrepiece
Adrian Hope	Cutlery
Gordon Burnett	Clock
Sarah Cave	Condiment set
John Creed	Pair of floor-standing candleholders
Maureen Edgar	Condiment set
Marion Kane	Pair of vases
William Kird	Rose or fruit bowl
Michael Lloyd	Pair of water jugs
Helen Marriott	Two pairs of candlesticks
Grant McCaig	Fruit bowl
Roger Millar	Wine cooler/ice bucket
Linda Robertson	Condiment set
Graham Stewart	Pair of claret jugs
Nicola Williams	Epergne and candlesticks

## Acknowledgement

*Photographs by Shannon Tofts, Edinburgh.*

*See p136 for details of the catalogue of the collection.*



1 *Pair of claret jugs, Graham Stewart (born 1955).*



2 *Pair of vases, Marion Kane (born 1975).*



# The Silver Trust

Christopher English

In June 2000 members of the Society visited 10 Downing Street. This article gives the background to the formation of the collection there, which is still being developed. John Wonnacott's portrait of John Major, which depicts some of the silver, was reproduced in last year's *Journal*.

It is a strange fact of British public life that until 1987, when The Silver Trust was established, 10 Downing Street was not equipped with silver for the sole use of the Prime Minister. He had to take his turn with other ministers to use silver supplied by the Government Hospitality Unit. The Silver Trust was founded to do two things - to broaden the public knowledge of British silver and to furnish No10 with a suite of silver for the Prime Minister's use. Its trustees decided that, rather than buy second-hand silver that had no relevance to the house, they would commission practising British silversmiths. It was also the Trust's aim that a number of leading British silversmiths should be involved in the project. The collection is now acknowledged as one of the more important collections of silver in the United Kingdom

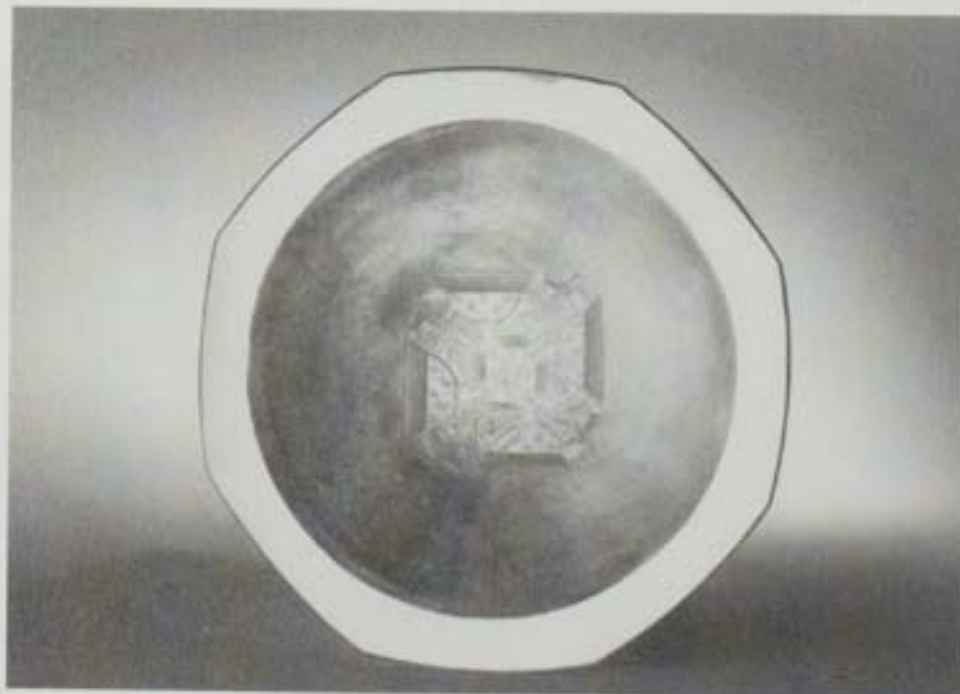
It should be emphasised that none of this would have been possible without an immensely generous benefactor. The only conditions placed on the gift were the total anonymity of the donor and that the amount of the gift should not be disclosed. It is hard to imagine a more undemanding benefactor and the Trust is grateful for this wonderful initial boost.

When the silver was exhibited at Mappin & Webb in Regent Street, London, in the summer 2000, John

Russell Taylor wrote in *The Times*

The happiest aspect of the work on display is its stylistic harmony. Each silversmith has his or her own style, but the thin line is miraculously trodden between something so traditional as to become pastiche, and something determinedly modern as to stick out like a sore thumb.

From the start the founding trustees were anxious that there should be a harmony to the collection and that it should fit well within its chosen home, 10 Downing Street. They also wanted as many British silversmiths as possible to be included in the enterprise. A small commissioning committee was formed to decide on the content of the collection and recommend to the trustees the designs they felt were compatible with their ideals. Gerald Benney and Rosemary Ransome Wallis, curator of the Goldsmiths' Company, were invited to become advisers to the Trust. Their brief was (and is) to assist the commissioning committee on the choice of silversmiths, to help set a budget for the commissions and to advise on technical matters relating to these commissions. The commissioning committee has remained essentially the same since its formation in 1987, namely Lady (Mary) Henderson, Lady Falkender, Rupert



1 left: Fruit stand, Michael Lloyd, 1997, height: 21.5cm (8½in).



2 right: Fruit stand, Toby Russell, 1996, height: 24cm (9½in).





Hambro and, until her death in 1996, Jean Muir. This group has guided the selection of pieces. In order to retain the harmony of the collection, the trustees prefer in all instances to control the design and commission of additions to the collection.

The task that faced them was complicated by the varied but very definite requirements for dining at No10. The state dining room is normally furnished with a large mahogany table measuring 36x5ft which seats up to thirty-four guests. For a state banquet this is replaced with a horseshoe trestle with sprigs only 27in wide, which seats sixty-five guests. The small dining room, which the Prime Minister uses for less formal government entertaining, is furnished with a table that seats twelve.

The committee, mindful of these parameters, has always felt that the commissioning brief should be as simple as possible to ensure that the silversmiths in no way feel that their artistic freedom is being constrained. The brief indicates the piece the silversmith is expected to design, the size, the budget and that any decoration should have some relevance to the United Kingdom. Furthermore they are encouraged to use other metals and materials if they are so inclined. The different skills within the craft are also exploited; thus there are fine examples of chasing, engraving, spinning, raising, modelling and electroforming. However the single most important factor in the commissions is that all the silver must be practical, as it is used on a regular basis in Downing Street. The trustees aim to add at least one new piece to the collection each year and at the moment two new commissions are in the early stages of discussion.

Initially the silversmiths are invited by letter to indicate their interest in a commission and to submit ideas for their design. When it is felt a particular design is in accordance with the thoughts of the committee the silversmith is asked to produce working drawings which are then approved by the commissioning committee and submitted to a full meeting of the trustees for their agreement. Otherwise the silversmith is asked to modify the design and the revised drawing is then reconsidered. Normally six months is allowed for the completion of commissions.

Following consultation with Rosemary Ransome Wallis and Gerald Benney a number of silversmiths were initially selected. Although many of the silversmiths were capable of making any piece in the collection, it was felt that some had skills suited to a particular item. The first commission was the cruet set by Malcolm Appleby in 1987. At the end of 1991, because of the donation already mentioned, we were able to commission fifteen of the country's leading silversmiths to produce the foundation pieces of the collection. Commissions were given to Brian Asquith, Gerald Benney, Alex Brogden, Jocelyn Burton, Kevin Coates, Lexi Dick, Richard Fox, Rod Kelly, Michael Lloyd, Grant Macdonald, Hector Miller, Martin Pugh, Keith Redfern, Michael Rowe and Robert Welch. Later commissions were given to Julian Cross,

Howard Fenn, Toby Russell, Michael Shorer and Hamilton & Inches.

A novel aspect of the collection is the collection of silver underplates. These were the result of a competition held in conjunction with *The Daily Telegraph Magazine* and the Royal College of Art. It was hoped the competition would stimulate student interest in the craft. The competition was open to anyone who felt they had design ability. There were over five hundred entries and the designs submitted were as varied and idiosyncratic as the electorate, but with a strong emphasis on British cultural iconography. These underplates have become wonderful conversation pieces for the Prime Minister's guests and allow him to introduce the collection. They are all the more interesting as many of them are by complete amateurs. Many of the designs were chosen on the basis of their originality and wit. A particular favourite is the 'Pea Plate' by Andrew Marsden. It shows an open pea pod with an empty space so that the guest may push a pea through the maze to fill it.

Readers will be familiar with the skills employed in this enterprise but I would like to draw your attention to two commissions in the collection: the fruit stands by Toby Russell and candelabra by Alex Brogden.

The Russell fruit stands are immensely challenging. They are constructed from two single sheets of silver. The design is first laid on a flat sheet of silver and the score lines of the panels are scribed onto the sheet with an extra panel so that on forming the bowl the tension can be maintained for the main seam. The lines are then scored at the precise angles and depths (previously calculated). The sheet is then annealed and the bowl formed by folding along the score lines.

The Brogden candelabra, which on first inspection appear wonderfully chased pieces, are in fact electroformed. This method, which has been greatly refined with much more reliable results than previously, I believe deserves more publicity. It is an ideal way of reducing the cost of manufacture and allows a much wider market for the designer silversmith.

Also to be remembered are the craftsmen who have helped in the finishing of these commissions. The polishers, engravers, spinners, casters, electroformers and chasers are each skilled in their own right and without their skills the pieces would not be so glorious.



3 One of a pair of candelabra, Alex Brogden, 1991, height: 53cm (21in).



4 Dining room of 10 Downing Street, the table laid for a luncheon given by John Major in honour of Nelson Mandela on 10 July 1996.



# Bhuj silver

Arthur Millner

1. For a teapot in the style of a Christopher Dresser design, see, Wynyard Wilkinson, *Indian Silver 1858-1947*, London 1999, pl 122.

2. *idem*.

3. English makers also used this form, for example Edward Barnard & Sons in the 1860s.

At the beginning of this year, our television screens and newspapers were filled with news of another disaster: an earthquake in a remote corner of western India near the Pakistani border, with its epicentre at the city of Bhuj. One of the details which emerged in the reports was the fact the area affected was relatively prosperous (unlike the earlier disaster zone, Orissa, on the other side of the subcontinent), a fact not unconnected with the familiarity of the name to connoisseurs of Indian silver. Although from the viewpoint of the modern tourist the district of Cutch seems remote and is little visited, its position in pre-partition days, on the coast between the ports of Bombay and Karachi and with easy access to other trading centres in the Arabian Sea, ensured abundant and diverse markets for its goods.

Cutch is now part of the modern Indian state of Gujarat, but it is a distinct geographical entity, almost an island, and indeed was a separate state before independence. Apart from the hilly area around the city of Bhuj itself, the land is low lying and marshy and forms part of the Indus delta. In earlier times agriculture played a much larger part in the economy, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century another even more severe earthquake diverted the river northwards towards Karachi. Thus crafts, chiefly textiles and silver, gained in relative importance in the local economy and, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, enjoyed strong support from the ruling family.

Silver was produced all over India for the British market, home and expatriate, during the nineteenth century, catering for a huge demand for objects such as teaset, commemorative salvers and ornamental

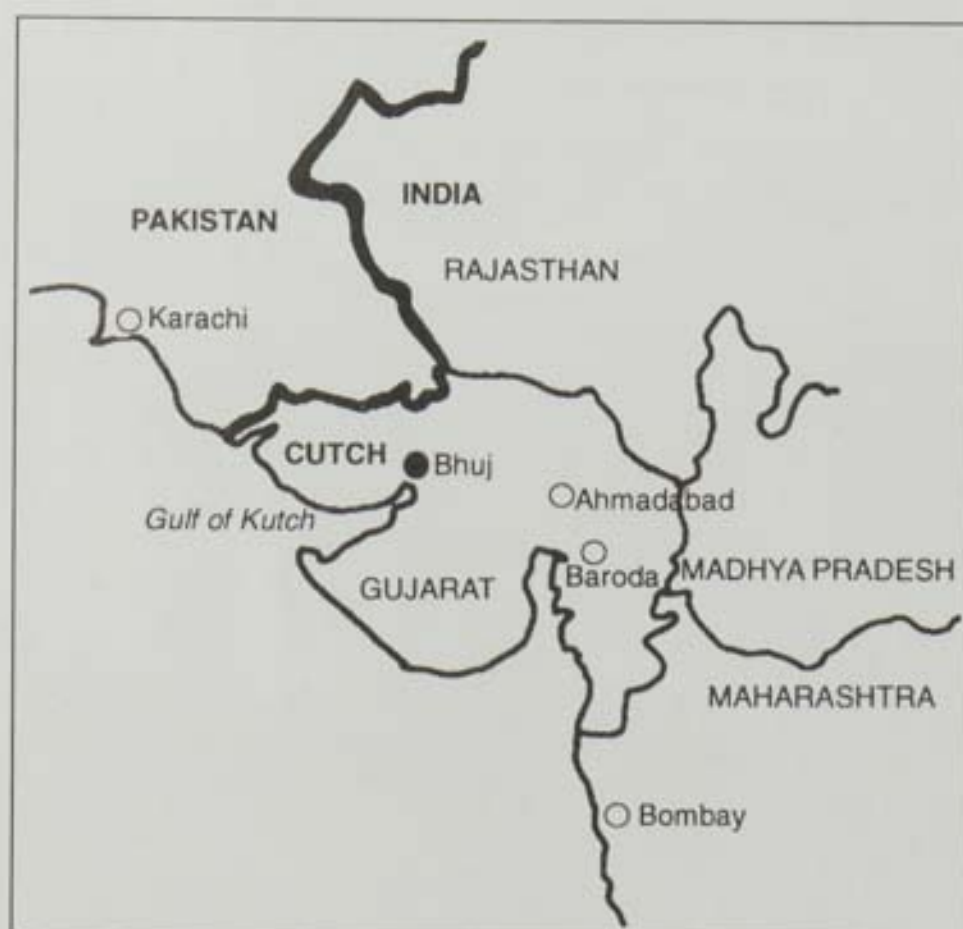
pieces. The Mughal rulers and the provincial courts had by this time all but disappeared as patrons, and indigenous Indian demand for silver was largely restricted to traditional, primarily religious use. Many of the maharajas had fabulous wealth, but they generally preferred to spend their money on luxury goods imported from Britain and France. It was the growth of an expatriate British middle class in India which led to demand for objects to perform familiar, western functions, yet to have a local character, the latter primarily manifested in the decoration.

The golden age of Cutch silver is the last three decades of the nineteenth century, when most of the finest objects in the characteristic style were produced. Typical is the finely chased foliate scrollwork interspersed with acutely observed wild animals or hunting scenes, the edges lined with an acanthus border. While the decoration draws on indigenous traditions, the forms, for reasons of patronage mentioned above, are generally European. The scrolling foliage is strongly reminiscent both of early Gujarati architecture, such as the fifteenth century Sidi Sayyid Mosque in Ahmedabad and of the floral decoration on Cutch silk embroidered cotton textiles, while the hunting scenes are clearly inspired by Mughal miniature painting. As for the forms, tankards, claret jugs, trays and teaset are most common.

The technique was also distinctive, with the decoration being hammered and chased externally, rather than being pushed from the inside out. This gives it a more crisp and solid appearance. Indeed the finest Bhuj silver is often noticeably heavier in construction than silver from other regions, although this is not necessarily the case with pieces from the later phase, made after 1900.

As the reputation for Bhuj silver grew, assisted by its appearance at the series of major international exhibitions which started with the 1851 Great Exhibition, the export market, particularly for the finest pieces, became increasingly important. The London department store, Liberty's, at the time a highly innovative retailer, was a major outlet. Interestingly, there was a modest degree of cross fertilisation between Cutch and the West at the time, for British firms, such as Elkington, catered for huge demand for the Cutch Style by making a range of derivative objects, in brass as arts and crafts style.<sup>1</sup>

The name of Oomersimawji dominates nineteenth and early twentieth century Cutch and indeed, Indian, silver. Coming from a family of leather workers, he and his sons were almost single-handedly responsible for the worldwide reputation of silver from the





region. Most of his work is marked OM Bhuj. Wynyard Wilkinson<sup>2</sup> calls him simply the best silversmith of nineteenth century India. He and his workshop produced a bewildering variety of objects of extraordinary inventiveness and quality. The cream jug [1] exemplifies the attention to detail associated with the OM workshop silver. The relationship between decoration and form is carefully managed, and the lion provides a crucial focus to the design. An example of Oomersimawji's inventiveness is the claret jug [2]. Unlike the usual snake handles which conform to a standard "S" curve, here the cobra coils around the jug in a seemingly random embrace which nevertheless forms a well balanced grip.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, the region was hard hit by famine and silversmiths were amongst the large numbers who emigrated. There is a noticeable tendency to reduce costs in Bhuj silver, with an increase of pictorial medallions rather than the traditional scrolling foliage in the decoration. An example of this later style is a pierced tray marked MR (Mawji Raghavji) dating from about 1910.[3] The decoration comprises a central elephant in a circular roundel surrounded by a border of smaller roundels depicting Mughal emperors and their wives. Outside Cutch the nearest large cities, as centres of wealth,

were inevitable magnets for silversmiths and a diffusion of the Bhuj style of silver was the result. Bombay, Karachi and Ahmadabad all produced silver in the familiar style, with some of the finest examples being made in Karachi.

#### Recommended further reading:

Wynyard Wilkinson, *Indian Silver 1858-1947*, London 1999.

