

SILVER STUDIES

*The Journal of  
The Silver Society*

NUMBER 19

2005









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## From the editor

As the reputation of this journal grows and the range of its articles widens, I find I am repeating more often to authors the mantra 'Never forget what it's like not to know'. The experience of several summers editing this journal has taught me not to let on – or to try not to let on – when I am asking questions of an author because I know nothing of what he or she is writing about (which is often the case), or because I remember the time when I didn't. It is impossible for an annual journal of this size to encompass every aspect of our subject for all levels of knowledge, but it must contain articles that people want to read, written in a way that is understandable and enjoyable. Scholarship and a good read should not be incompatible bedfellows.

Footnotes can be used to give sources of information but also to explain terminology, give the background to abstruse detail or events that not all readers will know. They are repositories of information that might otherwise clutter and confuse the main story. It is sometimes a struggle to keep these notes under control but they are crucial, as Ian Gow implied recently when reviewing John Cornforth's posthumously-published book *Early Georgian Interiors*: '... doubtless he envisaged that his National Trust curators were expected to read these pages with their fingers marking key illustrations in a pile of guidebooks or such periodicals as *The Silver Society Journal*'. I took this as a compliment, wondered whether we had 'arrived' and was amused to find a grin on my face – but then I began to wonder whether this was the image we really want to convey. I aim to entice people into reading an article in *Silver Studies* and then continue reading for pleasure – not just use the journal to cherry-pick information. This was, in part, the subject of a recent editorial in *Apollo* under the title 'Who is art history for?' which in turn followed an article in the same magazine on the problems facing art publishing and 'the way art historians neglect the needs and interests of the "educated general reader"'. The articles in *Silver Studies* are contributed, for no remuneration, by a mix of 'the educated general reader' and academics/art historians on equal terms. The mix works and is the backbone of this society.

I have received many appreciative comments on last year's journal – more than ever before – for which I am most grateful. Readers have liked the short entries interspersed between articles, you liked the 'basics' pages, and the information on events in the silver world and contemporary work. They make for better bedtime reading. In truth we had been slowly increasing this kind of material for several years without anyone seeming to notice: an extra nudge, coupled with colour, made for a big step forward.

Last year we published the first special issue of the journal, *Silver and the Church*. Copies are still available for those who have missed it to date. This year we are publishing our second special issue, which is the first major piece of research to be carried out under the aegis of the Society's research committee. Judy Jowett's *The Warning Carriers* is a fascinating story, of interest not just to those who like silver; it also covers jewellery, watch-making, London history and topography and crime in the city. Next year we hope to publish the papers given at a symposium on *Rococo* in 2004, in Richmond, Virginia. The editorial computer has been working overtime – I hope you enjoy the results.

Vanessa Brett

### In this journal

Dates are written in the following styles:

*Calendar year pre 1752*

1 January – 24 March  
1563/4

*Assay year (before 1975)*

1563/64

*More than one calendar year*  
1563–67

Weights are in grams and troy ounces unless otherwise stated.

Recent bullion prices:

October 2005

925 standard silver:

£3.12 per ounce

22 carat gold:

£220.43 per ounce

See p116 for details of the cover illustration.

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Any opinions stated in this journal are those of the individual author. Every effort is made to maintain the highest standards but the Silver Society does not guarantee the complete accuracy of opinions or stated facts published here.

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## Our contributors

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Simon Benney has a shop in Walton Street, London where he sells his designs for silver and jewellery, and those of his father, Gerald Benney.

Julia Clarke is the senior specialist at Sotheby's for objects of vertu and gold boxes.

Julian Cousins is the third generation of a family jeweller and silver-smithing business. He has just gained a BA in Fine Art & Antique Valuations for which a version of his present research was his final dissertation.

Victoria and Alexandra Edge carried out research in the studio of their mother, Jenny, who is well known for her enamelling and anticlastic raising, and has exhibited at Goldsmiths' Hall on many occasions. Victoria has already exhibited a necklace at Goldsmiths' Hall.

Johann Michael Fritz was a curator in Bonn and Karlsruhe before becoming lecturer at the universities at Bonn, Basel and Freiburg. He was Professor for the history of medieval art and decorative arts at the University of Heidelberg 1983–98 and is now retired.

Philippa Glanville is Senior Research Fellow at the Victoria and Albert Museum; she was Chief Curator of Metalwork there until 1999. From 1999 to 2003 she was Associate Curator at the Gilbert Collection and Academic Director, Waddesdon Manor.

Gale Glynn has a particular interest in heraldry. She was Chairman of the Society in 1990–91.

Richard Hill is an architect and writer. He is the author of *Designs and their consequences: Architecture and Aesthetics*, Yale 1999.

Timothy Kent has researched extensively the subject of spoons and has published on silver from the West Country and Sussex. He was called to the Bar but entered the business of insurance in 1959, from which he retired in 1991.

Michael Lloyd is one of Britain's leading silversmiths.

David McKinley was a businessman before his retirement and he then began to collect silver. He is particularly interested in social history.

Paul Micio is a specialist in French silver. His publications include the silver inventories of Nicolas Fouquet and he recently co-authored the book, *Les Cuillers à sucre dans l'orfèvrerie française du XVIIIe siècle*. He is currently preparing his doctoral thesis on the collections of precious metalwork of the ducs d'Orléans, at the Sorbonne.

Tim Pestell is Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, responsible for post-Roman collections. He curated the Museum's new Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery, which opened in July 2004. His latest book, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation*, about the early monasteries of East Anglia, was published last year.