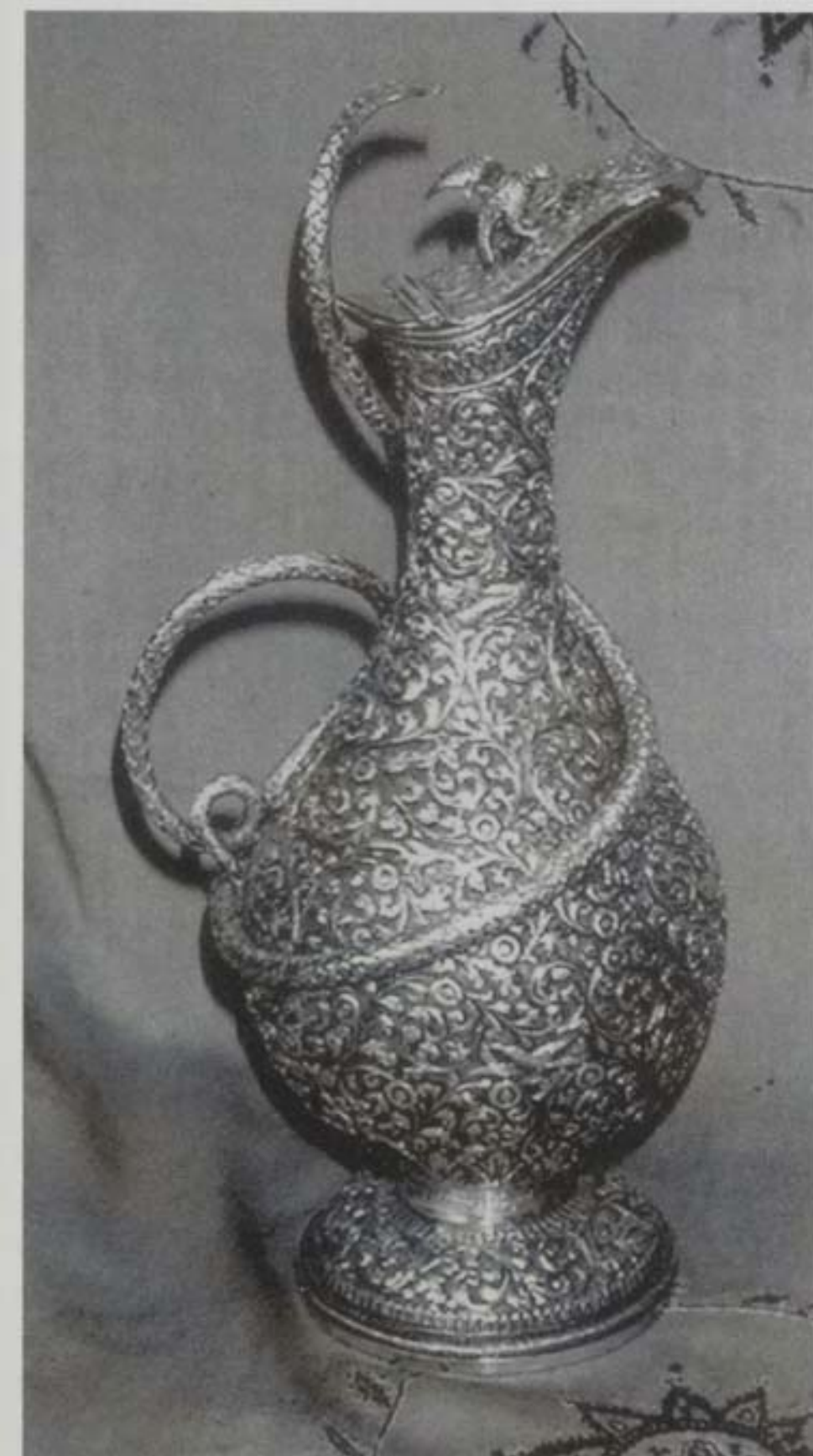
*Metal Marvels: South Indian Handworks*, Porvoo 1993.

George Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India*, London 1880.

George Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi*, Calcutta 1903.



1 Cream jug, Oomersimawji workshop, Bhuj.



2 Claret jug, Oomersimawji workshop, Bhuj. (Courtesy of Indar Pasricha Fine Art)



3 Tray, marked MR for Mawji Raghavji, circa 1910. (Courtesy of Indar Pasricha Fine Art)



# A new addition to African American silver

Rachel Layton Elwes

1. I conducted initial research jointly with Wynyard Wilkinson in order to identify a footed presentation cup marked by Bentzon, subsequently acquired by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See Rachel Layton, 'Peter Bentzon, Silversmith', *The Magazine Antiques*, February 1995; 'Peter Bentzon: A "Mustice" Silversmith in Philadelphia and St Croix', *The International Review of African American Art*, vol 12, no2, 1995, pp30-5; and 'Race, Authenticity and Colonialism: A Mustice Silversmith in Philadelphia and St Croix, 1783-1850', *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, (ed) Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, Routledge, 1998, pp82-94.

2. Maurice Brix, *List of Philadelphia Silversmiths and Allied Artificers, 1682-1850*, Philadelphia 1920; Stephen Ensko, *American Silversmiths and Their Marks II*, New York 1948; Ralph M. Kovel and Terry H. Kovel, *A Directory of American Silver, Pewter and Silver Plate*, New York 1969; Howard Pitcher Okie, *Old Silver and Old Sheffield Plate*, New York 1928; C. Jordan Thorn, *Handbook of American Silver and Pewter Marks*, New York 1949.

3. See David C. Driscoll, *Two Centuries of Black American Art*, New York 1976; Samella Lewis, *Art: African American*, New York 1978; Alain LeRoy Locke, *The Negro in Art*, Washington DC 1940; James A. Porter, *Modern Negro Art*, Washington DC, 1992. Silversmiths of full or partial African descent working in Philadelphia in the first half of the nineteenth century include Henry Bray and Antony Sowerwalt, both listed as silversmiths and 'Persons of Colour' in the 1813 and 1818 Philadelphia directories. Joseph Head, 'Black Man Silversmith', had business transactions with the early nineteenth century Philadelphia silversmith, Samuel Williamson. Ensko's 1948 edition of *American*

Peter Bentzon (circa 1783-after 1850) is the first known African American silversmith to be identified by his own mark. Just prior to my lecture to the Society in March of this year, a previously unknown object by Bentzon came to my attention. This article highlights that object - published here for the first time - and summarises the story of Bentzon's career already described extensively in earlier publications.<sup>1</sup>

Although Bentzon's presence in Philadelphia directories was noted in basic early reference works on American silver, his biography as a silversmith of partial African descent, who came from the Danish West Indies but worked in Philadelphia for half of his career, was previously unknown.<sup>2</sup> Other silversmiths of African descent are known to have worked in early America but as journeymen and apprentices executing or contributing to work that was ultimately marked by other European American silversmiths.<sup>3</sup> These lesser known silversmiths and related craftsmen, like chasers and engravers, were an important part of the craft hierarchy, yet their contributions are rarely named; there are few traces of their existence. It is only through the careful sniffing-out of names in account books, bills, wills, deeds, city directories and other sources that these individuals have begun to emerge. So when I published Bentzon's biography and nine objects bearing his marks, it was another small step toward tracking the history of African American decorative arts. It is now possible to add to that group of objects a significant new discovery, a teapot of about 1817, newly acquired by the Saint Louis Art Museum in Missouri.<sup>4</sup>[2]

Bentzon's biography is summarised here for the purposes of understanding the appearance of the teapot.<sup>5</sup> Born into freedom in St Thomas in about 1783 to a mulatto mother and a white father, Bentzon was called a 'mustice', signifying that his racial background was one quarter African. His mother was free and lived in St Thomas, although her identity is unknown. His father may have been the Norwegian-born lawyer Jacob Bentzon, aged 29 at the time of Bentzon's birth. Defining and enumerating African ancestry was deemed necessary because by the nineteenth century there had emerged in the Danish West Indies an intermediate group of non-European free persons of mixed racial ancestry called 'free coloured'. They were neither slave nor wholly free; together with free blacks the free coloured formed a class whose civil liberties were severely

circumscribed and whose political rights were non-existent.

At the age of eight, in approximately 1791, Peter Bentzon was sent from the West Indies to Philadelphia for his education. He was probably in school for seven years and then served his apprenticeship to an unidentified silversmith from 1799 to 1806. For the next four decades Peter Bentzon lived and worked in Philadelphia and St Croix, intermittently owned by the English and the Danes. He travelled periodically between Philadelphia and St Croix and his movements between the two places can be tracked from records in the Danish Royal Archives and from the Philadelphia National Archives passenger lists in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

The previously identified total of nine known objects marked by Bentzon as well as the full story on his origins in the Danish West Indies and his peripatetic career in St Croix and Philadelphia in the first half of the nineteenth century, are covered in the publications noted above. These objects include a footed presentation cup of 1841, acquired in 1994 by the Philadelphia Museum of Art; two tablespoons - one acquired by the St Croix Historical Society, the other by Derrick Beard, a collector of African American decorative arts; a gold buckle, two pastry wheels and a fish slice all owned privately; and silver drawer pulls on an early classical American sideboard in the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen. The ninth known object marked by Bentzon is a silver teapot of about 1817.[1] Even though he worked in Philadelphia for more than two decades, this teapot is the only piece of silver bearing one of Bentzon's marks that was actually made in America. It is on loan to the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh where it is exhibited in the gallery entitled 'Old World and New'.<sup>7</sup> Both the footed presentation cup and the teapot have been featured by the respective museums as significant additions to their holdings of objects by African American artists, representing multiculturalism and diversity in the decorative arts.<sup>8</sup>

Shortly before my lecture for the Silver Society, a second teapot came to my attention.[2] It is an almost identical twin to the one on loan to the Carnegie [1] and appears to have been made at the same time as part of one commission. David Conradsen and I have attempted to identify the history of ownership of the pair. That work in progress is summarised here.

Both teapots bear the inscription 'Rebecca Dawson'





**1** Teapot, Peter Bentzon, Philadelphia circa 1817, height 17.8cm (7in). (Private Collection, on loan to the Carnegie Museum of Art. Photo: Wayne Gibson)  
**1a** Detail of 'P.BENTZON' marks on the base of the teapot.

on the edge of the base and the cipher 'MC' on the side of the body.[3 & 4] Equally, both are of almost identical dimensions and weights and display similar characteristics such as a cast oval patera boss at the tip of the spout, a carefully worked cartouche-shaped plate inside the cover beneath the hinge and an exquisite acorn finial.<sup>9</sup> Even the acanthus-carved handles, which are both original, are similar.<sup>10</sup> The bodies of each teapot were raised rather than assembled from sheet. Both are highly-crafted objects made at a time when the early mechanisation of the silversmith's workshop in Philadelphia was well underway and hand craftsmanship was a diversion rather than normal practice. Peter Bentzon's mark was struck twice on the base of each object. Each of the marks on the base of the Saint Louis teapot is mis-struck while one mark on the other teapot is chattered. [1a & 2a] There is also an inscribed number '5746' near the marks under the base of both teapots.<sup>11</sup> These physical characteristics demonstrate that the two teapots, both of which have appeared at auction in America within the last nine years, together make a pair.

Pairs of teapots are not peculiar to America during the first half of the nineteenth century. Examples by Joseph Lownes, Samuel Williamson, and Fletcher and Gardiner - all Philadelphia silversmiths - are numerous.<sup>12</sup> But a pair of teapots by an unknown silversmith with a known body of work of only eleven objects might seem extraordinary. The pair by Bentzon was probably a special commission. One year after his return to Philadelphia in 1817<sup>13</sup> Bentzon's described occupation in the Philadelphia directories changed



**2** Teapot, Peter Bentzon, Philadelphia circa 1817, height 17.8cm (7in). (Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum Minority Artists Purchase Fund and donors to the 2000 Art Enrichment Fund, 41: 2001)  
**2a** Detail of 'P.BENTZON' marks on the base of the teapot.

*Silversmiths and Their Marks* (p148) illustrates a mark for Joseph Head as 'HEAD G \* D' but no object with this mark is known today nor is it certain that this is the correct mark for the Joseph Head in question. John Frances, a runaway slave, was a silversmith employed by John Letelier in Philadelphia. Joseph Sonnier, who was in partnership with John Lacazze, is also described as an African American and arrived in Philadelphia from Haiti.

4. In addition to the teapot discussed here, several years ago a spoon marked by Bentzon was identified and is now owned privately in America.

5. Versions of the biographical summary that follows appeared in the previously cited publications on Bentzon dating from 1995-98 but see also H.F. Garde, 'Peter Bentzon - en vestindisk guldsmed', *Personalthistorisk Tidsskrift* 1, 1993, pp.68-77. H.F. Garde (1910-92) was a Danish genealogist who specialised in the history of St Croix. His article is a detailed account of an 1845 court trial held against Peter Bentzon. Bentzon's testimonies from

that trial include evidence of his being 'free coloured' as well as other biographical information. Inge Meyer Antonsen kindly sent me a translated version of Garde's article.

6. Rigsarkivet, Vestindiske lokalarkiver, Christiansted byfoged 1734-1900, Politimester, Protokoller over ankomne og bortrejste personer, 1817; incoming passenger lists, National Archives, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia.

7. This gallery at the Carnegie and the Bentzon teapot on exhibit there is illustrated in Layton, 'Race, Authenticity and Colonialism', p.92, fig 7.5. The theme of the gallery examines the transference of style from the old world to the new in early Anglo-American culture.

8. Glenn C. Tomlinson and Rolando Corpus, 'A Selection of Works by African American Artists in the Philadelphia Museum of Art', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, Winter 1995, vol 90, nos382-83, pp6-7. Even though Bentzon made the footed presentation cup in St Croix in 1841 as a gift from the teachers of a Sunday

School to a retiring English minister, it nonetheless represents the work of a silversmith who also worked in Philadelphia. Prior to its acquisition by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, there was no example of Bentzon's work in an American museum.

9. Only the recently discovered teapot was examined in April 2001. All comparative comments are based on my previous study of the teapot on loan to the Carnegie Museum of Art.

10. Bentzon most likely purchased the fruitwood handles from a supplier of carved handles in Philadelphia. There is a certain uniformity of design with wooden handles for hollowware in Philadelphia in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Although there has been little research in this area the visual record implies that that were probably a small circle of makers supplying the trade.

11. At the very least, the appearance of this identical number indicates that the objects were together at some point. Prior to the appearance of the second pot I presumed this to be an inventory number



of some kind but on both pots is somewhat more conspicuous. I am grateful to Jack Lindsey for his suggestion that the inscribed number could be the final four digits of a standard nine-digit American Social Security number. However, without a specific name and death date, social security numbers cannot be identified; they are confidential within one's lifetime.

12. The artist files in the Decorative Arts Photographic Collection, H.F. DuPont Winterthur Museum, Library and Gardens, contain numerous examples of pairs of teapots from this period.

13. After completing his Philadelphia apprenticeship in 1806, Peter Bentzon went back to St Croix where he worked as a goldsmith and jeweller in Christiansted. For more information on his movements to and from Philadelphia and the West Indies see my articles cited above.

14. I am grateful to Don Fennimore for sharing his thoughts on the engraving. I have not yet examined the inscription and the cipher on the first teapot now at the Carnegie in light of this view that both inscription and cipher on the second pot are by the same hand.

15. In the tax records for the High Street Ward in Philadelphia, where Peter Bentzon lived 1819-22, he was taxed on the value of 'Robert Dawson's dwelling' where he paid \$6 ground rent. Philadelphia City Archives, High Street Ward, 1819, p48 and 1820, p47.

16. Charles C. Dawson, *A Collection of Family Records*, Charleston 1874, pp190-1.

from silversmith to jeweller. This change, together with his limited extant work, I have ascribed to his probable change in focus to smallwork – jewellery and repairs.

### Ownership of the teapots

The identical engraved inscriptions and ciphers on both teapots make excellent evidence for assembling a possible history of ownership of the teapots. Without this, the teapots together would be an anonymous pair. My initial conclusions about the association of the inscription and the cipher have shifted in light of the appearance of the second teapot. I originally disregarded the 'MC' cipher as a later inscription. However, after careful examination of the second teapot under magnification the cipher can be attributed to the same hand and the same date as the inscribed 'Rebecca Dawson' on the foot.<sup>14</sup>

Although my initial research focused on linking Bentzon's career in the West Indies and Philadelphia, I considered fleetingly the inscribed 'Rebecca Dawson' as the possible daughter of a Robert Dawson from whom Bentzon rented premises in Philadelphia at the time of his first return to America from St Croix in 1817.<sup>15</sup> Rebecca Dawson does not appear in Philadelphia census records of 1800, 1810 or 1820 - recorded by head of household only - or in city directories, and initially I did not explore the possible link between Peter Bentzon, Robert and Rebecca Dawson.

Now, with further research using Philadelphia probate and the family history collections at the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Rebecca Dawson (circa 1770-1855) is identified with certainty as the daughter of Robert Dawson (1744-1818), a prominent Quaker merchant and property owner in Philadelphia. On his death, Robert Dawson left substantial legacies, shares and property in and around Philadelphia to his two children Rebecca and Josiah (1772-1858). In turn,

Josiah Dawson, who, like Rebecca, was never married, died with an estate worth over \$300,000. Much of this Dawson left to benevolent concerns popular with Philadelphia Quakers such as the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery. A family history describes Josiah Dawson and it is worth quoting here to raise our understanding of his sister's family.

He served an apprenticeship with John and Elliston Perot, well known tradesmen of Philadelphia but, being of a very timid and retiring disposition, he never went into business. He inherited wealth, which by frugality and judicious management, he largely increased. . . . It partly arose from the great increase in the value of real estate, some of it having been kept for more than one hundred years. . . . He encouraged the accumulation of property through frugality, by precept and example, but devoted his time and fortune to works of beneficence and charity.<sup>16</sup>

No will survives for Rebecca Dawson but we can still build up a fairly clear picture of her family background and probable activities as a Quaker in post-Revolutionary Philadelphia. We believe that she commissioned the pair of teapots from Peter Bentzon in about 1817.

The recipient of the pair of teapots is likely to have been a woman with the initials 'MC' and there happen to be several candidates in families connected by marriage to the Dawsons. Rebecca Dawson's grandmother, Mary Warner, married firstly Rebecca's grandfather Robert Dawson and had two sons, William and Robert (Rebecca's father). She married secondly, in 1751, George Morrison. (At the time of this second marriage her sons were seven and ten years old.) One of the children from that second marriage was Mary Morrison, Robert Dawson's half sister, who married Josiah Langdale Coates. Her granddaughter and namesake, Mary Coates (1815-1913), is a likely recipient of the pair of Bentzon teapots, perhaps as a gift around the time of her birth.

Mary Coates and Rebecca Dawson were first cousins once removed, Rebecca Dawson being the first cousin of Mary Coates' father, George Morrison Coates (1779-1868). There are other possibilities to continue investigating, other individuals with the initials 'MC' in branches of the Coates' family: Mary Horner Coates, wife of Josiah Coates (1788-1850) - another first cousin of Rebecca Dawson - or perhaps one of their children. Though more distantly con-



3 left: Detail of 'Rebecca Dawson' inscription and 'MC' cipher on the teapot in fig. 2.



4 right: Detail of 'Rebecca Dawson' inscription on the teapot in fig. 1.



nected to Rebecca Dawson, 'MC' might also stand for Mary Coates, first wife of John Reynell Coates (circa 1778-1842) or their daughter Mary Coates (born before 1810); or Morton Coates, (born 1802), child of John Reynell Coates and his second wife Sarah Morton. Fortunately there is much material that survives about the Coates family, as they were in Philadelphia well before the War of Independence and were active in the Society of Friends and its associated benevolent charities.

At this point in our research it is speculation to identify Mary Coates (1815-1913) as the recipient of the Bentzon teapots. In her *Family Memorials and Recollections or Aunt Mary's Patchwork*, there is no mention of a pair of teapots though there are brief descriptions of silver objects interpreted as pre-Revolutionary family heirlooms of antiquarian interest.<sup>17</sup> Her will of 1913, whilst leaving a large estate, does not specify items of plate. Nonetheless, her namesake and grandmother, Mary Morrison Coates (the aunt of Rebecca Dawson), was clearly a family figurehead as according to the description by her granddaughter,

... our grandmother, Mary Coates, whose name I bear ... died being nearly 90 years old, and having survived her husband thirty-three years. She was a woman of much strength of character, with clear judgement, strong intellect and great determination and fortitude...<sup>18</sup>

With this close association between the spinster Rebecca Dawson, her formidable Coates aunt and her cousins, a probable narrative begins to emerge. It should also not be overlooked that a member of the Dawson family happens to have bequeathed a pair of silver teapots in her will. In 1821, Elizabeth Dawson, widow of William Dawson (Rebecca's uncle) is unlikely to have left the pair of Bentzon teapots, but the event does demonstrate a family proclivity toward pinpointing a pair of teapots as a unit worth setting apart.

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### Peter Bentzon as an African American

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Whether Rebecca Dawson's choice of Peter Bentzon reflects the possibility that she was aware of his African ancestry is also uncertain. In other words, did she make a conscious decision to patronise a black silversmith? Certainly the Dawson family, and Josiah Dawson in particular, took an interest in the abolitionist movement, but whether this was commonplace for a Quaker family of their standing or conspicuous in their level of support is also unclear. There is still no evidence to indicate that Peter Bentzon's identity as a man of partial African descent was known to his Philadelphia landlord and clientele. Bentzon's wife, Rachel (de la Motta) Bentzon was also termed a 'mustice' in St Croix, indicating that she was the offspring of a mulatto and a white European. His family therefore was likely to be of a light complexion, and, as I have concluded previously, was perhaps passing as

white in Philadelphia.

Peter Bentzon's biography and his existence in Philadelphia can throw the issue of nationality and racial categorisation into some confusion. His classification as an African American is as complex as history itself. Born in St Croix under Danish rule would make him a citizen of the Danish crown. He never applied to be naturalised as an American citizen though other members of his small community of Cruzan relations in Philadelphia did so. Was he American or was he Danish? He was known to be of African descent in the West Indies, by virtue of his publicly-known 'free coloured' status but was possibly passing as white in America by virtue of his and his family's skin tone. Yet, he was of African descent and worked in America and this distinctly shaped his life, and that of his family, in early mercantile America and the West Indies. He presents a fascinating and complex example of the African American experience in the early Republic.

The newly discovered teapot by Peter Bentzon might for the time being raise more questions than it answers but what a fortunate survival!

### Acknowledgements

*Research on the ownership of the teapot and locating it within the context of Bentzon's career has been conducted together with David Conradsen, Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts and Design at the Saint Louis Art Museum. This collaboration has been conducted when either of us could grab time for research in Philadelphia. I owe him many thanks for shouldering much of the genealogical work. I am also grateful to Mike Weller for bringing the teapot to my attention and to Don Fennimore who examined the teapot and offered his comments.*

17. Mary Coates, *Family Memorials and Recollections, or Aunt Mary's Patchwork*, Philadelphia 1885.

18. Ibid, p42.



# Competition and craft: silversmithing in Bermuda

Jeanne Sloane

1. As quoted by Mrs. Allan F. Smith, 'Bermuda Silversmiths and their Silver', *The Bermuda Historical Quarterly*, vol XXII, no4 Winter 1965, p9.

2. Mrs. Smith notes eleven, *op. cit.* p87; to this Bryden Hyde added John Cox Rankin. See Bryden B. Hyde, *Bermuda's Antique Furniture & Silver*, The Bermuda National Trust, 1971, p184.

3. Thomas Blatchley, Samuel Lockwood, Peter Pallais, James Perot, Thomas Savage, sen, William Stennett, and G.S. Rankin definitely trained abroad. The three known Bermuda trained silversmiths were Samuel Canton, J.C. Rankin, and presumably Thomas Savage, jun.

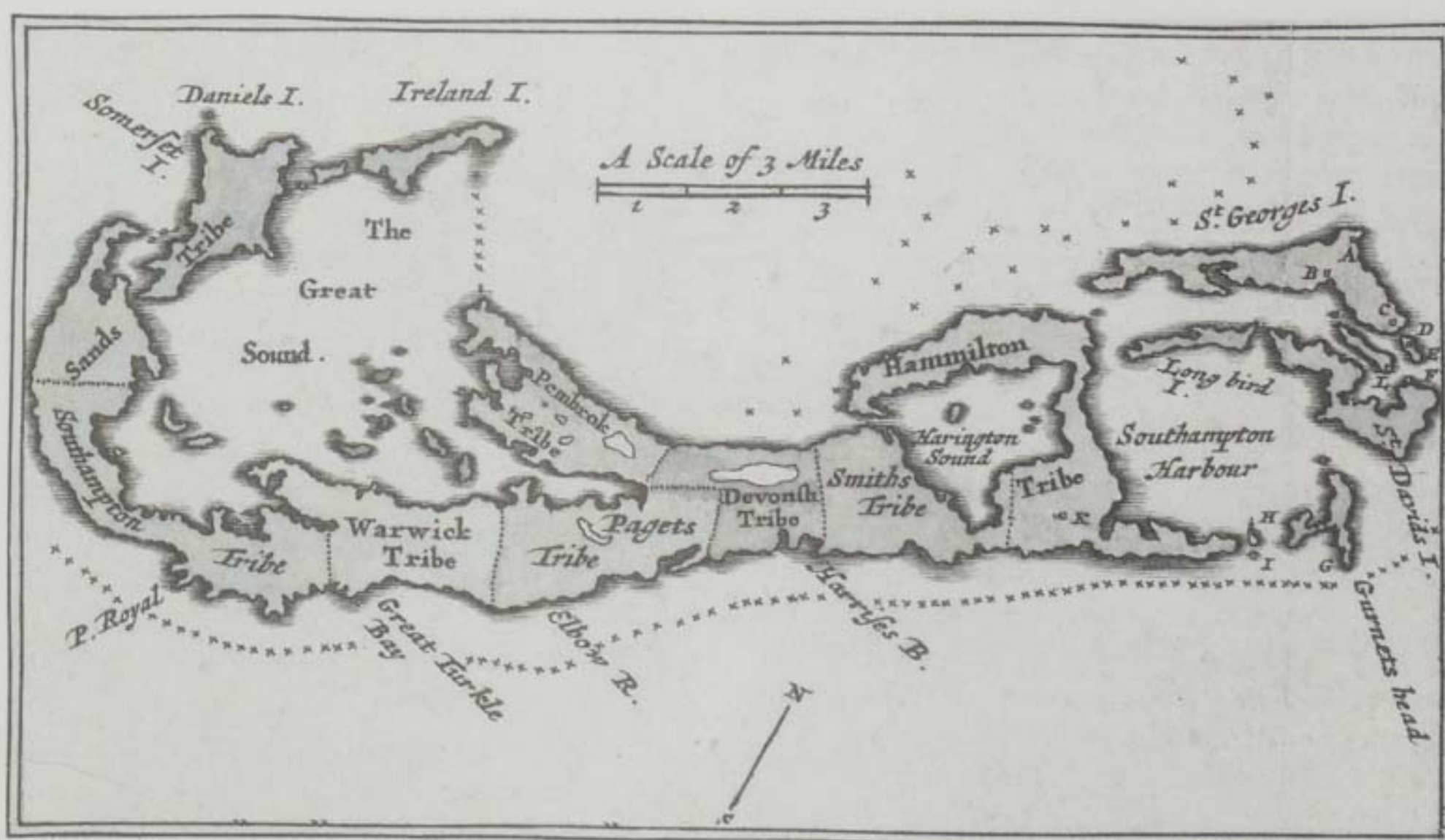
4. Robert Barker, 'Jamaican Goldsmiths, Assayers and their Marks', *Proceedings of the Silver Society*, vol III no5 Spring 1986, pp133-37.

When the silversmith Paul Hamilton announced his departure for Europe in the *Bermuda Gazette* in 1784, he described his affection for Bermuda 'where I have long happily enjoyed what I sought, health and asylum, and added to these, agreeable society'.<sup>1</sup> While the fond farewell of a single craftsman cannot speak for all thirty-eight of the silversmiths working in Bermuda before 1900, his comment does suggest that these craftsmen migrated to Bermuda as much for 'health and asylum' as for opportunity. Indeed, Bermuda's small population and maritime economy together circumscribed the activities of the local silversmith, whose products had to compete with imports from larger towns with much greater craft specialisation. The great majority of Bermuda's silversmiths therefore produced objects requiring simple technology, mainly spoons and smallwork, such as buckles, buttons, and jewellery. However, seven silversmiths successfully made and sold large objects, some thirty of which are known today.

Paul Hamilton's newspaper notice also demonstrates the cosmopolitanism of Bermuda silversmiths, who generally trained abroad and brought to the island techniques and styles from both Europe and the Americas. Out of the thirty-eight recorded silver-

smiths working between 1650 and 1900, only twelve were actually born in Bermuda.<sup>2</sup> Of the ten Bermuda silversmiths whose apprenticeships are documented, seven were trained abroad, including three known in England and one in Boston, and three others almost certainly in France, Nova Scotia, and New York.<sup>3</sup> Even Bermuda-trained silversmith Samuel Canton gained experience abroad, spending time in Wales and Nova Scotia during the early course of his career. Training in large cities appears to have been a virtual requirement for silversmiths in Bermuda, just as it was in other colonies of similar size. Jamaica, for example, supported a relatively large number of silversmiths - 140 before the year 1800 - but only two or three of these are thought to have trained there.<sup>4</sup> Patronage in small towns, no matter how wealthy, could not provide full-time silvermaking for an apprentice working continuously over the course of the required seven-year training period.

Diversification was an economic necessity for the Bermuda silversmith, who, like counterparts in other small towns, spent the majority of his time on repairs and allied crafts such as clock and watchmaking, jewellery making, instrument making, engraving, and various work in base metals. The career of Thomas



1 Map of Bermuda showing the nine parishes or 'tribes' of Bermuda. The town of Hamilton, capital after 1815, faces the bay on the south side of Pembroke Tribe. Map by Robert Morden, circa 1700. (Christie's)



Rec'd of Cap: Wm Bell 13:1287 Silver } 16:5  
 towards 2 waiters at 9/6 pr oo }  
 By a Maydore 12:00 a pistole 1/4 - at 17 1/2 pr. 3:9:10  
 to have this inscription on them  
 The Gift of Samuel Sherlock Esq: to  
 the Devon Tribe

2 Ledger entry of Joseph Richardson, silversmith of Philadelphia, 1737, describing Captain William Bell's payment for two silver waiters on behalf of Christ Church, Devonshire, Bermuda. The ledger also describes their engraved inscription, 'The Gift of Samuel Sherlock Esq: to Devon Tribe'. (The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Joseph Richardson's Account Book (Am 9240))

Blatchley typifies the wide-ranging activities of the Bermuda silversmith (appendix 2). His advertisement in the *Bermuda Gazette* on 30 June 1787 is particularly descriptive:

Thomas Blatchley, clock and watchmaker, silversmith and engraver from London begs leave to acquaint the ladies and gentlemen and others in Bermuda that he has opened a shop in St. George's ... Money for old gold, silver, and brass.<sup>5</sup>

The advertisements of Blatchley's peers Samuel Lockwood, William Pearman, Thomas Bennett, and Peter Pallais all proclaim the practice of silversmithing 'in all its branches' or 'in its various branches', referring to their similarly diversified skills. Sometimes silversmiths' entrepreneurial activities ranged even further from the traditional silver-related crafts, and Blatchley is known to have sold various products including the 'Old Jamaica Spirit at 8/-, Good Rum at 4/8 per gallon, a few barrels of English Walnuts' which he advertised in 1791.<sup>6</sup>

In the absence of surviving account books for Bermuda silversmiths, it is useful to examine the business ledgers of Edward Lang, silversmith of Salem, Massachusetts, a town with a population comparable to Bermuda's in the mid-eighteenth century. Of 1,929 transactions, Lang recorded 35% for gold and silver jewellery, 26% for repairs and polishing silver, and 5% for spoon-making. 14% of the charges were for foodstuffs and cash, indicating that the 'micropolitan' silversmith of New England turned to dry goods and even farming to supplement his income.<sup>7</sup> In Bermuda, the maritime economy provided the best alternative employment for silversmiths, who retailed imported goods such as the 'Japan Ware' offered by silversmith Thomas Dixon in 1784.<sup>8</sup> One silversmith, Daniel Hubbard of Hamilton Parish, abandoned the craft altogether, describing himself as a 'mariner' by the time he made his will in 1739.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps because of eco-

nomie uncertainty, Bermuda's silversmithing population tended to be a migratory one, with craftsmen moving on and off the island with apparent frequency. After 1783, with the founding of Bermuda's first newspaper, we know from their advertisements that four silversmiths emigrated to various destinations in the North American colonies, the West Indies, and Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The diversity of backgrounds of silversmiths, combined with their constant migration, is probably responsible for the fact that an indigenous or uniform style of Bermuda silver is difficult to define. While the seven Bermudian silversmiths who made large pieces of silver all drew from different sources, the unifying theme is inspiration from North America rather than England.

Bermuda's famously cost-effective freight trade meant that goods from Europe, the West Indies, and North America were readily available to the island's affluent classes. The majority of custom ordered silver, however, came from the North American colonies for two important reasons. First, the silversmiths in American colonial cities produced silver that was competitively priced with their own imports from London. Secondly, direct trade between Bermuda and England tapered off as early as 1700, with the decline of Bermuda's tobacco industry in the late seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup> Bermuda's silversmiths had to compete with the products of manufacturing centres like New York, which supported five hundred silversmiths from 1690 to 1820, and Boston, where there were over two hundred working between 1730 and 1800.<sup>12</sup> In these towns, a high degree of craft specialisation allowed the cost-effective manufacture of large silver objects which were substantially cheaper to make locally than to import from London. The fashioning of a tankard for example required collaboration between modellers, engravers, die-cutters, and chasers, in addition

5. Katharine M. McClinton, 'A Round-Up of Eighteenth Century Bermuda Silversmiths', *The American Connoisseur*, January 1966, p59.

6. Smith (as note 1), p90.

7. Gerald W. R. Ward, 'Micropolitan and Rural Silversmiths in 18th Century Massachusetts', in Patricia E. Kane, *Colonial Massachusetts Silversmiths and Jewelers*, 1998, p124. The author does not specify the 20% outstanding transactions.

8. McClinton (as note 5), p58.

9. Smith (as note 1), p9.

10. These were William Barker, William Bearn, Benjamin Gwynn, and Paul Hamilton.

11. Michael J. Jarvis, ' "In the Eye of All Trade": Maritime Revolution and the Transformation of Bermuda Society, 1612-1800', Ph.D. diss, The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1998, esp. pp389-465.

12. Ward (as note 7), p119.



13. Jarvis (as note 11), p404.

14. I am grateful to Michael J. Jarvis, Ph.D., for generously supplying this reference. Letter dated May 28, 1713, CV7.2:103, Bermuda Archives; as quoted by Jarvis (as note 11), p567.

15. Martha Gandy Fales, *Joseph Richardson and Family: Philadelphia Silversmiths*, 1974, fig 69, pp104–105.

16. Christie's New York, 19 January 1992 lot 176. See also note 31.

17. Hyde (as note 2), p196, fig453.

to the basic silversmithing skills of hammering, casting and soldering. Spoon making, on the other hand, necessitated only hand hammering of a bar or 'slot' of silver into a swage. Buckles, clasps and other small-work could simply be cast in small sand moulds.

Communication with North American colonies was facilitated by Bermuda's fast ships as well as by the outward migration of merchant families, whose relatives became trusted agents in other colonial ports.<sup>13</sup> Written documents, together with examples of American silver with Bermudian histories, illustrate how the wealthy Bermudian acquired 'bespoke' silver from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia throughout the eighteenth century. Surviving Bermuda-made silver reveals the strong influence these pieces had on the Bermuda silversmith.

In 1713, Elizabeth Smith of Boston commissioned two silver tankards to be made in Boston on behalf of her relative, a Mrs Tucker of Bermuda. Mrs Tucker had sent 'platt', a type of straw-work made from palmetto leaves and the fashionable material for bonnets at the time, to Mrs Smith, who replied on May 28, 1713:

Your Platt I rec'd and according to your orders I am making preparation to make returns in a Silver Tankard ... with the Coat of Armes as pr. The Draft enclosed. And I also rec'd the 1400 yards of Platt on yor. Daughters account of 8d. and 3000 of 6d. Platt and I shall send her the returns in a Tankard of Silver mark't

T in the Bottom as large as that will allow with the like coat of arms and I shall take a bill of lading and I shall inclose one in the letter so I shall do for you and send them pr. the next opportunity so with my kind love to you and your daughter and all our relations and friends in general.

I remain yours to serve in what I can or may,

Elizabeth Smith<sup>14</sup>

It is interesting that Mrs Tucker ordered tankards from Boston at a time when Thomas Savage, Boston-trained silversmith, was working in Bermuda. Perhaps the Tucker 'Coat of Armes' was better executed in Boston by a specialist engraver.

While Mrs Tucker's Boston tankards do not survive, a pair of silver salvers at Christ Church, Devonshire, provides another documented example of a custom order from North America. Church member Samuel Sherlock, a Bermudian Chief Justice, left a legacy of £10 to the church upon his death in 1736. His will states that he gave 'unto the Church in Devon Tribe aforesaid ten pounds money to be disposed and laid out for that use as my Executor and Executrix thinks fit'.<sup>15</sup> The congregation promptly ordered a pair of communion waiters from Joseph Richardson sen of Philadelphia. The silversmith's account book records that in 1737, Bermuda ship Captain William Bell paid for the 'weighters' with two gold coins, a Portuguese moidore and a Spanish pistole. The ledger entry further notes that the silver is 'to have this inscription on them – The Gift of Samuel Sherlock Esqr to Devon Tribe,' which indeed they do. [2]

A number of silver tankards were made in New York for Bermuda families in the early eighteenth century. John Darrell, another Chief Justice of Bermuda, serving from 1736 to 1743, commissioned a large tankard from New York silversmith John Hastier around 1740.[4] The tankard was simply engraved with the monogram IED, for Darrell and his wife Elizabeth (Tucker) and descended to Derisley Trimingham (born 1907).<sup>16</sup> Simeon Soumaine of New York made tankards for both the Jones and Butterfield families of Bermuda; the latter is at the Tucker House Museum in St George.

The Lightbourn family ordered a three-piece tea service marked by the Philadelphia silversmiths Joseph Anthony, John David, and John Leacock. It was probably made on the occasion of Mary Lightbourn's marriage to Edward Smith around 1785.<sup>17</sup> The significance of this well documented service is that it shows that Bermudians continued to commission American silver even after the American Revolution.