Kenneth Quickenden is Jewellery Heritage Professor at the University of Central England. He has been researching the Matthew Boulton archives since the 1970s.

Andrew Renton is Curator (Applied Art) at the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff

Joe Rock is a freelance cultural historian of the long eighteenth century having spent his working life as a photographer. He has published articles on Scottish wallpaper, anatomical illustration, porcelain, sculpture and architecture. His PhD thesis (Edinburgh 1997) is on the life and work of Hugh 'Grecian' Williams (1773–1829).

Antony Sale was a research scientist until his retirement, when he began to research and study silver, primarily that of the county of Gloucestershire.

Eric Smith was manager of S.J. Shrubsole Ltd and then director of the silver department of Phillips (now Bonhams) until his retirement in 1992.

Ben Walker works at Marks Antiques in London where he specialises in twentieth-century British, Continental and Scandinavian silver design. He has a degree in Fine Arts Valuation.

Robert Wenley is Curator of European Art 1600–1800 at Glasgow Museums. He was previously a curator at the Wallace Collection, London (where he worked from 1991 to 2003), and a research assistant at the Norwich Castle Museum (1987–88).

Wynyard Wilkinson has been a student of silver for over forty years. His interests are centred upon the anthropology of the silver trade and how new technologies have affected the production of silver, and also the development of colonial centres of silversmithing. He has written three books on silversmithing in India and numerous articles.





1 *Temperantia* dish, silver, Elkington & Co, Birmingham 1864/65, designed by Benjamin Schlick after Briot and Enderlein.  
(All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club)



# Benjamin Schlick (1796–1872)

WYNYARD WILKINSON WITH MARY-LOUISE HAWKINS

During the course of my 35 years in the silver trade, I have handled many pieces which have piqued my curiosity and compelled me to discover more about their makers, the social context in which they were produced, the process of manufacture, or their provenance. Rare is the piece or pieces, however, which yield discovery in all of these areas. The electrotyped wares designed by Chevalier Benjamin Schlick for Elkington & Co are just such pieces.

A decade or so ago, I was offered a piece of electrotyped silver that absolutely took my breath away. It was elegant in line and sublime to handle, its design reminiscent of classical pieces, yet its designer was unknown to me. I had to discover more, so off to the Public Record Office I went, only to come away with the meanest snapshot of the man responsible for the creation of the beguiling piece. A brief entry in the social column of an 1843 issue of the *London Times* informed me that Chevalier Benjamin Schlick had broken his leg in two places while examining the racecourse at Kilkenny when staying with the Earl and Countess of Belmore at Castle Coole. Rather heady social company for an artisan, but his title told me he was beyond such easy classification.

Further information on Schlick was not forthcoming, and other projects presented themselves, diverting my attention away from my investigation, and so several more years went by until another piece designed by Schlick came my way. Again, the look was distinctive: fine craftsmanship, real presence, and a quintessential nineteenth-century take on classical motifs. This time, I made a sincere effort to discover more about the career of the man who produced these marvellous pieces and what follows is a synthesis of the myriad snippets of information gleaned from diverse and sundry sources. Even now, Schlick remains a faceless phantom, for an image of him has proven strangely elusive. What I did discover was that Benjamin Schlick was one of the most important nineteenth-century interior and industrial designers you've never heard of.

Benjamin Schlick was born in Copenhagen in 1796, the son of the lead violinist at the court of Frederick VI.<sup>1</sup> Frederick VI's reign is considered to have been Denmark's Golden Age, when art, architecture and society flourished under a liberal regime which was funded by the enormous wealth derived from its colonies in the East and West Indies. Sadly, this period of prosperity was brought to an end by the Napoleonic wars.

Young Schlick enjoyed all of the benefits of growing up in court circles; thus he had many acquaintances among the European aristocracy. Orphaned at 11, Schlick remained at court with his mother and was effectively adopted by the King. He studied at the University of Copenhagen architecture school under Peter Brondsted,<sup>2</sup> a charismatic archaeologist, whose retelling of his

1 *Neues allgemeine Kunstlexicon*, Munich 1845 vol 15–16.

2 Margaret Bendtsen, *Danish Architects in Greece 1818–1862*.



2 Monogrammed BS seal of Benjamin Schlick, to be found upon most of the finer pieces of his design; this seal from fig 8. (Minneapolis Institute of Art)





3 Posthumous portrait of George Elkington by Samuel West. (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery)

3 To track his movements and works, it is necessary to refer to the various national reference books on artists published in Germany, France and Italy in the last half of the nineteenth century. Some of his major works are listed in *Histoire de l'Art*, vol VIII, published under the direction of André Michel, 1925-6, pp248-49.

4 *The Times*.

5 *The Times*.

6 The Elkington Archive is held by the National Art Library at Blythe Road, London W14. The reference most applicable to Benjamin Schlick is AAD3-1979 PL8.

7 PRO.BT 43/64 20333 etc.

adventures exploring ancient Rome and Greece inspired many young Danes to inspect the ancient classical remains for themselves.

Benjamin Schlick's interest in architecture manifested itself early: in 1815, at the age of 19, he received a Silver Medal in his course of architectural studies. On leaving university in 1818, he was sent on the Grand Tour for two years, courtesy of his royal patron, with the substantial sum of £400, (the approximate equivalent of £50,000 in today's currency) a year at his disposal. On his return, he studied at the Academy in Copenhagen, before travelling again to Paris, where he produced his first major work: a painstakingly complete series of scaled architectural drawings showing the Odeon theatre and its interiors in minute detail. As a result of this project, he was commissioned by Charles X of France to execute similar drawings of *all* of the great theatres of Paris, as well as those of larger French provincial cities. To this catalogue, Schlick added detailed drawings showing how he felt the ornamentation and accessories of each theatre could be improved.