3 Tazza, Thomas Savage sen, probably Bermuda or possibly Boston, 1700–10, engraved with the arms of Dickinson. The pair is in the Tucker House museum in St George, Bermuda. (Christie's)





4 Tankard, John Hastier, New York, circa 1740, made for John and Elizabeth (Tucker) Darrell of Bermuda. (Christie's)



5 Tankard, attributed to Thomas Savage, jun, marked TS in a heart, Bermuda 1715–40. (Private collection, Bermuda)

### Seven silversmiths

The seven Bermuda silversmiths who made large objects in silver were, in rough chronological order: Thomas Savage, sen, James Perot, Thomas Savage, jun, Peter Pallais, the 'TB monogram' maker (Thomas Blatchley or Thomas Bennett), George Hutchings, and Joseph Gwynn.

**Thomas Savage sen** (1664–1749) of Boston worked in Bermuda circa 1706–14, when he returned home. Two of his Bermuda-made tankards follow exactly the Boston style, with their characteristic split-scroll thumbpiece. Two other Bermuda-made tankards are in a distinctly New York style, with the typical cocoon or corkscrew thumbpiece (although they may now be attributable to Savage, jun, see below).<sup>18</sup> [5] Savage, sen's Boston work, interestingly, shows not a trace of New York influence. Two identical footed salvers or tazzas in the Boston style marked by Savage were probably both made in Bermuda, as they were engraved with the arms of Dickinson, a prominent Bermuda family in the late seventeenth century. One, now at the Tucker House in St George, was later engraved with the arms of Taylor; the other surfaced in New York in 1942 and retains its original Dickinson coat of arms. [3]<sup>19</sup> The engraved cartouches enclosing the arms on these salvers are particularly elaborate although somewhat naïve in design. **Mark 17**

**James Perot** (born 1712) was born in the French Huguenot colony of New Rochelle and came to Southampton, Bermuda, in 1740. His career in Bermuda appears, like Savage's, to have been short-lived, as there are only four known pieces of large silver bearing his mark.<sup>20</sup> The superb pair of communion cups at Christ Church, Warwick, displays French influence in the bell-shaped bowls and lathe-turned



6 Pair of communion cups, James Perot, Bermuda, circa 1740. (Christ Church, Warwick, Bermuda)

18. Hyde (as note 2), figs 403, 404, 405; one in a private collection

19. Christie's New York, 22 January 1993 lot 242

20. Hyde (as note 2), figs 400 and 447.

21. McClinton (as note 5), figs 5 and 6. The pepper-pots were exhibited at the Bermuda National Gallery, 23 September 2000–27 January 2001.

22. Smith (as note 1), p107. Savage senior's best-known mark is TS above a star in a heart-shaped punch. The fact that a number of Bermuda tankards are marked with a TS without a star in a similar heart-shaped punch suggests that they may have been made by Savage jun after his father's return to Boston in 1714. The tankard at Christ Church, Warwick, bears the heart-shaped mark without the star. Further research is necessary to make certain attributions for all of the TS marks found in Bermuda.



23. Hyde (as note 2), figs 444, 448, 452.

24. Hyde, *op. cit.*, figs 449 and 451.

25. The pepper-pot is illustrated in 'Silverware and Silversmiths', *The Bermudian*, vol VIII no9, November 1937, p10. I am grateful to Hugh Davidson for bringing the pepper pot to my attention. A salver of unusual rectangular shape is illustrated in Hyde, *op. cit.*, fig 406. A circular salver with a pierced border related to the pierced galleries on the teapots was exhibited at the Bermuda National Gallery, 23 September 2000–27 January 2001.

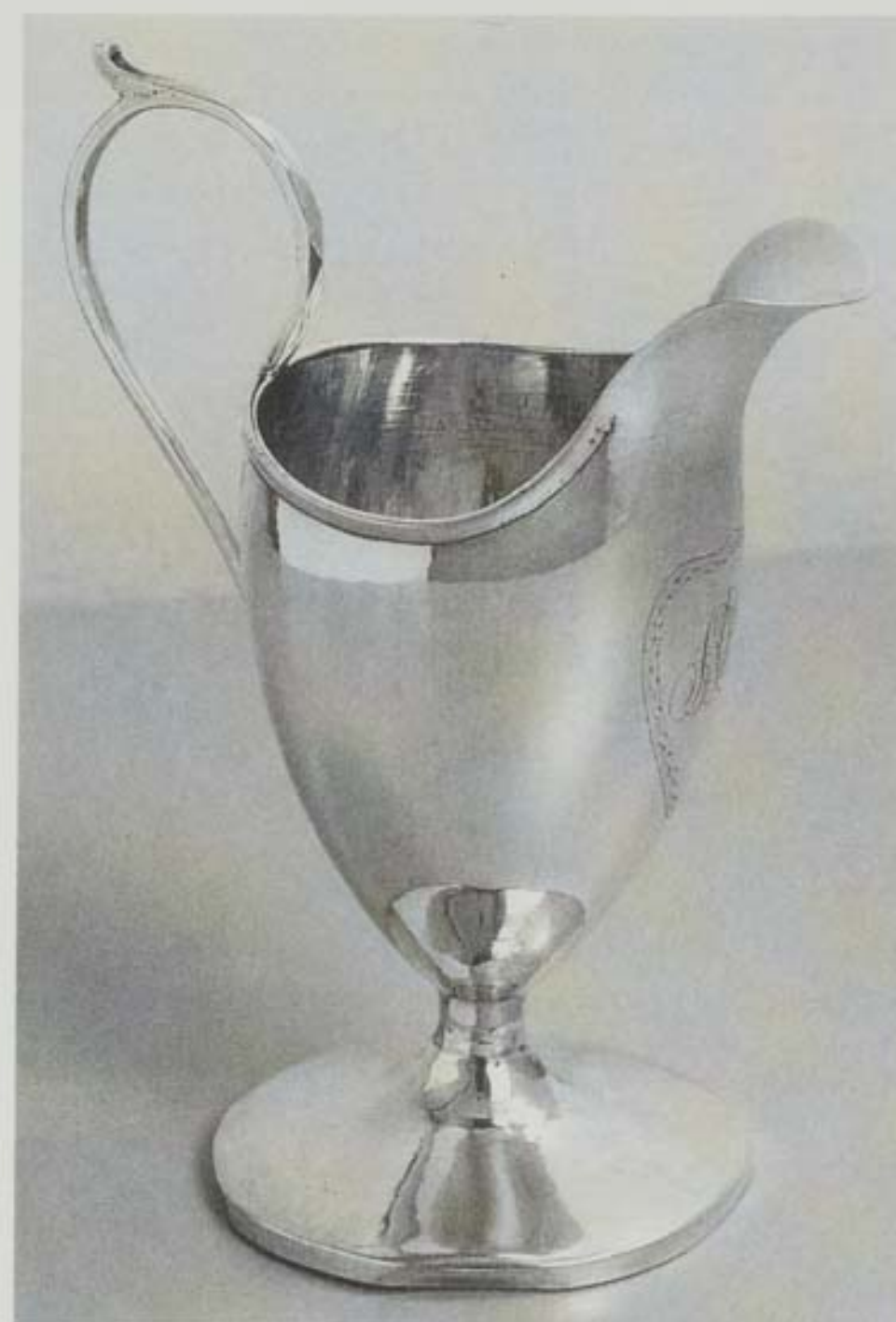
26. One of the smaller plates has traces of a pewterer's mark on the reverse. Illustrated in Erica Manning, 'Art of the Bermuda Silversmiths', *Country Life*, 27 February 1964, p453, fig 3, and Hyde (as note 2), figs 398 and 399.

27. Hyde (as note 2), fig 401. The circular salver was exhibited at the Bermuda National Gallery, 23 September 2000–27 January 2001.

28. Hyde, *op. cit.*, fig 455.

29. McClinton (as note 5), p58.

30. McClinton, *op. cit.*, p58.



7 Cream jug, Bermuda circa 1790, possibly Thomas Savage III, marked TS in rectangle. (Private collection, Bermuda)

finish technique, and suggests that Perot trained in France.[6] These are a unique instance of Continental influence in Bermuda-made silver, even though some early French silver, thought to have come from privateers, exists in Bermuda today. A lovely plain circular bowl by Perot is of a generic type found in both England and the American colonies, although its engraved mirror cypher is in the French taste. Two cylindrical pepper-pots, again in English colonial style, are also known.<sup>21</sup> **Mark 16**

**Thomas Savage, jun** (1694–1767) remained in Bermuda after his father returned to Boston in 1714, but his career as a silversmith as well as his maker's mark remain somewhat mysterious. It is possible that he made some of the tankards traditionally attributed to his father, as they bear a variation of Savage, sen's mark unknown in Boston (see appendix I).[5] A very fine cream jug marked with a TS in elongated rectangle is thought to be his work, but the style of the cream-jug post-dates the date of Savage, jun's death by nearly twenty years.[7] It is possible that the cream jug was made by a grandson, as another Thomas Savage is recorded in 1784.<sup>22</sup> The cream jug, recalling Philadelphia models of 1785–1800, exhibits some distinctive Bermuda characteristics shared by the work of Peter Pallais. Both makers used an almost egg-shaped jug atop an unusually broad circular foot. **Mark 18**



8 Beaker, Joseph Gwynn, Bermuda circa 1810. (Private collection, Bermuda)

**Peter Pallais** (died 1811) immigrated to Bermuda in 1787, and worked in both St. George and Hamilton. More pieces of largework survive by Pallais than by any other Bermuda silversmith. His three known oval teapots made circa 1790 betray strong influence of Philadelphia, particularly in the pierced galleries on two of them.<sup>23</sup> A fine example is the teapot engraved with the Smith coat of arms and the monogram HSS, for the marriage of Henry Smith III of Paget, and his wife Susannah in 1794. Two cream jugs by Pallais in the Philadelphia style are also recorded.<sup>24</sup> One of these is closely related to the example by Thomas Savage (III?) cited above. Pallais's mark also appears on a cylindrical pepper-pot in New England style, two salvers, a porringer in the New York style, and a covered cylindrical mug at St George Historical Society.<sup>25</sup> A distinctive technical feature of Pallais's work is the unusual use of rivets to attach mouldings to borders of his objects. **Mark 14**

Either **Thomas Blatchley** (died 1792) or **Thomas Bennett** (active circa 1789) could have made the fine galleried teapot bearing the TB monogram mark also found on Bermuda spoons.[9] It is the only known piece of largework bearing this mark. Philadelphia characteristics include a gallery at the rim and a silver pineapple finial. A striking feature is the base, which has an unusual pierced band repeating the motifs on the rim. The recent discovery of this teapot may lead to a firm attribution of the mysterious TB



monogram mark. Since the style of the teapot is closely related to the work of Peter Pallais, who continued Thomas Blatchley's business after the latter's death in 1792, it is tempting to ascribe this mark firmly to Blatchley. Even the distinctive manner of striking the maker's mark five times on the base is repeated in Pallais's work. The high quality of the teapot and the unusual English influence in the pierced base further support the theory that it is the work of this London-trained master. **Mark 3**

**George Hutchings** (1777–1856), one of the most successful of the Bermuda silversmith-jewellers, has left the greatest number of surviving spoons and other table silver, including a rare few forks. Hutchings's larger pieces of silver, however, betray some technical flaws, underscoring the fact that even a silversmith of his stature rarely made hollowware. His set of three communion plates made in 1822 and 1823 for Christ Church, Warwick, are constructed in a unique fashion. Rather than hand-raising the plates through the traditional process of repeated annealing and hammering, Hutchings instead simply cast the plates from pewter originals!<sup>26</sup> As a result, the plates are extremely heavy. Flat silver pieces, especially large examples like tea trays, are considered to be some of the most difficult objects for a silversmith to make. Hutchings did make one hand-wrought piece for Christ Church, a small christening bowl of 1821, but stress cracks and patches on the reverse indicate that hand-raising was indeed troublesome for Hutchings and may have inspired his decision to cast the larger pieces of 1822 and 1823. The style of this scalloped bowl recalls both English and American colonial examples of the so-called strawberry dish type. Another hand-wrought piece by Hutchings, a plain circular salver on ball feet, has recently come to light.<sup>27</sup> **Mark 11**

**Joseph Gwynn** (working circa 1813) made two cylindrical beakers in a simple neo-classical style found in both England and America, but the preference for this form in the Southern States suggests that Gwynn's beakers may have been Bermudian versions of the popular julep cup.<sup>28</sup> **[8] Mark 10**

Products

Bermudian silversmiths excelled in the production of spoons, ladles, and other table silver. The most prolific spoonmakers in Bermuda were Samuel Lockwood, Peter Pallais, Benjamin and Joseph Gwynn, George Hutchings, Samuel John Canton, and George S. Rankin. Lockwood's work is distinguished by its particularly fine bright-cut and roulette-work engraving. In general, Bermuda spoons tend to be of very good gauge and comparable to American examples in their close following of English fashion, from the early Hanoverian pattern with upturned handle of the mid-eighteenth century, to the Old English pattern with downturned handle of the late eighteenth



9 Teapot, Thomas Blatchley or Thomas Bennett, Bermuda, circa 1790. (Private collection, Bermuda)

century, and the fiddle pattern with a squared terminal of the early nineteenth century.

The newspaper advertisements of Bermudian spoonmakers and smallworkers show that they were anxious to protect their market niche in the face of increasing industrialisation in London at the end of the eighteenth century. Thomas Dixon advertised in 1784 that he 'still continues carrying on the business of a goldsmith and jeweller. He likewise makes silver spoons of all sizes which he can dispose of at as low a rate as they can be purchased in the City of London'.<sup>29</sup> While highly specialised manufacturers in Birmingham and Sheffield supplied England and the Colonies with the majority of buckles, buttons, and other smallwork by the late eighteenth century, Bermuda silversmiths could easily keep abreast of the new fashions by simply using imported examples to make moulds. Samuel Lockwood boldly advertised in 1789 that he 'has taken patterns for shoe and knee buckles of the latest importation from England'.<sup>30</sup>

While a good deal of English silver was owned and used in Bermuda, it did not seem to pose as great a commercial threat to the Bermuda silversmith as did North American 'bespoke' silver. The majority of English silver that was used in Bermuda was carried in by governors for official and church use or by families as heirlooms.<sup>31</sup> Some of it returned to England, such as Governor Craufurd's communion service, and some of it remained in churches or became government property, such as the 'Oar of Admiralty' brought to Bermuda by Governor Bennett.<sup>32</sup> With the steady importation of English silver by governors and of American silver by the merchant class, it is remarkable that Bermuda's silversmiths managed profitable businesses and produced a substantial body of work. Perhaps further research will lead to the identification of more pieces by these enterprising craftsmen.

*The appendices are on the following pages*

31. One of the most interesting pieces of English silver to descend in a Bermuda family – an Elizabethan gourd-form standing cup – was brought to the island by George Tucker IV of Milton, Kent, during the Commonwealth. The cup was made in 1598/99, on the occasion of George Tucker II's marriage to Mary Dayrell of Cahill, Kent – the first of several marriages between the two families over the next 150 years. It was inherited by the Dayrells of Lillingston-Dayrell, Bucks, in the eighteenth century and brought back to Bermuda by the Tucker family in the nineteenth century. See Christie's New York, 20 October 1997 lot 342, and *The Silver Society Journal*, no12 2000, p130.

32. Governor James Craufurd's silver 'Chapel Furniture' was valued at £45 in 1795. See Sotheby's London, 4 July 1989 lot 202. Other English Church silver remaining in Bermuda is described in Hyde (as note 2), p174. Governor Benjamin Bennett's silver oar of 1701 is illustrated in Henry C. Wilkinson, *Bermuda in the Old Empire, 1684–1784*, London and New York 1950, pp160–61, illus pl V, opposite p156. Wilkinson notes that Bennett was also granted a silver communion service, recorded in the Royal Jewel House accounts. Wilkinson, *op. Cit.*, p160.



# Appendix I

## Maker's marks on Bermuda silver

1. WW ADAM in rectangle  
William Adams, Hamilton and  
St George (recorded 1798–  
1801), spoons

7. JWD script in rectangle  
Joseph Dill (nineteenth  
century; dates unknown),  
spoons



2. WB in oval  
William Barker, St. George  
(recorded 1798) or  
William Bearn, St George (recorded  
1805), spoons



8. T.D in conjoined circles  
TD conjoined in oval  
Thomas Dixon, St. George  
(recorded 1794), spoons



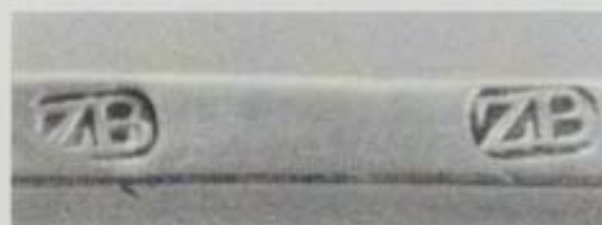
3. TB conjoined in rectangle  
Thomas Blatchley, St George  
(died 1792) or possibly  
Thomas Bennett, Heron Bay  
(recorded 1789), spoons and  
one teapot



9. BG  
in rectangle  
Benjamin L. Gwynn, Hamilton  
(recorded 1824), spoons,  
fishslice



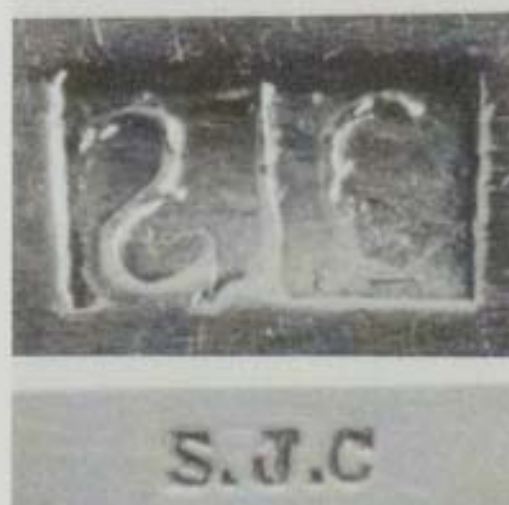
4. ZB in oval  
Zachariel Bolitho, Paget  
(recorded 1781), spoons



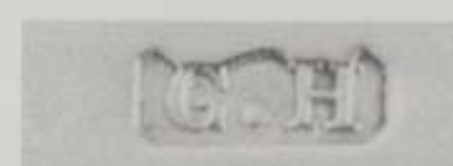
10.1. JG in conforming punch  
10.2. JG in rectangle  
10.3. BERMUDA in rectangle  
Joseph Gwynn, St George and  
Port Royal (circa 1783–1826),  
spoons, two beakers



5.1. SC in rectangle  
5.2. SJC in rectangle  
5.3. S.J.C. incuse  
Samuel John Canton, Bailey's  
Bay (1811–1900), spoons



11.1. G.H in rectangle  
11.2. G.H in rectangle with  
uneven upper edge  
11.3. GH in conforming punch  
George Hutchings, Hamilton  
(1777–1856), spoons, forks,  
three communion plates,  
baptismal bowl, salver on four  
ball feet



6. IC in oval  
John Cox, St George (circa  
1777–1829), spoons





12. SL in rounded rectangle  
1788 or 1789 in rectangle  
Samuel Lockwood, St George,  
Salt Kettle (immigrated 1783),  
spoons



17.1. TS star below in heart  
17.2. TS in rounded rectangle  
Thomas Savage sen (1664–  
1749), Port Royal (in Bermuda  
1706–14, worked in Boston  
1690–1706 and 1714–49)



13.1. DGM BERMUDA in  
rectangle  
13.2. D.M or DGM in  
rectangle  
David Glegg Ming, St George  
(1785–1819), spoons



18. TS no star in heart  
Thomas Savage, jun (1694–  
1767), the Bermuda mark TS  
in a heart, without a star, is  
previously unrecorded and is  
probably that of Savage  
jun (see note 22)



14.1. PP in scalloped rectangle  
14.2. PPL (last letters  
conjoined) in rectangle  
Peter Pallais, St George,  
Hamilton (immigrated 1787,  
died 1811), spoons, 3 teapots,  
2 cream-jugs, 2 salvers,  
porringer, pepper-pot



19. TS in rectangle  
?Thomas Savage III (recorded  
1784), a cream jug. The  
attribution of this mark is  
tentative, pending further  
research on this maker. This  
mark is sometimes confused  
with that of Samuel Lockwood  
(upside down)

20. G.R in rectangle  
20.1 G.R in rectangle, incuse  
florettes  
George Samuel Rankin, St  
George (1794–1876), spoons



15.1. W.P in rectangle  
15.2. WP conjoined in  
rectangle  
William Pearman (active circa  
1818), spoons



16. I.P in rectangle  
James Perot, Southampton  
(born 1712, immigrated 1740),  
spoons, pair communion cups  
(goblets), punch bowl, 2  
pepper-pots





A true and perfect Inventory and Appraisement of all and Singular the Goods, Chattels and personal Estate of Thomas Blatchley, late of St Georges Parish in the Island of Bermuda deceased, taken by Maurice Stack and John Fisher Administrators  
[April 23, 1792]

3 pair Boots	3.	-	-
1 pair Shoes	10.	-	
5 Shirts	13.	4	
3 Woollen Waistcoats	18.	-	
2 Linnen ditto	3.	4	
1 pair Casimere Breeches	6.	8	
1 ditto Ververet ditto	6.	8	
3 " Linnen & Nankeen ditto	6.	8	
2 Diaper Table Cloths	10.	-	
7 Towels	5.	4	
2 pr Sheets	16.	8	
3 Muzlin Cravets	6	-	
1 Pillow-Case	1.	-	
2 Silk Handkerchiefs and 1 Linnen ditto	2.	-	
5 pair Hose	8.	-	
1 Close-boddy's Coat	1.	3.	4
2 Surtouts	2.	-	-
1 Flannel Robbin and one ditto Drawers	1.	8	
2 Bermuda straw hats with [?Medicines]	10.	8	
1 pattern blue Broad Cloth and Trimings	4.	6	
1 Scarlet Cloak (Trimed with Ermine)	1.	11.	6
1 [?] thread Gauze 12 yards	1.	-	-
1 Jointed Guaging Rod	13.	4	
A pair blue Satten Shoes	13.	4	
1 small Vice	15.	-	
5 large files	6.	8	
1 pair Taylors Shares	4	-	
8 small files	2.	8	
4 pair Ear drops	3.	-	-
1 " Silver Shoe Buckles	2.	15.	6
2 " ditto Stone Knee Buckles	16.	8	
9 " Ladies Elastic Glove Strings	6.	8	
3 small Boxes with old Silver	5.	16.	1
15 [?] Clock & Watch work etc	-.	-.	-
2 Gold rings with Cyphers JRT[?] & SMP	2.	5	-
A Fancy Gold Broach	13.	4	
A paper with of Gold Rings, Ear drops, Buckles etc	3.	8.	-

Mr Thomas Blatchley's Inventory continued

1 Beaver Hatt	12.	-	
2 dozen Penknives	1.	7.	9
½ dozen Watch Keys	15.	8	
4 doz: Silver thimbles & a Caddy spoon	3.	10.	-
7 Breast Pins	1	-	-
5 Watch Chains	12.	-	
A parcel Old Watch Cases	13.	4	
2 Papers Watch Cristals	4.	-	-
A paper small Iron Wire	3.	4	
1 Gold seals, Cypher BB	1.	6.	8
4 ditto ditto AF, TS, IH, JB[?]	5.	6.	8
1 ditto with Seymours Coat of Armss	1.	6.	8

1 Old Ettwee Case	6.	8	
A paper with Catgut	14.	8	
2 Common Watch Chains & 2 Seals	13.	4	
1 Box Bubbles & 1 small ditto	1.	6.	8
17[?] pair Stone ear drops	6.	6.	8
1 " Gold ditto	1.	17.	6
1 " small Marking Irons	1.	4	
2 Steel Beams	10.	-	
1 Silver hilted Sword & Seal [L&F?]	4.	-	-
6 pair Scissors with Silver Sheaths (Wash'd)	1.	10.	-
An old Silver Seal & Watch Chain	3.	4	
A Case with a pair of Razors	10	-	
1 Silver Gilt Watch RF	7.	-	-
1 Silver Watch JH [?]	6.	6.	8
1 Gold Watch BB	23.	10.	-
1 Old Silver Watch	2.	-	-
1 New ditto ditto with Hand (Separately)	6.	16.	8
1 " ditto ditto JH [?]	6.	6.	8
1 old Gold Watch	10	-	-
1 ditto ditto ditto	8.	-	-
1 ditto Silver ditto	6	-	-
1 Clock with a Mahogany Case	16.	16.	8
½ dozen Windsor Chairs	2.	-	-
1 Round Table & 1 Square table 8.2	10.	10	
1 Glass Case	16.	-	
1 small parcell Queens Ware	11.	4	
1 pair old Boots	1.	4	
1 pair Stays & a Girls Hatt	2.	2.	-
1 Mare and Saddle	5	-	-
1 pair large (Forge) Bellows	15	-	
A parcell of Watch Markers and Silver Smiths Working Tools	3.	10	

Maurice Stack  
John Fisher

33. Book of Inventories, vol. II, 1790-1794, pp. 121-122, Bermuda Archives (transcribed by Jo Bohanan, Records Officer, Bermuda Archives)



# American bird-decorated spoons

Donald L. Fennimore

By the eighteenth century the spoon had become a streamlined and eminently practical utensil, but there was an inherent problem with their design. The junction of the bowl and handle was a potential area of weakness, as can readily be seen on old spoons that were fashioned sparingly of thin metal and have split or separated at that point. As evidenced by most surviving spoons, silversmiths recognised this flaw at an early date and attempted to correct it. Their solution was to thicken that junction of bowl and handle to provide it with increased rigidity and resistance to bending. The most straightforward example of such a solution is the so-called rat-tail, frequently incorporated into silver spoons during the early to mid-eighteenth century.

Although this ridge was attractively designed and pleasingly incorporated into the spoon bowl, some silversmiths altered and modified it to increase its decorative appeal. The decorative modifications made to the thickened area on the backs of spoon bowls between about 1750 and 1830 provide a singular, most attractive and iconographically interesting instance of the evolution and transfer of style. About 1750 English makers began to ornament the backs of their products with a variety of decorative motifs. While many of these motifs were strictly ornamental, some, such as the Prince of Wales feathers, carried political content; the flaming heart conveyed religious zeal, whilst others still, such as milkmaids, were allegorical. Precisely why birds became a popular motif has not been determined. Birds have long appealed to humans – literally, because of their beguiling song and beautiful colours, and figuratively, because they have freedom of flight. These qualities certainly help to explain in part their desirability as decoration. Additionally, a more deep-seated cultural tradition – a religious one – could be responsible for their rise in popularity, particularly the use of the dove with olive branch. The dove is apparently the first bird documented on spoon backs, with the entry ‘tea spoons with a Dove and Olive branch’ in 1753.<sup>1</sup> This image can be traced to the biblical parable of the deluge: when the waters eventually subsided Noah

sent forth the dove out of the Ark; and the Dove came into him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.<sup>2</sup>

This short passage became a universally accepted icon

for hope, renewal, and regeneration in Judeo-Christian culture. At the same time, and because of its positive symbolic message, it also came to serve as a timeless source of artistic inspiration.

Such inspiration is most evident in the art of the Christian church, where the dove and olive branch appears with great frequency, representing not only hope but also the ideals of peace, purity, innocence, love and even saintliness. The all-inclusive and proselytizing nature of Christianity in Europe and its various spheres of influence encouraged diffusion of the dove image and the qualities it represented throughout Western culture, even into a secular context. The dove and olive branch became an appropriate image

1. *The Public Advertiser*, London, 17 November 1753. A number of authors have cited this reference, however I was unable to locate a copy. The citation is significant because of its early date but since I have not personally seen it, I include it with reservation.

2. Gen. 8:10-11.



1 Detail of a tablespoon, Christian Wiltberger, Philadelphia 1793-1819. (Winterthur Museum. Gift of estate of Constance A. Jones)



3. Jennifer Speake, *The Dent Dictionary of symbols in Christian Art*, 1994, pp45-46. The dove with olive branch is not to be confused with other images of the dove in Christian art, such as the dove with nimbus, which represents Christ or the Holy Spirit. Barbara Franco, *Masonic Symbols in American Decorative Arts*, Lexington 1976, p49.

4. Winthrop L. Carter and Wayne Hilt, 'Export Pewter for the American Trade', *Journal of the Pewter Society*, vol 2 no3, Spring 1980, pp8-11.

5. 8 January 1754.

6. This process is described in the memorandum book of Daniel Burnap, an eighteenth century Connecticut clock-maker and silversmith, as transcribed in Penrose R. Hoopes, *Shop Records of Daniel Hurnap Clockmaker*, Connecticut Historical Society 1958, pp120-121.

for organisations whose character, ritual and purpose were suffused with symbolism. One such group was the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, a benevolent fraternal organisation founded in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> Like the church, the Masons' adoption of the dove and olive branch endorsed its acceptance as a positive and universal symbolic image, rendering it appropriate even for individual use.

Some examples will serve to illustrate how widely the dove and olive branch appeared in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *The Scottish Dove*, a British newspaper published between 1643 and 1645, used as its masthead a dove in flight with olive branch, proclaiming the sanctity of the publisher's purpose. The touchmark of London pewterers John Townsend and Robert Reynolds, (in partnership 1766-76) shows the dove flying over the Lamb of God, broadening the bird's biblical association. Townsend, a Quaker, was active as a pewterer alone and in partnership with others in addition to Reynolds from 1748 to 1801. He used variants of this mark on a great deal of his pewter, of which a significant amount was sent to the British colonies in North America, particularly Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

With minor variation, the dove and olive branch was incorporated into the coats of arms and crests of several hundred British families. It is not surprising to find that the popular and widespread use of the image in eighteenth century England was echoed in North America, as suggested by an advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:<sup>5</sup>

Lost a few days ago, a red cornelian seal, set in gold, the arms, three crosses; the crest a dove and olive branch.

Some twenty-eight years later (16 October 1782) another notice in the same newspaper described a house robbery in Philadelphia in which 'a white glass seal, set in silver, impression a dove and olive branch' was stolen. These seals, however, could have been made in either England or the colonies. More compelling evidence for the transfer of the dove and olive branch motif lies in objects actually made in America. One of the touchmarks of Philadelphia pewterer William Will (active 1764-98) bears a striking similarity to that of Townsend and Reynolds, including the spread-winged dove at the centre, above a lamb. A diminutive gold clasp made by Philadelphia silversmith Joseph Richardson Jr (1752-1831), which originally adorned a three-strand coral-bead necklace, is charmingly engraved with a dove and olive branch.

The dove was only one of almost a dozen birds that English makers stamped on their spoons during the second half of the eighteenth century. By contrast, American makers chose to use the dove and olive branch almost to the exclusion of other species. American silversmiths from Boston, Massachusetts, to Salem, North Carolina, made bird-decorated spoons, of which hundreds survive. The overwhelming majority depict doves with their attendant olive

branches. Clearly, this motif struck a familiar and comfortable chord with Americans.

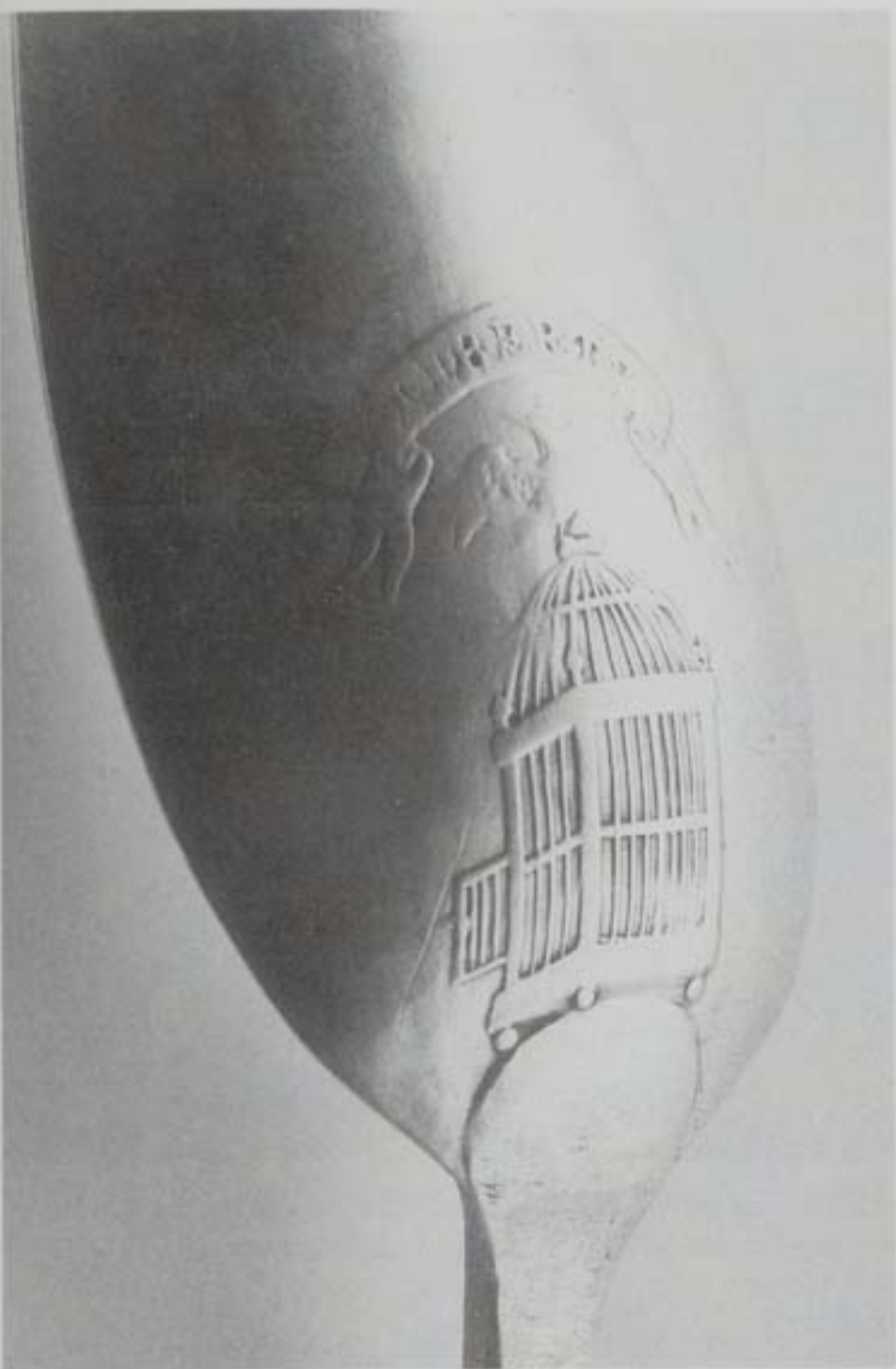
It is apparent when studying these spoons that the bird images on them were created with great variety [1]. Some are exquisitely rendered with finely detailed features; others are comparatively crude. Some have their wings folded; others are spread-winged. Some have upright, attenuated, delicate bodies like the mythical phoenix; others stand squat and horizontal like the common pigeon. Some look over their backs; others look forward. Some face the viewer's left; others face the viewer's right. Most hold an olive bough, usually with discernible olives, in their beaks; others have the bough behind their bodies. Most stand on a branch; others stand on a scroll, and occasionally some take flight.

The method of creating these images on spoons provides further insight into the artistry depicted. Prior to the application of mechanised techniques in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, silver spoons were hammered entirely by hand from a single piece of metal. For teaspoons, a silversmith began by fashioning a narrow, flattened bar about 7cm (2¾in) long, weighing about 12gr (7 or 8dwt). Tablespoons required a bar about 12cm (4¾in) long, weighing about 62gr (2oz). The length and weight increased according to the dictates of style between 1720 and 1830. Allowing approximately one quarter of its length for the bowl, the silversmith shaped a bar into various parts with a series of hammers and stakes, each designed for a specific purpose: to stretch, gather, or smooth and finish the metal.<sup>6</sup> After bringing the spoon to its proper outline and finish, the silversmith created the characteristic dished contour by hammering



2 Detail of an iron die used by James Parmelee, Durham, Connecticut, 1805-28. (Winterthur Museum. Gift of Dr Richard C. Weiss and Dr Sandra R. Harmon-Weiss)





3 Detail of a teaspoon, Christian Wiltberger, Philadelphia, 1793-1819. (Winterthur Museum. Gift of estate of Constance A. Jones)

it into a teast or swage, which could be made of wood, lead, or even a sand-filled canvas bag. These materials, being softer than silver, enabled the silversmith to sink the bowl to its proper contour without marring the surface.

If the back of a bowl was to be decorated, the design was stamped before the spoon was sunk, using a separate die [2]. These dies were made by a specially trained engraver known as a die sinker, who cut the chosen design into one end of a small piece of steel that had been polished perfectly smooth. He then hardened it so that it would not crack or distort under repeated blows of a hammer and attached it to a block of iron. Properly used, the die was set into a vice. The silversmith then aligned the still-flat spoon bowl over the decorative element and hammered, transferring the intaglio design into an exact duplicate in cameo on the back of the spoon bowl.<sup>7</sup> Following that, he sank the spoon bowl.

Although bird-decorated silver spoons bear only the names of silversmiths, they were in effect the product of both the silversmith and the die sinker. The latter was artistically responsible for the creation of the bird's design and technically responsible for its execution in the die, which the silversmith then transferred to the spoon. While it is possible that a man could have been both die sinker and silversmith, these functions were normally performed by separate specialists.