During this time, Schlick was commissioned to redesign the interiors of the Variety Theatre in Paris, while at the same time he was making frequent trips to London to meet the engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel and observe the building of the latter's tunnel under the Thames. Schlick's drawings of the tunnel were published by the Academie des Beaux Arts in book form in 1826 as: *Rapport fait à l'Académie des beaux arts de l'Institut de France: sur le chemin souterrain, dit tunnel, qui s'exécute en ce moment, sous la Tamise à Londres par Benj. Schlick*.

As an aristocrat moving in rarefied circles, Schlick's peripatetic lifestyle seems an early form of jet-setting. He moved from one royally-sponsored project to another with the kind of fluidity one would have thought possible only in our own times. As a designer, his scope was impressive: he tackled everything from civic interiors to the mechanics of theatre curtains, yet this same versatility is also what makes any research into his life and achievements so difficult. His work defies artistic classification, and he was perpetually on the move. Here is a man from one country, Denmark, whose work is to be found in at least four others: France, Germany, Italy and Great Britain. He is a researcher's nightmare, as he turns up everywhere, yet is recorded in depth nowhere.<sup>3</sup>

In 1828, in recognition of Schlick's monumental work on French theatres, Charles X of France made him chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Then, as he was about to reveal to the King his grandiose plans to decorate the central hall of Paris Hotel de Ville after the Baths at Caracalla, Charles X was deposed in the Revolution of 1830. This was the first of many instances in which political upheaval conspired to interrupt Schlick's career. The masterful plans for the Hotel de Ville thereafter remained in Schlick's portfolio, never again to be presented for consideration. But just as the chevalier was deprived of his French patron, the Duke of Baden summoned him to Bavaria, where Schlick created a new interior for the theatre at Karlsruhe. Next, our man appears in Rome, where the recently elevated Prince Torlonia couldn't imagine building his private theatre without the latest in interior design and technology as furnished by Benjamin Schlick. Not even the unadorned columns of Florence's Palazzo Vecchio escaped Schlick's touch: these he painted in flamboyant Pompeiian motifs.

By 1839, Schlick had acquired the sinecure of Chamberlain to the



Dukes of Lucca. In this capacity, he continued to flit around Europe, invited as a guest to some of the continent's greatest homes. While in Italy, Benjamin Schlick became a leading figure in the preservation and restoration of the Roman ruins as they were excavated at Pompeii. Schlick's interest in new technologies led him to design, develop and patent a vertical pantagraph, in order that designs from antique sources like those at Pompeii might be more accurately copied to scale. His drawings and watercolours of the discoveries in Naples were widely published. Many reached these shores and were, along with the electroplated wares they helped inspire, instrumental in the re-introduction of Neoclassicism to nineteenth-century Britain. The miraculous discoveries at Pompeii were a real passion for Schlick, and he returned there periodically to sketch and observe the excavations for the rest of his life.

It was the year 1843 which saw the start of Schlick's great English adventure. For the chevalier, this was a year of mixed fortunes: as mentioned previously, he broke his leg at the racecourse at Kilkenny,<sup>4</sup> but he appears on the list of those attending Queen Victoria's annual Fancy Dress Ball.<sup>5</sup> He was responsible for Prince Albert's visit to the Elkington factory in Birmingham, and he spent time with Prince Nicolai of Russia on the latter's visit to London. Most significantly, in 1843 Benjamin Schlick met George Elkington, most probably at the Exhibition of British Manufactures held by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, where Elkington was among the exhibitors.[3]

The process of electroplating had only been patented three years before this exhibition, and Elkington was displaying his latest electroplated wares. Alongside the electroplated pieces were some objects that had been copied exactly from originals using the newly invented process of 'electrogalvanic deposition', which from now on I will refer to as electrotyping. Schlick immediately saw the potential of this new form of reproducing works of art, and, on his return to Italy, he summarily resigned his post as Chamberlain in Lucca and threw himself whole-heartedly into the art and technology of electrotyping.

It was Schlick's conviction that 'The aim of industrial art should be to produce the utmost possible effect with

the smallest possible means'. Electrotyping, which provided a mechanical means to reproduce great art on an industrial level, was to Schlick a way to bring high art to the masses, and therefore perfectly suited his philosophy. This notion also coincided neatly with Elkington's profit-driven ethos. Electrotyping was seen by Elkington as 'Handmaid of Art and cultivator of Artistic Taste'. For Schlick the opportunity to influence public taste was the challenge of a lifetime, and he set to work immediately experimenting with the new medium.

Within a year, Elkington and Schlick had improved the electrotyping process sufficiently to be able to successfully reproduce larger three-dimensional pieces.<sup>6</sup> Both men considered Roman, Greek and Renaissance originals as good things to copy, as 'articles of taste', that is, pieces they felt would help to edify and refine public tastes. However a lack of suitable pieces upon which to experiment led Schlick to invent his own pastiche prototypes designed in the spirit of antique originals. Drawing on his rich vocabulary of classical design motifs derived from his architectural studies as well as his experience at Pompeii, Schlick produced a series of designs for household objects. The first four of these, described simply in the Elkington archives as 'three cups and a milk jug' were patented early in 1844.<sup>7</sup> The pieces, as well as the original clay moulds from which the electrotypes were made, were all inspired by antique originals, but were completely designed and made by Schlick. The designs were duly registered by Elkington at the Patent Office; because these original designs were rendered in clay, they appear in the *Patent Book for Pottery* (another discovery I gleefully made only after many fruitless hours searching in the metalware designs registry).