Numerous American silversmiths have stamped

their names on the handles of bird-decorated spoons. Although no die sinkers are recorded as having done so, the names of possible candidates can be found. One such artisan was Henry D. Purcell, an engraver who noted in the 9 July 1783 edition of the *Freeman's Journal*, a Philadelphia newspaper, that

he has opened a shop in Front Street . . . where he carries on the engraving business in its various branches (some excepted) in the neatest taste. GOLDSMITHS and other gentlemen who may be pleased to favor him with their commands may depend on the greatest punctuality, care and dispatch.

Another engraver, John Jacob Bury, advertised in the 17 April 1784, issue of the *Pennsylvania Packet* that 'he has the honor to recommend himself to the public in general, and more particularly to Jewellers, Gold and Silversmiths' for his skill at engraving and die sinking. Others who offered the same service in Philadelphia at that time were James P. Malcom, James Manly, Robert Scott, James Smither, James Akin and John Cook.

Although those names and those of their competitors are not present on spoons decorated with the birds they designed and cut, their association can comfortably be inferred through advertisements such as the ones cited as well as the spoons themselves. For example, three spoons and a ladle bearing the various marks of silversmiths Joseph Lownes, Samuel Richards, Samuel Williamson, Harvey Lewis, and Joseph D. Smith – all working in Philadelphia between 1780 and 1818 – are decorated with a displayed (spread-wing) bird, facing the viewer's left, on a beaded arch.<sup>8</sup> They differ slightly, but the birds are sufficiently alike in design and execution to indicate they were struck with dies cut by the same die sinker.

One might conclude from the foregoing that every silversmith owned his own die. Close examination of the images on the backs of spoons by different makers indicates this is not necessarily the case, as illustrated by Bancroft Woodcock and Richard Humphreys. The former worked in Wilmington, Delaware, between 1754 and 1794 and took the latter as an apprentice. When Humphreys finished his training, he set up shop in Philadelphia, where he worked between 1771 and 1796. The dove and olive branch stamped on the backs of spoons bearing their respective marks are identical, clearly indicating they shared the same die.<sup>9</sup> A similar connection can be seen in the birds struck on the backs of spoons bearing the marks of Thomas Sparrow, Eliakim Garretson and James Kendall. Sparrow worked in Philadelphia and later in Annapolis, Maryland, from 1759 to 1784. Garretson and Kendall had separate shops in Wilmington between 1790 and 1811. Identical doves and olive branches ornament the bowls of spoons marked by these three men. One might infer that upon Sparrow's death, his die found its way to Wilmington, where it was shared by Garretson and Kendall.

As birds rose to their height of popularity on silver spoons, political forces developed in England and the

7. On creating dies, see E. Chambers, *Cyclopaedia or An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, 2 vols, 1752. Dies for creating rat-tail supports on the backs of spoon bowls are pictured in Denis Diderot, *Encyclopédie*, 1751-76, vol 8, pl 11 figs 5-6.

8. Examples are in the Winterthur collection.

9. Humphreys used a number of different bird-decorated dies; he shared only one with Woodcock, which presumably was owned by Woodcock and borrowed by Humphreys until he had sufficient capital to purchase his own.





4 Reverse of a silver half-dollar minted in Philadelphia in 1834. This eagle design, by John Reich, was first used in 1807. (Winterthur Museum. Gift of Miss Marion E. Wilson)

10. For a short but informative history of this symbol, see Louise Belden, 'Liberty and the American Eagle on spoons by Jacob Kucher' in Milo M. Naeve (ed), *Winterthur Portfolio III*, 1967, pp110-111.

11. Gaillard Hunt, *The History of the Seal of the United States*, 1909, p7; Frank H. Sommer, 'Emblem and Device: The Origin of the Great Seal of the United States', *Art Quarterly* vol 24 no1, Spring 1961, p76.

12. Prior to this time, the principal medium of exchange in America was the British pound sterling, in conjunction with numerous other national currencies. Coins were minted in America prior to 1794 but they were issued by individual states.

colonies that profoundly altered which birds were depicted. Growing tension between George III and Parliament for political control fostered a popular sentiment for individual liberties of thought, speech, and actions. As that sentiment was more forcefully expressed by men such as John Wilkes (1727-97) – England's most outspoken proponent of free speech – the caged songbird came to be seen as an appropriate symbol for the struggle being waged.<sup>[3]</sup> That image began to appear increasingly in this highly charged symbolic context, as can be seen in the masthead of *The Boston-Gazette and Country Journal* at the time of the American Revolution.<sup>10</sup> English and American silversmiths were not insensitive to the mood of their constituents in this respect, as evidenced by examples of their work that depict the same image. And lest there be any doubt as to the meaning of the iconography, the bird clearly sings forth the word 'LIBERTY' on a banner above its head.

The vogue for birds as ornament on the backs of silver spoon bowls seems to have spent itself in England by the close of the eighteenth century. Examples from after 1800 can be found, but they are rare. Conversely, American silversmiths continued to fashion bird-decorated spoons well into the nineteenth century. They are, however, quite different from what had come before and are totally unlike anything previously made in England. With the successful culmination of the Revolution, Americans sought a new identity—one that represented them as politically independent and as an equal partner in the international arena. Concern over identifying the proper image to convey Americans' self-perception began almost immediately after hostilities ceased. On 4 July 1776, Congress resolved to establish a committee 'to prepare a device for a Seal of the United States of America'. Following six years of discussion, sometimes acrimonious, Congress approved the design on 20 June 20 1782. It was, of course, the American bald eagle, which the founders felt best symbolized 'the great tradition of European humanism ... and ... the aspirations and spirit of the new republic'.<sup>11</sup>

While members of Congress were struggling to identify a national symbol, they were also contemplating the establishment of a federal mint to coin money. Plans were approved to do so on 21 February 1782, and construction began on 2 April 1792. With completion of the building, installation of coining equipment and the hiring of professional staff, the United States began to stamp federal coins.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, the silver half-dimes, dimes, quarter dollars, half-dollars, dollars, and gold five- and ten-dollar pieces that the mint began to issue in 1794 as a universal medium of exchange for goods and services, were avidly sought. Without exception, all coins were ornamented on the reverse with the American bald eagle.

The value in those coins gave Americans purchasing power. The imagery on them provided a source of artistic inspiration. The silver dollar issued by the



5 Detail of a teaspoon, Samuel Krause, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1808-15. (Private collection)

United States mint in 1794 and 1795 depicted a spread-wing eagle with slender, arching neck and wings held high. Robert Scott, chief engraver for the mint between 1793 and 1823, designed the image.

One final example demonstrates the close relationship between designs on American coins and silver spoons during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The eagle with shield-adorned body and asymmetric wings, grasping arrows in one talon and a laurel bough in the other, was used on fifty-cent pieces issued by the mint from 1807 to 1873.<sup>[4]</sup> John Reich, assistant engraver at the mint from 1807-17, designed the image and it was adapted with virtually no change on a teaspoon made by Samuel Krause.<sup>[5]</sup>

Spoons, being small, commonplace, and of humble purpose, can easily be overlooked as useful tools for understanding our past. As shown in this essay, however, in addition to being objects of true beauty, spoons can be an informative record of deep-seated and traditional cultural values. Indeed, in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century America – a formative era in our history – spoons certainly proved to be a significant vehicle for expressing creativity as well as a new national identity.

*This is a shortened version of the text for the exhibition catalogue 'Flights of Fancy, American Silver Bird-Decorated Spoons', Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 2000.*



# Some misidentified Munster goldsmiths

Conor O'Brien

Munster is the southern and largest of the four provinces of Ireland, comprising the counties of Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the province was the most populous one in Ireland, with goldsmiths active in several of the larger towns, contrasting with the other provinces where similar activity outside the provincial capitals was exceptional.<sup>1</sup> Identification of the work and marks of some hitherto obscure goldsmiths working in Clonmel, Limerick, Waterford and Youghal is the aim of this paper.



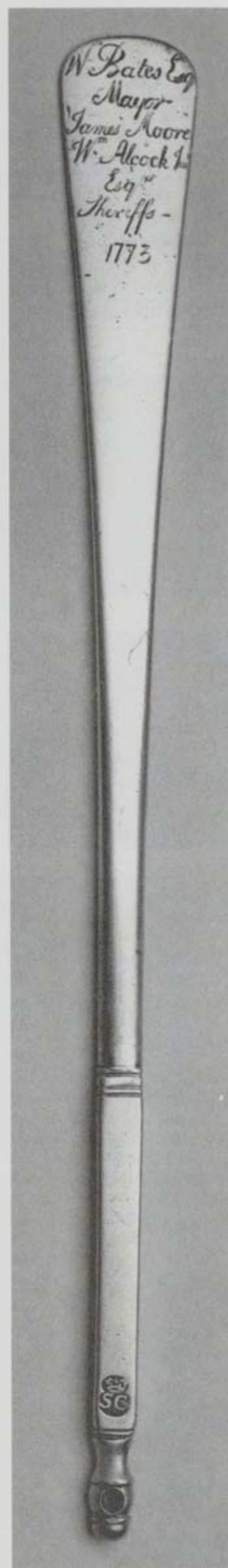
1 Province of Munster, in the south of Ireland, comprising the counties of Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford.

## Clonmel

Interest in examining Clonmel, County Tipperary, as a centre of silversmithing was given added stimulus by the appearance in a saleroom last year of a rare trefoil spoon bearing the twice repeated marks HB conjoined and a sailing ship.<sup>2</sup> These marks were attributed to one Hercules Beere (*sic*) of Clonmel 1660–79. Given its inland location, the attribution of the mark of a sailing ship to Clonmel seems unconvincing and it would appear more likely that the spoon was made in Youghal, County Cork, with which the ‘town mark’

of a sailing boat or yawl has long been associated.<sup>3</sup> These marks will be discussed later.

There is, however, no uncertainty about the existence of a goldsmith by name Hercules Beere working in Clonmel in the early 1700s, and probably in the last decade or so of the previous century. The minutes of the Dublin Goldsmiths Company for 23 June 1705 record the admission of Robert Cuffe as a freeman, having served seven years apprenticeship to ‘Mr Hercules Beer, a Goldsmith in Clonmel’. Cuffe worked as a quarter brother in Dublin 1702–03, which indicates that his apprenticeship to Beere had com-



2 Silver oar of the Waterbailiff of Waterford, Samuel Clayton of Waterford, circa 1773.



Top:  
4 Cup, Jeremiah Morgan  
of Clonmel, circa 1750.

Bottom:  
5 Salver, Jeremiah  
Morgan of Clonmel, circa  
1750. The inscription  
(below) is on the reverse.

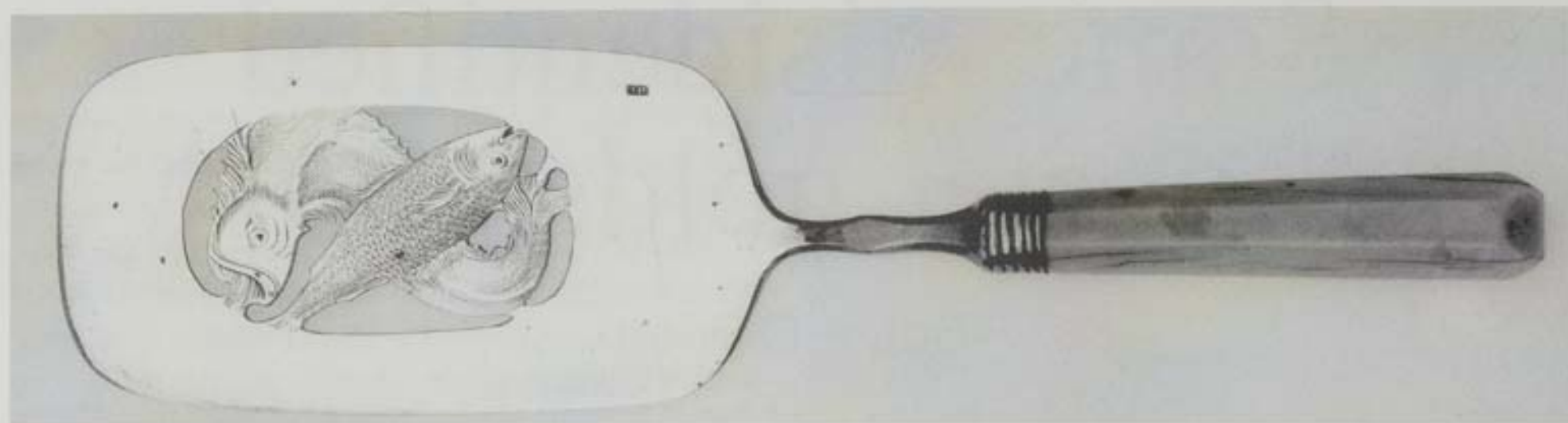


*The Gift of W<sup>m</sup> Smyth Esq<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Esther  
Smyth to M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Smyth*  
22.10

1. Kilkenny in the province of Leinster was the principal exception.

2. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, 28 June 2000, lot 158. The marks being excessively worn are not illustrated here.

3. I. Pickford (ed), *Jackson's Silver & Gold Marks*, Woodbridge 1989, pp734-5, hereafter Pickford.



3 Fish server, with ivory handle, Theophilus Harvey of Clonmel, circa 1810. (Phillips)

menced at least seven years before 1702, in turn showing that Beere was established in Clonmel as a master goldsmith at least as early as 1695. Indeed he is very likely the same Hercules Beere, a merchant resident in Clonmel, who was attainted under an Act of Attainder passed by the parliament of James II in March 1689.<sup>4</sup> The victory of King William over James was good for Beere and thereafter we note his steady progress in the town's business and political life. He was one of the two bailiffs of the town in 1697.<sup>5</sup> In September 1703 he was named as one of twelve persons for 'assessing and applotting the town of Clonmel', and in 1704 held the post of Chamberlain.<sup>6</sup> He was elected mayor of Clonmel in 1720. He gradually acquired property in the town and its neighbourhood. Some of the deeds relating to these transactions describe him as 'goldsmith', but by the time of making his will in 1728 his abode had moved

are shown in Tables I (line for 1698) and II (line for 1712) of Cork marks given in Jackson.<sup>11</sup> Both seem, however, to represent the conjoined initials HB rather than IB. Given the existence of Hercules Beere as a prominent goldsmith in a neighbouring town, it would be more reasonable to attribute these pieces of plate to Beere rather than Jonathan Buck of Limerick, with the most credible explanation for the comb-like heraldic device being that it was intended to suggest the bridge shown on the arms of Clonmel. As depicted on the Corporation sword and maces, the municipal arms consist in part of 'a bridge of three arches in fess masoned'.<sup>12</sup>

Hercules Beere's will, dated 16 April 1728, perished in the destruction of Ireland's Public Record Office in 1922. However, a century prior to that an abstract had been made by the genealogist Sir William Betham. This lists an only son Hercules, a sister Charity – wife of Jeremiah Morgan, a sister Jane – wife of Samuel Atkins, and another sister Elizabeth – wife of Edward Gillett.<sup>13</sup> Edward Gillett is probably the Youghal goldsmith of that name while Jeremiah Morgan was a successful goldsmith working in Clonmel. He was prominent in the political and business life of the town, being returned as one of the bailiffs in 1725 and mayor in 1738, 1747 and 1750.<sup>14</sup> Jeremiah's son Hercules Morgan was also a goldsmith, and in 1754 married Jane Terry – sister of the well known Cork goldsmith Carden Terry.<sup>15</sup>

#### Jeremiah Morgan's mark

Jeremiah Morgan's name first appears in the records of the Dublin Goldsmiths Company in 1712 when he was listed as a quarter brother.<sup>16</sup> Later records show that between 5 December 1732 and sometime in 1755 parcels of plate were occasionally received for assay from 'Morgan, Clonmel'.<sup>17</sup> Also at this time parcels of plate were being regularly received from John Moore, a prominent Dublin goldsmith. Two quite different versions of makers' marks comprising the initials IM are found on Dublin hallmarked plate of this period. One consists of roman capitals, the other of crudely cut sanserif letters [Mk 1]. That the latter is the Clonmel maker's mark is convincingly suggested by the local ownership of some items bearing this particular mark, some with Dublin hallmarks, others struck with the provincial indicator

outside the town to Ballyboe, when his designated status had risen to 'gentleman'.<sup>7</sup>

Only two pieces which can be confidently attributed to Hercules Beere of Clonmel are as yet recorded, both communion cups. One belonged to the Anglican parish church of Dunkerrin, in the vicinity of Roscrea, Co Tipperary. It bears a presentation inscription dated 26 October 1698. The markings have been described as consisting of two incuse marks, twice repeated, one a comb-shaped object apparently resembling a battlemented building, the second the letters IB or HB conjoined and enclosed in an oval.<sup>8</sup> The other communion cup belonged to the parish church of Knockgraffon, County Tipperary. It bears a presentation inscription dated 10 August 1712, with marks described as in some ways similar to the Dunkerrin chalice.<sup>9</sup> When shown in an exhibition of Church of Ireland silver in the National Gallery of Ireland in May 1970 it was catalogued as 'Limerick made by Jonathan Buck' with the comment that 'The comb like mark is probably the Limerick Castle'.<sup>10</sup> Impressions of the marks, apparently based on these two pieces,



‘STERLING’ [Mk 2] as on the salver in [5]. The salver bears a crest which may be described as a demi-bull rising from a ducal coronet. This is associated with the Smyth family of Ballynatray, County Waterford, some five miles or so north of Youghal. The Ballynatray seat was established in Elizabethan times by Sir Richard Smyth, Kt, who had married a sister of Richard Boyle, the first Earl of Cork, of whom more anon. Sir Richard’s son and heir was Sir Percy Smith, whose third son William established a seat at Headborough, a few miles north of Ballynatray and some twenty-five miles or so distant from Clonmel. Beneath the maker’s mark ‘IM’ and ‘STERLING’ on the reverse of the salver is the inscription *The Gift of Wm. Smyth Esqr. & Mrs. Esther Smyth to Mr. Wm. Smyth.*

The donors may be identified as a later generation William Smyth of Headborough and his wife Esther, who in 1748 made over a substantial portion of their holdings in counties Cork, Tipperary and Waterford to their nephew William, only son of William senior’s eldest brother Percy Smyth, then deceased.<sup>18</sup> It is probable that the salver was a present given around this time by the apparently childless couple to their favourite nephew and that it was commissioned in the nearby town of Clonmel. Contemporary items of plate belonging to churches in the Clonmel hinterland have also been noted with the same IM stamp, supporting the Jeremiah Morgan title to this mark.<sup>19</sup> Jeremiah Morgan’s son Hercules was also a working goldsmith in Clonmel and examples of his work too are found in churches in the Clonmel catchment area.<sup>20</sup>

In compliance with an Act of 1784, several Clonmel-based goldsmiths registered with the Dublin Goldsmiths Company between then and 1815 but, except for Theophilus Harvey, their work has not been identified.<sup>21</sup> In February 1815 Harvey submitted a parcel of 42oz 10dwt to the Dublin Assay Office, apparently the sole occasion he sought the metropolitan stamp of approval. The unattributed maker’s mark TH in a rectangle, recorded on a pewter plate in the Dublin Assay Office, is very probably his.<sup>22</sup> The same mark is struck on the fish server in fig[3]. Stylistically, this piece appears to be Irish while the absence of official hallmarks points to a provincial origin.<sup>23</sup> A similarly marked Irish-style sugar bowl is believed to be in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.<sup>24</sup>

### Limerick

An exhibition, entitled *North Thomond Church Silver 1425–1820*, held in The Hunt Museum, Limerick, last year, provided a rare opportunity to view inaccessible pieces of early Limerick-made silver.<sup>25</sup> Amongst the exhibits of interest in the present context was a paten from St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick. It was described as circa 1710 on the grounds that the marks – a castle gateway between two towers and a maker’s mark ‘IB’ with stars between – were long considered to be the marks of Jonathan Buck I, a Limerick silversmith 1698–1725. Another exhibit, a chalice and



6 Sugar bowl, Jeremiah Morgan of Clonmel, Dublin circa 1750. (National Museum of Ireland)

companion paten bearing a presentation inscription *Ex do. Simos Eaton Armr Par Askeaton Anno 1663.* While neither of these latter pieces bore a maker’s mark, they did bear the castle gateway mark, apparently struck from the same punch used on the earlier mentioned paten. In addition they were stamped with an eight-rayed device reminiscent of a starfish, frequently found on Limerick silver.<sup>26</sup> Another exhibit,

4. W.P.Burke, *The History of Clonmel*, Boethius Press 1983, 2nd ed, p109

5. *ibid* p271.

6. *ibid* p144.

7. Registry of Deeds, Dublin; see for example Memorials 21.496.12255; 101.387.71363; 114.51.77959.

8. R.Wyse Jackson, ‘Old Church Silver of East Killaloe’ in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, ii 1940–41, p67; hereafter NMAJ.

9. *Ibid*.

10. *Church Disestablishment 1870–1970; A Centenary Exhibition*, National Gallery of Ireland, 1970, item 171.

11. Pickford, pp710–11. I have not personally examined these two pieces.

12. Burke, pp235,237.

13. National Library of Ireland, G.O. MS 228, vol vi; National Archives, Ireland, MS BET 1.4, p85.

14. Burke, pp116–8, 230.

15. Registry of Deeds, Dublin, Memorial 165.515.112953. Interestingly, the marriage deed was witnessed by Stephen Mackrill, Cork, jeweller: a maker’s mark attributed to Mackrill is shown in Jackson’s Cork marks (Pickford, p714).

16. Pickford, p688.

17. Jeremiah Morgan may well have sent plate to be assayed in Dublin before December 1732. There is a gap in the records between May 1725 and November 1728, while plate was submitted ‘for Clonmel’ by Dublin-based Noah Vialas in 1729 and again by him in 1730 ‘for Country’.

18. Reg. of Deeds, Mem. 131.423.89695 which cites the relationship. The pedigree of this generation of the family given in Burke’s *Landed Gentry of Ireland*, 1912 ed, p650, appears to be defective.

19. An excellent illustration of the Morgan mark (unattributed) on a chalice belonging to

Thurles parish and dated 1748 is given in D. Bennett, *Irish Georgian Silver*, 1972, p263.

20. See for example a chalice and paten, with maker’s mark H.M in a rectangle and Dublin hallmarks, c.1765, belonging to the parish of Cullen, Co. Tipperary, on exhibition in the GPA-Bolton Library, Cashel. Another example is a paten in Clonmeen church, recorded in C.A.Webster, *The Church Plate of Cork, Cloyne and Ross*, Cork 1909, p89.

21. Pickford, p705

22. See Pickford, p654 where it is shown third from bottom in the third column.

23. Phillips, London, 25 June 1999, lot 333

24. Regrettably, a photograph of the mark could not be obtained.

25. Thomond was a medieval kingdom which embraced portion of north Munster. Copies of the attractively produced exhibition catalogue are presently available from the Hunt Museum.





7 Flagon and chalice from Bruhenny, co Cork, given by Sir John Percivall, circa 1660. Maker's mark IB (illustrated as Mk 3). (Photo: Tom Lynch)

26. The symbolism of the star-form device on certain Limerick silver remains obscure, but see, however, J. Wallace, 'Origin of the Early Marks on Limerick Silver', *NMAJ*, iv, 1944, pp75-6.

27. R. Wyse Jackson, 'Some Irish Provincial Silver', *NMAJ*, viii, 1959, p4.

28. Webster, pp13,87. R. Wyse Jackson, 'An Introduction to Irish Silver', *NMAJ*, ix, 1962-63, p22. The marks were dated 1710 by Jackson; see Pickford, p724.

29. Wyse Jackson, *ibid*; M. Archdall, *The Peerage of Ireland*, Dublin 1789, vol II, pp253-4.

30. *Report on the MSS of the Earl of Egmont*, H.M.C., 1905, vol I, lix.

31. Tony Sweeney, *Irish Stuart Silver*, Dublin 1995, pp34-43.

32. N. Canny, *The Upstart Earl*, Cambridge 1982, pp 6,20 and *passim*.

formerly belonging to Kilmastulla parish and now in Killaloe Cathedral, bore the same castle gateway stamp, its maker's mark partially obliterated though retaining the first initial 'I' and mullets seen on the Limerick Cathedral paten.<sup>27</sup> It was pertinently noted that this chalice and the Askeaton chalice dated 1663 were virtually identical in form. This suggested that they may have had common origins, and not alone that but that all three pieces may have been made contemporaneously. Subsequently, both the Kilmastulla and Askeaton chalices were observed to be very similar to a well-documented chalice formerly belonging to the parish of Bruhenny in north county Cork.<sup>28</sup> This chalice and its companion flagon are inscribed *Ex dono Viri honorabilis Johannis Percivall Equitis Aurati in usum Parochialis de Browheny*. [7] The maker's mark, a quatrefoil stamp containing the initials I B separated by three mullets or stars, and the 'town' mark of a castle gateway [Mk 3] were identical to those found on the pieces already mentioned. By virtue of his being designated an 'eques auratus' the donor of the Bruhenny plate has been identified as the John Percivall who was knighted on 22 July 1658 by Lord Deputy Henry Cromwell, with whom he had been intimate as a student at Cambridge. On 9 September 1661 he was created a baronet by King Charles.<sup>29</sup> This therefore means that the Percivall gift can be dated to the period between his conferment with a knighthood and his later elevation to a baronetcy. Correspondingly, the other pieces may be confidently considered as also made in the 1660s.

Sir John Percivall had inherited an immense estate in Ireland from his father Sir Philip Percivall, and held a number of highly lucrative State offices in Ireland during his lifetime, successfully managing to attract

the favour of Charles II despite his intimacy with the Cromwellians. His principal ancestral home, Liscarroll Castle, had been partially destroyed during the wars of the 1640s and 1650s and in 1659 he commenced 'building a small nest', as he termed it in a letter to Henry Cromwell, in nearby Ballymacow.<sup>30</sup> It was probably around this time that he made the donation of plate to the local church. He died on 1 November 1665 at the early age of 36. Throughout the course of his public life he was closely associated with a neighbour, Roger Boyle, fifth son of the Earl of Cork. Because political events at this time, particularly as they related to the Boyles and Percivalls, had a certain influence on the course of silver in Munster, it may be helpful at this point to touch briefly on the broader historical picture.

### Irish Civil War 1641-53

Provoked principally by Catholic discontent and fear of the Puritan administration in Britain, on 22 October 1641 a rising broke out in Ulster. Tension between Charles I and Parliament in England disabled the government from dealing effectively with the situation and soon the whole island became engulfed in a bitter and prolonged civil war which, while denominational in most respects, was interlinked with the conflict on the neighbouring island that resulted in the King's execution in January 1649. In July Oliver Cromwell arrived in Ireland, determined to eradicate Catholicism and repair Royalist misrule. Massacres followed in towns that showed resistance to Cromwell but he was obliged to return to England in May 1650 to deal with the worsening situation there. His equally hardline son-in-law General Ireton took over from him but by this stage Ireland had been virtually reduced to submission. All meaningful opposition petered out over the next few years, with hostilities ending without formality in 1653. Twelve years of conflict, exacerbated by famine in 1648 and plague in 1649, had left the country utterly devastated, and it was not until the 1670s that rent and population levels recovered to previous levels. The impact of the war on goldsmiths' livelihoods may be gauged from the paucity, relative to the more peaceful periods before and afterwards, of surviving pieces of Irish-made plate reliably datable to 1641-60.<sup>31</sup>

One person who did well by the Rebellion was Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill. He was born in Lismore Castle, County Waterford, in 1621. His father, Canterbury-born Richard Boyle, had arrived in Ireland on 23 June 1658 with £27-3s in his purse, and through various sharp and shady property acquisitions became in due course the wealthiest person in Ireland.<sup>32</sup> His willingness to lend money to Charles I endeared him to the King who in 1616 honoured him with the title of Baron of Youghal, advancing him in 1620 to the Earldom of Cork. In 1627, the earl's third surviving son Roger was raised to the peerage as Baron of Broghill, though but six years old then. After



spending some years abroad on the Grand Tour, followed by a period of service in England and Scotland, Lord Broghill returned to Ireland a few days before the 1641 Rebellion broke out. He was immediately given a troop of horse by his father, taking part in the defence of Lismore and subsequently distinguishing himself fearlessly and ruthlessly in several other engagements during the war. He narrowly escaped death in an engagement at Percivall's Liscarroll seat in 1642, to become in later life one of the most influential players in the settlement of Ireland.

It has been remarked that Broghill 'accommodated himself with apparent ease to changing political situations'.<sup>33</sup> Thus after the execution of Charles I he switched tack to Cromwell without compunction, and after the latter's death and when the Cromwell family star appeared to be in decline, Broghill engaged in devious schemes to restore Charles II. He was rewarded by the King in July 1660 with a pardon for all crimes and offences and in September raised to the dignity of Earl of Orrery. Throughout his career under both Cromwell and Charles II he was the beneficiary of large estates in Munster that had been confiscated from rebels, as well as appointments to a number of highly lucrative and influential Government offices such as a Lord Justice of Ireland, membership of the Privy Council, and Lord President of Munster. In the latter capacity he appointed Sir John Percivall to be a member of his Council of State, and set about creating a presidential court at Charleville where the foundation stone for a new mansion was laid on 29 May 1661, the first anniversary of Charles II's re-entry into London. Writing to the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Ormond, on 11 December 1663 from Charleville, 'which is the name some godfathers have given the new home I am now in, ... it being now called by the heathenish name of Rathgoggane', he went on to say how he was establishing linen and woollen manufactures there and 'all other good trades'. Orrery actively promoted economic progress throughout his domains and was aided in this by the King who in March 1661 ordered that such foreigners as Orrery named should be admitted into their corporations to encourage trade and manufactures in various chosen towns. Thus Orrery settled forty Dutch families in Limerick, whose efficiency in the manufacture of linen, he wrote, 'did my heart good'.<sup>34</sup> His interest in establishing 'good trades' in Charleville does not seem to have extended to goldsmiths. It is likely though that he presented some plate to the local parish church but of this later. The situation in Limerick as regards encouraging goldsmiths appears, however, to have been more positive.

John Bucknor

Papers surviving amongst the Orrery archives at Petworth include a few relating to transactions with goldsmiths.<sup>35</sup> One of these is a receipt dated 12 September 1665 issued by a John Bucknor to Orrery for old plate to be used making a fruit dish. Another,

dated 15 December 1666, is an account from John Bucknor covering the supply of twenty-two trencher plates, two spoons and two communion cups, as well as repairs to a cistern, candlesticks and a pair of snuffers. Offset against the charge for the plates and spoons was an allowance for two London 'tutched' flaggons, two Dublin flagons, three old sockets, an old pair of snuffers and, intriguingly, 'a Corke tutched spoune'. Bucknor's charge for fashioning the new plates was at the rate of 8d per ounce; engraving Orrery's arms on them was charged at 2s6d. each, while crests on two spoons and one candle socket cost 5s. The charge for the two communion cups, which were apparently not engraved, was £10-10s. It would be interesting to know what Bucknor interpreted as the Cork touch mark at that time, which, presuming the spoon was an old one, would have been applied some time before 1666, a period about which our knowledge of Cork silver is vague to say the least, with no evidence at all that any form of official assaying or 'touching' of plate was in operation there.

A rental roll, undated but apparently of the later 1660s, shows that Orrery had then two tenants described as goldsmiths, in High Street, Limerick, John Bucknor paying £24 per annum for a 21-year lease, and a William Smith £6 per annum for a similar lease. A later rental roll recorded that another goldsmith, Randall Hicks, obtained a 21-year lease in High Street commencing 28 March 1668 at £15 per annum. John Bucknor ceased to be listed on Orrery's rent rolls after the year ending 25 March 1671, and is presumably the person of that name whose will was admitted to probate in 1671.<sup>36</sup> William Smith's name is not found on a new rental roll made on 22 February 1675/6 while Randall Hicks continued to be returned as a tenant in the year commencing 25 March 1678.<sup>37</sup> No items of plate have as yet been noted bearing marks that could be reasonably assigned to Hicks or William Smith of Limerick. However, there seems hardly any doubt but that John Bucknor was the maker of the pieces bearing the IB mark under discussion. An intriguing question that remains to be definitively resolved is where did Bucknor come from to Limerick and where did he learn his craft.

Youghal

In medieval times Youghal was an important walled town trading with ports all over Europe and was created one of the Irish 'Cinque Ports' in 1462. Jackson lists several goldsmiths working there in the early 1600s.<sup>38</sup> These would have been organised under a Company of Hammermen from 1657 when a guild embracing goldsmiths, pewterers and such like trades was incorporated by mayoral charter.<sup>39</sup>

The town has particularly close associations with the Boyle family. Richard, 1st Earl of Cork, had one of his principal residences there and when he died in 1643 was buried there.<sup>40</sup> Here too his son Roger, the Earl of Orrery, was buried when he died in 1679 in

33. Kathleen Lynch, *Roger Boyle, First Earl of Orrery*, Knoxville, 1995, preface (vii).  
34. *ibid*, p112.  
35. Orrery MSS, Petworth, G.S. 15, 16. These have been accessed in the Nat. Lib. of Ireland on microfilm p7074.  
36. Sir Edward Vicars, *Index to Prerogative Wills of Ireland 1536-1810*, Dublin 1897, p61. Bucknor is possibly also the John Backnar (*sic*) listed as one of the two sheriffs of Limerick in 1666: see Maurice Linehan, *History of Limerick*, Dublin 1866, p703.  
37. E. MacLysaght (ed), *The Calendar of Orrery Papers*, Dublin 1941, pp219-221  
38. Pickford, p736.  
39. R.Day, 'Memoirs of Youghal', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, xii, 1903, p42.  
40. Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork (1566-1643) had five sons and eight daughters. The eldest son, Richard, became 2nd Earl of Cork and in 1664 1st Earl of Burlington; the third son, Roger, (1621-79) was created Baron of Broghill in 1627 and Earl of Orrery in 1660.



41. Bailiffs, or sheriffs as they were called in some other boroughs' charters of incorporation, were elected officials immediately below the rank of mayor.

42. Richard Caulfield, *The Council Book of the Corporation of Youghal*, Guildford 1878. This is a thorough and comprehensive summary of the surviving Youghal town records. I have trawled the original town books (now housed in the Cork Archives Institute) for information on goldsmiths that might not have been revealed in Caulfield's book but without gleaning anything additional.

43. *ibid.*, p200

44. J. Walton, 'The Subsidy Roll of Co. Waterford', *Analecta Hibernica*, xxx, 1982, p71. This relates to a tax assessment to ease Charles II's financial problems, especially the maintenance of the Army in Ireland.

45. Caulfield, *passim*

46. Dean Webster (as note 20) stated that the marks on the paten were the same as on the flagon and cup. Bishop Wyse Jackson (as note 27), alluding to Webster's misreading of the marks on the paten, stated that they consisted of the Cork three-master town mark, identical with those of Charleville and Castlemartyr [communion cups], together with the Cork version of IB in a dotted circle. However, the photo clearly shows the maker's mark to be HB conjoined.

47. Bonhams & Brooks London, 12 October 1993 lot 315



8 Tankard, probably Hercules Beere of Youghal, circa 1675. (Bonhams & Brooks)

nearby Castlemartyr. One of the many appointments Lord Orrery, or Lord Broghill as he then was, had in his lifetime was Military Governor of Youghal in 1644–45. At that same time one of the two bailiffs<sup>41</sup> of the Corporation of Youghal, was one John Bucknor. No doubt John Bucknor became well acquainted with Lord Broghill during his tenure of office.

John Bucknor became a freeman of Youghal on 17 September 1643 but unfortunately the surviving town records do not record his trade or occupation.<sup>42</sup> It may be credibly presumed that he was either the same person or a son of a John Bucknor who since 1620 had been farmer of a substantial estate in nearby Dromore, Co. Waterford. Bucknor's lease was renewed on 16 August 1641. The indenture recording it was endorsed by the landlord on 14 September 1642, noting that Bucknor had carried out many improvements on the lands and had erected many buildings, 'which said houses are burned down and demolished by this Rebellion, the quicksets spoiled, and all his stock of great value taken from him by the Rebels, to the undoing of himself, wife and children'. Ten years later, on 11 May 1652, Bucknor took the unusual expedient of entering on record in the Youghal 'Town Book' a copy of the deed. The reason given was that Bucknor feared 'the deed may miscarry by the distempers of these times'.<sup>43</sup> That gives a flavour of this turbulent period and the problems for parents, concerned with the uncertainty of life and prospects for their children then. That John Bucknor had died before 1662 is indicated by the Subsidy Roll of Waterford in 1662 where Mary Bucknor, widow, is listed as the occupier of Upper Dromore.<sup>44</sup>

The John Bucknor who was bailiff in 1644–45 is not further encountered in the Youghal records, leaving it open to speculation as to whether, if he were the goldsmith we encounter in Limerick two decades



9 Tankard, probably Hercules Beere of Youghal, with an inscription dated 1679.

later, he might not have gone abroad to earn a living at this time, returning at the behest of Orrery when normality returned in 1660. Given that in 1632–33, three goldsmiths, Daniel Wright, Daniel McRory and John Sharpe, were admitted to be inhabitants of Youghal with permission to practise trades, and likewise another goldsmith, John Smith, in 1638 there would appear to have been a thriving business in Youghal immediately before the Rebellion, in turn suggesting opportunities for apprenticeships.<sup>45</sup> It is not inconceivable therefore that John Bucknor may have learned the craft in Youghal at this time, subsequently being encouraged by Orrery to revive the craft in Limerick.

HB conjoined:

is it Hercules Beere, sen, of Youghal?