These early designs were offered in three different metals: gold, silver and electroplate. Schlick was to receive a 15% commission on all sales of his designs and a 25% commission on all sales brought in by him. Among the first designs was one that proved so popular that it was produced by Elkington's for some 50 years. It was

... An ornamental design for a lamp, or taper stand, a foot, shod in a classical or Roman Legionnaire's sandal, with a rope ring at the heel and a scone projecting from under the big toe.



4 (left) Registered design drawing for taper stick in the form of a Roman foot. (PRO BT43/3 no22276)  
5 (right) Taperstick in the form of a Roman foot, silver, Elkington & Co, Birmingham 1844/45, designed by Benjamin Schlick. (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery)



This foot appears alone or on various stands, with or without ivy appendages, as a taperstick, as a lamp, and even as an inkwell, in both silver and electroplate.[4&5] My wife thinks that, given Schlick's intimate familiarity with Italy, the most likely inspiration for this, rather scary foot is the famous Roman fragment that marks the entry to the eponymous via de Pie'di Marmo, in Rome. This is an ancient marble foot, long detached from its mythical owner, which occasionally endures the indignity of having its toenails painted by the locals.

According to Elkington's ledgers, sales of the first Schlick-designed pieces from the initial period May–August 1845 totalled £2,715, a staggering figure. In comparison, a bank manager's salary of the period was approximately £450 per annum. The success of these early designs led to a second, more commercial agreement (at least from Elkington's point of view) between Elkington and Benjamin Schlick in 1845. In this document, Elkington agreed to produce examples from plaster and wax casts supplied by Schlick in readiness for exhibition during 1847. For these, Schlick was to be paid £900.<sup>8</sup> Schlick was also to earn 15% on net retail price of pieces he sold, and 5% on pieces sold by Elkington.

Schlick, encouraged by his initial success, and eager that his pieces should be included in the great collections of the day, proceeded to dash around Europe and enlist all of his grand contacts as customers – and what customers they were! The list is impressive; it includes the crowned heads of France, Holland, Prussia, Sardinia, Wurttemberg, Saxony, and Bavaria, the Grand Dukes of Batten and Hesse-Darmstadt, the Dukes of Modena and Lucca, the Count of Syracuse and Prince Metternich, to name a few.

George Elkington too was clearly more than satisfied with the sales Schlick's objects generated, as his firm was now supplying the most elite customers of the day. Both men prospered as a result. Happy to pay Schlick large sums in commission, Elkington soon ordered still more casts and moulds.

Schlick's noble contacts did not just become customers, they also provided a priceless resource of original artworks which he was able to access for reproduction. Schlick's entrée to collections both public and private was unique, and the Elkington firm profited from his contributions both in terms of profit and prestige. The ability to gain access to and copy pieces never before available to the public delighted Elkington. He wrote:

The labour of the sculptor, the skill of the engraver, of the modeller, the chaser, designs which may have cost them years of labour and anxiety, may in a few hours be copied with rigid accuracy and precision.

The chevalier took his pick from the great collections of Europe. Hundreds of designs, masses of moulds taken from fabulous pieces in the great collections of Innsbruck, Berlin, Dresden, Naples, Rome – even the

Louvre – were produced during the period 1845–47. Royal collections including those of the King of Poland, Emperor of Austria, Duke of Tuscany were made available to Schlick for reproduction. Whenever he thought it beneficial, Schlick improved on the original. Elkington wrote, 'He made good the deficiencies in the original – rearranging the parts as he felt it to be necessary'. A good example of this is the so-called *Temperantia* dish, originally made in pewter by François Briot, by far the most accomplished French metalworker of the Renaissance. Briot's moulds were adapted by another renowned metalworker, Caspar Enderlein, who in turn added his signature. Schlick took his moulds from Enderlein's version in the collection of the Louvre.[7] The dish features Temperance in the centre surrounded by the four elements, the outside rim with representations of the seven liberal arts: Astrology, Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Rhetoric, Dialectic, and Grammar. These are accompanied by Minerva, goddess of learning. Schlick's 'improvements' to this piece consisted of adding identifying legends to the figures in the border vignettes as a way of ensuring that those who purchased this piece knew what each figure represented. The Schlick version of the *Temperantia* dish produced by Elkington was given to Prince Albert in 1849.[1]

As early as 1845, Schlick began having moulds made to his order in Paris. He noted that the skills required to produce moulds of the desired quality were simply not available at an affordable rate in England. Writing to Elkington four years later, he reminded his employer, 'If you now have better workmen you should not forget that you had neither chasers nor modellers able to do anything before I began to trim them'.