In addition to the spoon mentioned at the beginning of this article, other pieces known stamped with a sailing vessel and a maker's mark HB conjoined and contained within a circle [Mk 6] include a paten belonging to Bruhenny church, *en suite* with the chalice and flagon mentioned earlier and bearing the same Latin inscription acknowledging Sir John Percivall as the donor.<sup>46</sup> Another is the tankard with the flat domed cover illustrated [8 & Mk 5],<sup>47</sup> as also a tankard with a simpler, stepped flat cover [9 & Mk 7]. The latter tankard bears an inscription 'The gift of Capt. Richard Bent to his grandson & godson Richard Croker 1679'. Captain Bent resided in Carrignecota outside Youghal and died on 10 April 1680. None of these sets of marks is identical, which may suggest that the career of the maker was a busy one, spanning the useful life of several punches. Other pieces said to have these or similar marks are a communion cup and paten belonging to Lismore Cathedral, each inscribed with the date



Christ<sup>r</sup> Oliver of Cork A.D. 1691  
 Will proved 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 1691 mentions his wife Alice son Edward  
 1<sup>st</sup> Dr Blyth Barbara Frances Alice - Ment<sup>ed</sup> <sup>all</sup> <sup>new</sup> <sup>rich</sup>  
 Beere gold<sup>th</sup> Youghall son Edward Head<sup>ed</sup> <sup>adulter</sup> Rich<sup>d</sup> Beard  
 Alice <sup>and</sup> Rich<sup>d</sup> Sampson

10 The will of Alderman Christopher Oliver of Cork, 1691, mentions a Beere of Youghal, goldsmith, possibly Hercules Beere. Detail of an abstract compiled in the 1830s.

1663.<sup>48</sup> Attached to the parish of Ballyhea, Co. Cork, are two cups and cover patens, each inscribed 'Chalice and Cover for the Parish Church of Charleville' and stamped with a ship, the maker's initials HB conjoined, followed by a ship.<sup>49</sup> Two cups and a paten, marked with a ship and the conjoined initials HB, are attached to Castlemartyr parish, each inscribed 'Chalice and Cover for the Chapple of Castlemartyr'.<sup>50</sup> The shape of the Castlemartyr and Charleville cups, as well as the marks, are similar.<sup>51</sup> It is hardly without significance that the Earl of Orrery's two principal seats were at Castlemartyr and Charleville, and having built the church in the latter town,<sup>52</sup> it is very probable that the donor of the church plate in these two instances was the local eminence himself – presuming his tenants in the parish would feel it inexpedient to upstage their landlord with benefactions to the church. It remains to attempt identifying to whom he might have given the commission for this plate.

The name Hercules Beere is an unusual one in an Irish context. In the light of the undisputed fact that there was a goldsmith of that name in Clonmel in the late seventeenth century, who had adopted his initials in conjoined form as his maker's mark, one is inclined to seek a family precedent. The name is first encountered in a statement taken by officials after the outbreak of the rising in 1641 in an effort to identify the persons involved. In County Waterford on 17 June 1642, Hercules Beere of Glenmore in the parish of Lismore,<sup>53</sup> carpenter, deposed that certain named parties had robbed him, claiming his losses amounted to £439.<sup>54</sup> We next find him in Youghal, on 17 May 1647, when the Corporation granted him a seven-year lease of the Youghal Ferry with the condition that he build sufficient boats with all speed to serve the ferry.<sup>55</sup> The Town Book mentions his name on a few other occasions between then and August 1670. His name is not included in a list made on 15 October 1675 of the ratepayers, which would suggest he had either retired or died.

The name Hercules Beere reappears in the town records on 8 August 1686, this time in the list of those levied for a weekly payment towards quartering of soldiers. Presumably this was a son of the former carpenter of Lismore. Next year this Hercules Beere was chosen as one of the two bailiffs of the town but was

put out of office on 5 May 1688 by virtue of a new charter given by King James empowering papists. He was restored to office after the defeat of King James. Thereafter, in the capacity of a burgess, he regularly attended meetings of the Corporation until 1699, when he seems to have retired from active involvement in town affairs, though he is still included in a list of the Common Council in 1712.<sup>56</sup>

The occupation of this later Hercules Beere is not stated at any time in the surviving Youghal Corporation records. Beyond these records, no reference to him could be found in the usual alternative sources of genealogical information such as church records of births, marriages and deaths, and registrations of deeds. However, a tempting indication that he might have been a goldsmith is to be found in a collection of abstracts of wills compiled by one Denis O'Callaghan Fisher in the 1830s and now held by the National Library of Ireland. One of the abstracts deals with the will of Alderman Christopher Oliver of Cork, proved on 1 April 1691.<sup>57</sup> Amongst those mentioned in the will, Fisher lists what appears to be the name 'Nich's Beere, gold'th Youghall', the occupation given as 'gold'th' being presumably an abbreviation for goldsmith. However, as will be appreciated on examining the illustration [10], Fisher appears to have had difficulty deciphering this Beere's forename on the original document, first rendering it as Nicholas, cancelling that and substituting it with what appears to be Ulysses, and finally settling on Achilles. Despite considerable searching of contemporary documents for references to everyone named Beere, an uncommon name in any event, none bearing the forenames offered by Fisher were noted by us. All things considered, the probability is that the name written on the actual will was Hercules Beere, goldsmith of Youghal.

One suspects an association of some kind between Lord Orrery and the Beeres, as with the Bucknors, but this is a matter for further discovery, as also is the precise relationship between Hercules Beere, the Lismore carpenter, and his later namesakes. It is surely remarkable also that Sir John Percivall divided his commission for the Bruhenny church plate between a Limerick goldsmith and another apparently based in Youghal. One suspects the hand of Orrery here too.

48. R. Wyse Jackson, 'Old Church Plate of Lismore Diocese' in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 85 (1955), p57; hereafter JRSAL. The marks on the Lismore pieces are illustrated in Jackson, p710, top of the table of Cork marks.

49. Webster, p88.

50. *ibid*, p121.

51. *ibid*; the Charleville and Castlemartyr cups are illustrated on pp 86 & 120 respectively. Having regard to the misreading of the marks on the Bruhenny paten by previous writers (see note 45) it should be noted that the description of the marks has not been verified by the present writer.

52. *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland*, Edinburgh 1844, i, p391.

53. Lismore is about 14 miles north of Youghal.

54. T. Fitzpatrick, *Waterford during the Civil War*, Waterford 1912, p40.

55. Caulfield, p262.

56. *ibid*, p379 and *passim*.

57. G.O. MS 289, p16. The original will does not seem to have survived the destruction of the Public Record Office in Dublin in 1922.



58. See for example *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1285–92, *passim*.

59. *Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead*, vol vi (1904–06), p158–9.

60. S. Pender, 'The Guilds of Waterford, 1650–1700' in *Jn. Cork Hist. & Arch. Soc.*, lix, 1954, p15

61. 'The Tradesmen's Coinage of Waterford in the Seventeenth Century' in *Waterford & S.E. of Ire. Arch. Soc. Jn.*, viii (1902), p2. If any tokens were issued in 1667, no specimen for that year is known to exist.

62. S. Pender (ed), *Council Books of Waterford, 1662–1700*, Dublin 1964, pp107,108,112

63. *ibid* p123.

64. *ibid*, p146.

65. For further details of these pieces see R. Wyse Jackson, 'Old Church Plate of Lismore Diocese' in *JRSAL*, 85 (1955), p54, and C.B. Warren, 'Notes on the Church Plate of Waterford Diocese', *idem*, 97 (1967), p125–7.

66. Pickford, p737.

67. Pender, *Council Books of Waterford*, p254.

68. *ibid*, p347.

69. *ibid*, p270.

70. Pickford, p739.

71. Mary Clark, 'List of Principal Inhabitants of Dublin City, 1684', *The Irish Genealogist*, vol. 8 (1990), p49.



11 Tankard, Edward Russell, Waterford circa 1675. The arms are those of Porter, a long-established Co. Waterford family name. (National Museum of Ireland)

## Waterford

In medieval times Waterford was second only to Dublin in importance with respect to trade and population, a position reflected to some extent by the occasional mention of Waterford's goldsmiths in State documents of the time.<sup>58</sup> An inscription in Latin on a sixteenth century gravestone within the walls of Waterford's so-called French Church records the burial there of Cornelius Hurley, goldsmith, who died in January 1582, while another one commemorates 'N. Colton, goldsmith'.<sup>59</sup> Possibly there are sixteenth century spoons extant made by such as these, but if so they are likely to be catalogued in auction rooms as 'West Country, unasccribed', the qualification 'west' not being intended to extend across the Irish Sea!

By the seventeenth century Waterford's pre-eminent maritime status on the south coast of Ireland had suffered to the benefit of Cork and Youghal, a situation aggravated by the ruinous events of the 1640s and 1650s when large numbers of natives were expelled from the city. They were replaced with settlers from England, who were imbued with zeal and determination to build better lives in their new colony. A guild of hammermen was given its charter of incorporation in 1657, which *inter alia* embraced goldsmiths, silversmiths, watchmakers and lapidaries.<sup>60</sup> A major problem affecting the development of trade at the time was shortage of coin, a situation furnishing temptation to enterprising swindlers. To restore public confidence, on 17 March 1666/7 the Corporation

itself decided upon the business of coining, and appointed Mr Edward Russell to cut dies for new copper penny tokens. The obverse of Russell's tokens shows the Waterford city arms within the legend CORPORATION OF, with the reverse consisting of a castle with three flags, on either side a tree, and the legend WATERFORD 1668.<sup>61</sup> Russell was again employed by the Corporation, in November 1672, to deface counterfeit pence and to exchange his earlier tokens for regular currency.<sup>62</sup> Described in Latin as 'Edmandus Russell faber argentarius', he was admitted to the freedom of Waterford on 1 September 1674.<sup>63</sup> On 1 April 1675 the newly enfranchised silversmith was given the exclusive right to provide money weights to the inhabitants of Waterford.<sup>64</sup>

In some churches in the Waterford hinterland are items of plate stamped with a maker's mark ER against a background of a shield with a notched border, with a separate stamp of a castle from which flies three flags.<sup>65</sup> Examples are a chalice and paten belonging to Carrick-on-Suir church. These are inscribed *The Gift of the Duke of Ormonds Troop to ye Parish of Carrick Anno Domini 1673*. Carrick lies about thirteen miles north-west of Waterford and the castle there was one of Ormond's favourite residences. Jackson devoted some special attention to similar marks noted on a chalice in Fethard, Co. Tipperary, attributing them, though somewhat tentatively, to an Edward Rothe of Kilkenny on the grounds that a goldsmith of that name was recorded as living there in 1609–24, as well as the fact that some Kilkenny tokens of circa 1657 are found stamped with a triple-masted castle.<sup>66</sup> Clearly the attribution to Rothe was somewhat anachronistic, and given Edward Russell's adoption of the triple masted castle on his official Waterford tokens, there seems no doubt that the marks in question are his. It should be noted that Jackson's depiction of the maker's mark on the Fethard chalice is not considered true to the original. The drawing of the marks [Mk 4] is based on the Carrick chalice and paten, and on a tankard in the National Museum [11].

Contemporaneous with Edward Russell was another silversmith, William Smith (Willelmus Smith faber argentarius), admitted a freeman on 29 September 1676 by right of birth.<sup>67</sup> He was master of the Guild of Hammermen in 1684 and on 28 June 1698 was elected to the office of Mayor for the ensuing year.<sup>68</sup> On 21 December 1686 he was paid £15–10s for providing a gold freedom box which had been presented to the lord lieutenant, Lord Clarendon, on the previous 10 September.<sup>69</sup> It is tempting to suggest that the mark WS shown in Jackson's list of 'Unasccribed Irish Provincial Marks'<sup>70</sup> is that of William Smith of Waterford, but against that is the candidature of William Smith of Limerick whom we have mentioned above, as also the consideration of William Smith, a goldsmith who was a Justice of the Peace in Dublin in 1684.<sup>71</sup>

Thomas Miles was a goldsmith prominent in Waterford politics in the mid-1700s. Admitted a free-



man of Waterford in June 1737, he held various civic offices, including mayor in 1755–56 and again in 1762–63. He died in 1768.<sup>72</sup> Like his neighbouring contemporary, Jeremiah Morgan of Clonmel, who had been elected mayor of his town three times, Miles occasionally sent plate to be assayed in Dublin. In 1754 he submitted two parcels totalling 180 oz to the Dublin Assay Office, the only one answering to the initials TM, who is listed in the records as having plate assayed around this time. A maker's mark, TM in roman capitals within an oblong, on a Hanoverian basting spoon with Dublin marks for 1754/56 is therefore assigned to him.

The Flemings, including Ignatius (died 1755), his son Robert and daughter-in-law Anastasia and this couple's son Ignatius (born 1766), were a family of working goldsmiths in Waterford. The mark I+F below a crown, shown in Jackson's table of unascrived marks, is possibly Ignatius Fleming's.<sup>73</sup> The mark AF in a rectangle was stamped on a pair of salvers by Thomas Jones, Dublin 1778–79, bearing a presentation inscription to the Mayor of Waterford in 1778.<sup>74</sup> While this was most likely Anastasia Fleming's mark, attributing this mark to her in all cases should be tempered by the consideration that plate belonging to a prominent Galway family has been noted bearing a similar mark, which is probably that of Austin French of Galway.<sup>75</sup>

We are on considerably more certain ground when attributing the mark – a crowned SC on a punch of conforming outline, to the allegedly longeval Samuel Clayton of Waterford. We know virtually nothing of his early career. The Corporation minutes for 22 June 1761 record his election that day as one of the Assistants on the Board of the Corporation. *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* reported in their issue of 6 May 1794 the death

in Waterford at the very advanced age of 110 years, Mr Samuel Clayton, formerly an eminent silversmith of this city. He exhibited no apparent diminution of his strength and faculties until a few months previous to his decease, nor has there been any perceptive change in his features or person in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Waterford.

We must, though, cynically bear in mind that official registration of births had not been established in Ireland at that time. A unique piece made by Clayton, the silver oar of the waterbailiff of Waterford is illustrated.<sup>[2]</sup> The blade is engraved on one side with the date 1773 and the names of the mayor and two sheriffs, and on the other side with the Arms of Waterford. The oar was made on foot of a resolution adopted by the Council of Waterford Corporation on 22 April 1773 ordering that the waterbailiff 'be provided at the Expende of this Board with a Hatchet and Silver Oar, which he is always to carry with Him as Ensign of his Office while on Duty ...'.<sup>76</sup>

### Acknowledgements

*I owe Mrs Ida Delamer many thanks for sharing with me the fruits of her researches on some Clonmel and Waterford goldsmiths. I benefitted too from the help and enthusiasm of a coterie of specialists on Limerick silver, Dr John McCormack, Jim Noonan and Clodagh and Michael Lynch. My thanks also to the Revd George Kingston for facilitating us in inspecting the Bruhenny church plate.*



12 Detail from fig 2: arms of Waterford on the reverse of the oar.

72. Minutes of Waterford Corporation. See also list of Waterford wills 1589–1910 in *Waterford & S.E. of Ire. Arch. Soc. Jn.*, viii, 1902, p27.

73. Pickford, p739.

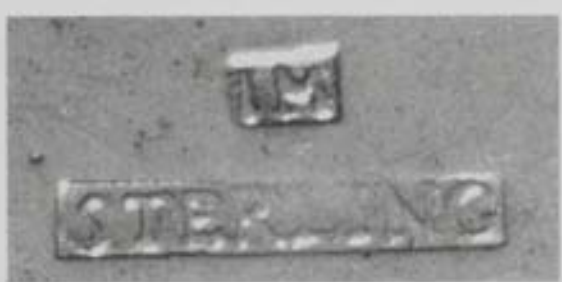
74. Sotheby's, Slane Castle, 20 November 1978, lot 316.

75. Sotheby's, Tulira Castle, Co. Galway, 16 June 1982, lot 67. See also a similar mark amongst the counterfeit plate seized from Reuben Lyon; illustrated in *The Goldsmiths' Company's pamphlet, Spurious Antique Plate*, London 1899, p6.

76. C. O'Brien, 'The Silver Oar of ... Waterford' in *JRSAI*, 125 (1995), pp135–7.



Mk 1 Jeremiah Morgan of Clonmel, from fig 6.



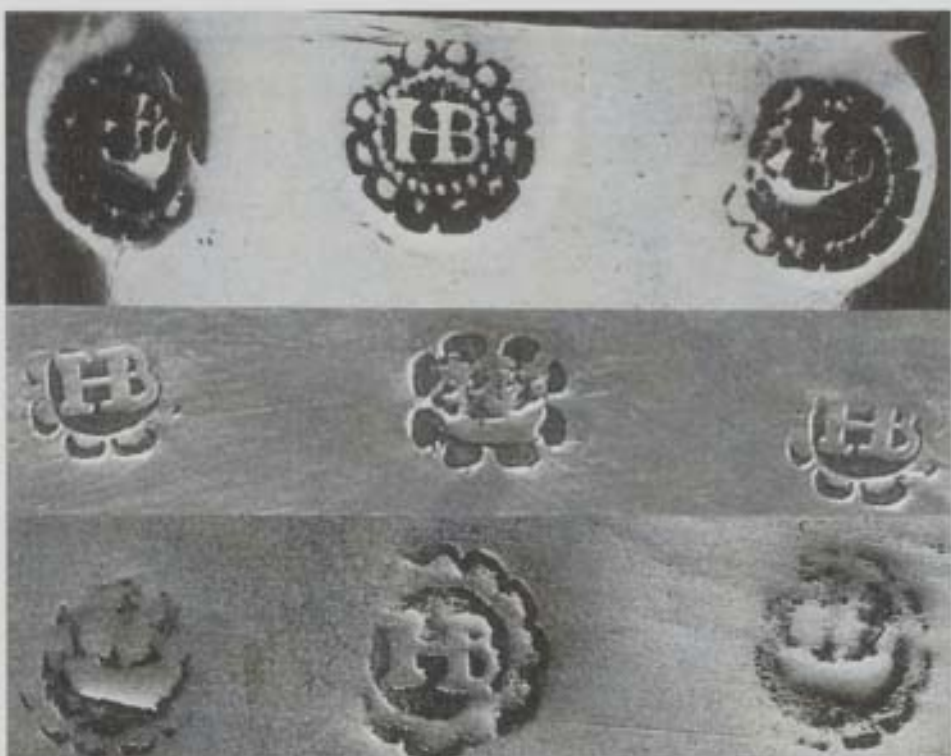
Mk 2 Jeremiah Morgan of Clonmel, from fig 5.



Mk 3 John Bucknor of Limerick, as on the Communion cup fig 7. (photo: Jim Noonan)



Mk 4 Edward Russell of Waterford.



Mk 5 Hercules Beere of Youghal, from fig 8.

Mk 6 Hercules Beere of Youghal, from the Bruhenny paten. (photo: Jim Noonan)

Mk 7 Hercules Beere of Youghal, from fig 9.