From 1845 to 1849 Schlick continued to work on moulds for production, but the beginnings of his eventual rift with Elkington & Co were already in evidence. Josiah Mason, George Elkington's business partner, harboured an innate dislike of Schlick from their first acquaintance, and the feeling was most definitely mutual. Apart from not considering Mason a gentleman



6 Registered design drawing of an ascos, Benjamin Schlick. (PRO BT43/64 no21073)



on an equal social footing with himself and Elkington, Schlick frequently complained of Mason's lack of artistic vision. Mason was suspicious and resentful of Schlick's ideas and his success from the outset. He felt that the limited reproduction of rarefied works of art as a method of elevating public taste was simply a waste of time. Instead of devoting valuable time and money pursuing Schlick's lofty artistic aims, Mason favoured a more hard-boiled industrial approach to manufacturing, driven more by profit than art. As the source of most of Elkington's financing, Mason's influence over Elkington and the firm was profound, and the fact that he did not approve of Schlick meant that the latter's relationship with the firm was probably doomed from the start. In 1846, yet another agreement was drawn up between the Elkington firm and Benjamin Schlick. This document made a distinction between pieces inspected by Schlick and those which were not, doubtless an indication that Schlick was growing increasingly concerned about the quality of the pieces being produced. According to this agreement, pieces personally inspected by Schlick would be signed with his name in full, those that hadn't would bear only Schlick's initials in a reverse cipher. Schlick would be paid 10% of the profit derived from sales of the inspected, more expensive objects, and 5% of the profits from sales of the less expensive pieces.

The 1846 contract was amended in the following year to favour Elkington & Co. This document did, however, grant Schlick a 10% royalty on sales of all of his pieces for life. Schlick's letters in the Elkington archives reveal the many problems associated with production of his pieces. Most significant of these is the enormous percentage of wastage, which sent production costs spiralling and impeded the timely delivery of orders. In 1849 the King of Sardinia complained that he still had not received all the pieces he had ordered in 1845, a stinging embarrassment for Schlick.

Towards the end of 1847, the perfectionist Schlick was growing ever more exasperated with the Elkington firm. He wrote, 'When I left Birmingham nothing was done and what was done afterwards was bad'. Schlick's relations with Mason continued to deteriorate. Letters in the company archives reveal, for instance, that Mason saw Schlick as an uppity foreigner. To exacerbate matters, Mason travelled to Rome to engage the archaeologist Emile Braun as an alternative, much cheaper and far less demanding supplier of classically inspired moulds.

The tumultuous year of Revolution across Europe, 1848, proved just as dramatic on a personal level for Chevalier Benjamin Schlick. Although the Elkington archives have quite apparently been purged of any less than savoury documents, it is palpably evident from what correspondence remains that there was a substantial altercation between Schlick and Mason early in the year. A later letter to George Elkington from Schlick laments 'that black day' when Mason somehow permanently alienated Schlick, whose rapport with the firm was forever changed.

February 1848 saw Paris once again in the grip of popular revolution and Schlick, who by this time was spending a great deal of his time in the French capital, was, owing to his aristocratic credentials, viewed with suspicion. So extreme was the resentment against the merest soupçon of the *ancien régime*, or what little there was left of it, that Schlick's moulds which were being prepared for an exhibition in 1849 were impounded by revolutionaries. Among the seized



7 Dish by Caspar Enderlein, pewter, similar to the one in the Louvre from which Benjamin Schlick took his mould for the *Temperantia* dish [see fig1]. (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2063-185511)



8 Wall plaque, silver, Elkington & Co, Birmingham 1844/45, designed by Benjamin Schlick. Diameter: 54.6cm (22½in). (Sotheby's)





9 (above and colour illustration on p99) Homer cup, silver, Elkington & Co, Birmingham 1844/45, designed by Benjamin Schlick. (Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2003.13)

10 (below) Registered design drawing for the Homer cup. (PRO BT/43/64 no20334)

9 Catalogue of the articles in the Exhibition of Manufactures and Art, published by the British Association for the advancement of Science, 1849.

10 Elkington Archive, National Art Library.

11 Patent Office Design Register BT43/64 where one of the Schlick drawings is specifically annotated as being for Minton.

12 Dansk biografisk Lexikon, vol 15, 1896.

moulds was that taken from the Enderlein dish at the Louvre. Sitting comfortably in England, George Elkington, when told of the events in Paris and the misfortune that had befallen his colleague wrote jocularly to him, 'I hope that you are safe in the land of modern liberty'.

Schlick, however, was truly distraught by the fracas. He had counted on making his contribution to Elkington's display at the 1849 British Association for the Advancement of Science Exhibition in Birmingham his *tour de force*, proof to Mason that he was an invaluable asset to the firm, and the moulds were pivotal to his plan. Finally, after protracted negotiation, the moulds were released, alas not without damage to some.

In the end, the Birmingham exhibition of 1849 proved an enormous critical success for Elkington & Co, and Schlick's pieces dominated the display, although Emile Braun did contribute a notable body of work.<sup>9</sup> Among the Schlick-designed pieces exhibited were ice pails; covered venison dishes; a coffee jug 'composed from the antique'; dessert plates; a vast selection of vases, including one moulded from an original in the Museum in Naples which had been unearthed at Pompeii; ice cups; an array of statues and figures in bronze; butter coolers; soup tureens; meat and fish dishes; teapots; tripods; candelabra in the form of Silenus, also taken from the original from Pompeii; claret jugs; and the Temperantia rosewater dish, lent for the occasion by Prince Albert himself.

Robert Hunt (1807–87) a leading and influential artist/scientist who had in 1841 published the first English treatise on photography, in the *Art Journal* of October 1849 wrote of Elkington's display at the 1849 exhibition:

Time has spared from destruction numerous examples of the genius of past ages... the republication of these at such a price as will place them within the reach of all... will do much to cherish into full activity that love of excellence of Art which we hope is like a living stream running through the European Population.

This exhibition marked the zenith of Benjamin Schlick's affiliation with Elkington & Co, yet despite the fact that it was largely due to Schlick's contribution that the firm enjoyed the triumph that it did, Josiah Mason continued to distrust him. Mason deliberately undermined Schlick's position by encouraging Emile Braun to increase his output, something Schlick viewed as a direct betrayal, as Braun benefited from Schlick's success. Increasingly frequent incidents involving the verification of sales and troubles collecting his commission (which, according to the 1846–47 contract was due to him for life) led to a further entrenchment of ill will between Mason and Schlick. To add insult to injury, Elkington continued to keep Schlick's demanding noble clients waiting for completion of their orders, and the chevalier's welcome with some was wearing thin.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 held at London's Crystal Palace was a seminal moment for most European manufacturers and Elkington & Co was no exception. Sadly for Benjamin Schlick, his contribution to this crucial event, although very well received, was greatly reduced in comparison with that of 1849, most probably as a reflection of his fallout with Mason, but also due in part to Schlick's own peripatetic nature: he had simply lost his passion for his work. Oddly, had he not had the great success at the Birmingham Exhibition two years previously, his star would most likely have burned brightest at this far more important exhibition, and the



name Schlick would not have become an obscure one for a student of silver to rediscover in the twenty-first century.

The period following the Great Exhibition unfolded for Schlick as a continuation of that which had gone before: more moulds were commissioned by Elkington & Co, and more arguments over payment and commission ensued. Schlick returned to Paris exasperated and demoralised at having to beg for money he was owed. In an act of desperation, wanting to be free of the yoke of the firm and all of the unpleasantness with Mason, he decided to sell the rights to his designs to Elkington & Co with the proviso that all pieces made be signed with his name or cipher.<sup>[2]</sup> After months of heated negotiation with Elkington and Mason, Schlick settled for a mere £500 for the rights to all of his models. Resolution to the dispute over commission never seems to have come, as Mason no doubt realised that Schlick's bargaining position was growing steadily weaker over time. Worse, Mason was not above taking an active role in antagonising the chevalier. On one occasion, he alerted bailiffs to Schlick's imminent sailing for France, and the poor chevalier was forced to endure the indignity of arrest for non-payment of a debt to a supplier. Schlick was profoundly shaken by the experience. He wrote to Elkington: 'I have been paid with ingratitude and chicanery'.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, weakened by the constant discord with Mason, Schlick brought his association with Elkington & Co to an end in an emotional letter to George Elkington in which he accuses Mason of having 'nearly broken my heart, ruined my exhibition (by not having everything ready on time) and cooled my love for England and the English'.

The remainder of Chevalier Benjamin Schlick's career is not as well documented as it was during his affiliation with Elkington & Co. One fact that emerged in my research was that Schlick began to design and make moulds for Minton during his long disputes with Elkington's.<sup>11</sup> The degree of Schlick's distress over his row with Elkington & Co is apparent in that, written in Schlick's hand across the width of the design sketch is an exaggerated 'Designed for Minton & Co'.

Benjamin Schlick spent the rest of his life in France, where he was fêted, given a pension by the government, and 'treated with the respect he deserves [sic] as a living Artist of special talents'. He continued to travel to Pompeii to record and help restore the archaeological treasures there. He died in Paris in 1872.<sup>12</sup> So, what is important about Chevalier Benjamin Schlick?

For those interested in matters pertaining to silver, without his contribution, the process of making copies of antique pieces through electro-deposition may not have developed as a commercial proposition, and that is certainly achievement enough for one man; however, Schlick's talents were not limited to the industrial production of silver. Schlick's more significant contribution to the development of art and taste was his crucial role in re-introducing classicism to nineteenth-century Britain. In devising ways to transport the designs of the ancient world to a mass audience, Benjamin Schlick's passion for Neo-classicism allowed him to alter the development of style throughout Europe. His influence was felt for over half a century.



11 (and colour illustration on p99) Homer Cup (vine version), Elkington & Co, Birmingham 1844/45, designed by Benjamin Schlick. (Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh 1998.15)



12 (below) Registered design drawing for Homer Cup (vine version). (PRO BT/43/64 no20333)





Carte de visite photograph by George J. Tear, The Kennington Photographic Studio, 1864, for E. Crouch, silversmith, N. Brixton. The inscription on the salver reads: 'This Salver [with a dessert service] / was presented / to the Revd. Charlton Lane MA / by the / Parishioners and Congregation / as a token of their love and esteem / on his Leaving the Incumbency / of St. Marks Kennington / after a residence amongst them / for nearly a third of a Century / 26<sup>th</sup> March / 1864'. The silver was probably made by Smith, Nicholson & Co. (photo: Culme collection)

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Left: In the Church of England Official Year-book, 1889, Keith & Co featured an illustration that they had been using for some years (eg in the *Clergy Directory* in 1875). Jones & Willis and Hart Son Peard & Co also promoted their wares in the 1889 *Year-book*, as did Hardman Powell & Co – here on the same page as Keith & Co. Right: Despite wartime rationing the *Official Year-book* for 1943 contained a full-page advertisement for F. Osborne & Co Ltd, a firm that were originally heraldic engravers.

Further information: J. Culme, *The Directory of Gold and Silversmiths, 1838–1914, 1987*.

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# Thomas Harper, Masonic jeweller and the jewels of his period

TIMOTHY KENT

*The purpose of the present paper is not to demonstrate an impressive measure of Masonic learning – it is to summarise the basic history of Masonic jewels, identify the main types, present some examples, and give details of the most eminent and prolific maker in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.*

A little historical outline is appropriate at the outset.<sup>1</sup> From the mists of antiquity, working masons had their guilds, in which ritual played a significant part, linked to their working tools and the practices of their craft. In due course of time there emerged what we term 'speculative Masonry', in which Lodges were comprised of members who were not operative masons but applied ancient craft observances (actual or inferred) in a moral sense denoted by symbolism and allegory. This remains the basis of present-day Freemasonry.

By 1717 matters had developed to the extent that a number of Lodges combined to form the Grand Lodge of England, and the popularity of the craft grew from modest origins to attract noblemen and royal princes, which it still does, the present Grand Master being HRH the Duke of Kent. Round about the middle of the eighteenth century a split took place with the emergence of a rival Grand Lodge, comprising Lodges who termed themselves (somewhat confusingly) 'Antients' as opposed to the original or 'Modern' Grand Lodge. After lengthy negotiation this breach was healed in 1813 and the present United Grand Lodge formed under HRH the Duke of Sussex, who had been Grand Master of the 'Moderns'. Thomas Harper, Deputy Grand Master of the 'Antients', played an important part in the union (see panel on p15).

There are various degrees in Freemasonry, but the standard membership unit is the individual Lodge, ruled by a Master and Senior and Junior Wardens. Other officers include Deacons and an Inner Guard who keeps the door, the Tyler or outer Guard [10] remaining outside. Lodges are numbered in order of foundation (over the years there have been adjustments) and are subject to the jurisdiction of Grand Lodge, to which dues are payable.

## Jewels

Few, if any, jewels earlier than the late 1750s have survived, and the classic period, when many fine jewels of all types were produced, lies between 1790 and 1830. In a large number of cases, these are not Lodge jewels but private jewels made to the order of individual masons. Thus there was wide scope for individual taste and craftsmanship.<sup>2</sup>

We know them as 'jewels', but to the layman this could be a misleading term, as precious stones (as opposed to pastes) rarely play a part. Probably 'badges' or 'pendants' would be a more descriptive



1 Deacon's collar jewel, Thomas Harper, London 1801/02, 10.5cm (4 1/8 in), cast. It depicts Mercury, messenger of the Gods, a device of the Antients which such Lodges retained in 1813 (as opposed to the dove and olive branch of the Moderns)

1 See Gould's *History of Freemasonry*, rev edn, 1951, 4 vols.

2 See William Hammond *PSA Masonic Emblems and Jewels*, 1917, the earliest authoritative treatment of the subject. See also T.A. Kent, 'Thomas Harper,

Masonic Jeweller, and the Jewels of his period', paper to Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 9 September 2004 (44 illustrations), and Ronald Kellett, 'Thomas Harper – Masonic Jeweller', *Proceedings of the Society of Silver Collectors*, vol II, no3, 1973.



word. Many other institutions, such as City livery companies, have badges pertaining to their wardens or other officers, and the analogies are obvious. A constant feature of Masonic jewels is that they bear a wide variety of devices relative to the craft.

Fig [5] (thought to be a self-portrait) shows how jewels were (and are) worn. The wearer, Arthur Loutherboung Thiselton, had a distinguished Masonic career and was also artist scene-painter to the Theatre Royal and other leading theatres. He is likely to have had a close connection with Philip James de

Loutherboung RA (1740–1812), who had himself painted scenery for Garrick and others.

We may assume that from the early days of organised speculative masonry, the Master of each Lodge and his officers would have had their collar jewels, and indeed Hogarth's celebrated picture *Night*, circa 1735, shows a very tipsy Master, who is being helped home by his Tyler, with a collar jewel in the form of a plain square.<sup>3</sup> Hogarth, incidentally, was a Grand Steward in 1734 and is reputed to have designed a collar jewel for the Grand Stewards' Lodge of this period.<sup>4</sup>

### *Masonic jewels can be classified in a number of different ways*

Leaving on one side commemorative or specially granted jewels, a fundamental distinction is between

- ▲ Lodge jewels, which belong to the Lodges concerned, and
- ▲ personal jewels, which are the property of individual members.

The other main distinction is between

- ▲ collar jewels, ie jewels worn suspended from a collar, and
- ▲ breast jewels, ie those worn on the breast in the manner of a medal.

The method by which the jewels are made also lends itself to classification under three main headings:

- ▲ Pierced jewels, where the design is pierced or cut out, a process which accords well with the presentation of Masonic symbols.
- ▲ Cast jewels, where all or part of the design derives from the casting process.
- ▲ Plate jewels, usually personal and for wearing on the breast with a pin, which consist of a small plaque of silver on which the chosen Masonic symbols are engraved.<sup>5</sup>



2 Breast jewel, silver-gilt, Thomas Harper, London 1813/14, 7.5x5.5cm (3x2in), engraved 'Thomas Harper Fleet Street Fecit' and numbered 995. This is Harper's typical Royal Arch pattern (see note 14)



3 Past Master's breast jewel, silver-gilt, Peter & Ann Bateman, London 1794/95, 10x6cm (4x2 3/8in), depicting King Solomon ordering the building of the temple



4 Master Mason's jewel, unmarked, circa 1760, 5.5x5cm (2 1/4x2in), for a member of Lodge no56. The quality of engraving on such badges varies from amateurish or crude to absolutely superb

Some jewels, of course, may be hybrid and show more than one of the above characteristics, but all have reference to the hallowed Masonic devices with their allegorical depiction of the tools which operative masons would have used. The fine early plate jewel [4] features three articles central to Masonic thought, namely the volume of the Sacred Law (Old Testament), square and compasses, besides the all-seeing eye and other items.





5 Arthur Loutherboung Thiselton, past Senior Grand Deacon, West Yorks, Secretary of the Middlesex Lodge 1828–42, wearing his jewels. Inscribed on the reverse: Aug<sup>t</sup> 1835



Thomas Harper

We may now turn from the general to the particular, and survey the life and work of Thomas Harper, leading Masonic jeweller of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries. Grimwade gives him a full biography,<sup>6</sup> but some of this (based on old Masonic sources) has been qualified by more recent research on the part of Lt-Cdr Kai Hughes, RN.<sup>7</sup> It is now known that Thomas Harper was buried at St Dunstan-in-the-West on 3 May 1832 aged 88 years, which would place his date of birth at 1743 or 1744. For this reason it has been doubted that he is the Thomas Harper initiated at Bristol in 1761: this however is not conclusive as initiates were sometimes at this date below the regulation age of 21. He cannot be identified with any certainty as a London apprentice of this period, and it has also been suggested that he may have been American-born. His wife Elizabeth (née Edwards) certainly was.

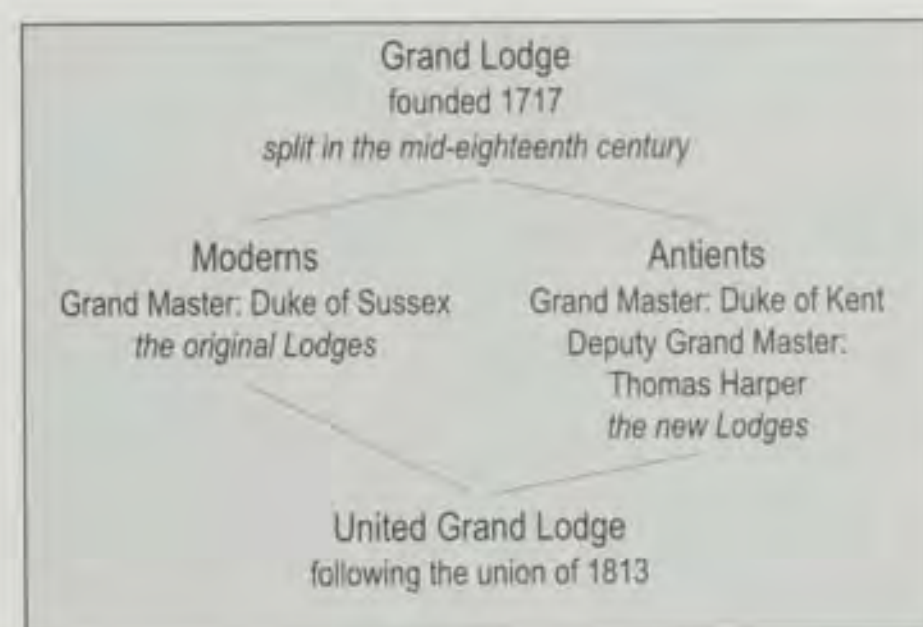
What is certain, however, is that he became located in Charleston, South Carolina, where the following appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette* for 14 January 1773:



6 Past Master's collar jewel, maker's mark IS, London 1796/97, 9.5x8.5cm (3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>x3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>in). For the Royal Naval Lodge of Independence, of which Sir Francis Daniel was Master.

A Lodge jewel is worn by successive Masters. When he has finished his term of office the Lodge presents him (now a Past Master) with a jewel, usually a breast jewel

7 (below left) Thomas Harper's mark, as commonly encountered



3 Hammond (as note 2) pl 18.

4 Hammond (as note 2), pl 38 no5.

5 There are numerous examples of this type in the museum at Great Queen Street (see note on p19).

6 A.G. Grimwade, *London Goldsmiths 1697–1837*, London 1976, pp536–37.

7 Kai Hughes, 'The Story of Thomas Harper, Deputy Grand Master', paper to Thomas Harper Lodge, 2001 (unpublished).



8 Whose warrant had been purchased in 1769 by Lawrence Dermott for 5 guineas.

<sup>9</sup> Gould (as note 1), vol III, p86.

10 Whose claim to these titles was dubious: he had recently been excluded from the Antients for sundry malpractices, and had reputedly obtained his knighthood by turning up at an investiture and joining the back of the queue! The Royal Naval Lodge (at one time adding the words 'of independence' to its style,) was Daniel's preserve.[6]

11 Hammond, (as note 2),  
pl 17. Fig 8 is pl 17 of this  
book (courtesy Grand  
Lodge library).

12 Grimwade (as note 6), pp199, mark no2786.

13 The British Government offered some compensation to Loyalists (ie royalists loyal to George III) who had lost their property.

14 Archives of Mount Moriah Chapter. This is the same Robert Gill who incurred the enmity of Sir Francis Daniel. Chapters are usually linked to Lodges. A Lodge is concerned with a general application of the Masonic craft, while a Chapter is more specifically concerned with the Temple at Jerusalem and its ritual is termed the 'Royal Arch'. [2]

15 PCC (Prerogative Court  
of Canterbury) 302  
Tenterden.

16 Kirkby Gregory & Co are listed in Contemporary Directories as 'Sheffield Plate Warehouse and Platers'.

17 Edwards (born 1778), named after his mother, had been admitted to St Paul's School in 1788, to be followed by his brothers Charles and James in 1799 and 1801. Edwards followed his father in a distinguished Masonic career, becoming Deputy Grand Secretary of the Antients in 1800, and Joint Grand Secretary from the Union in 1813 until 1838, when he retired. He was in 1823 Master of the Turners and, in 1834, one of my predecessors as First Principal of Mount Moriah Chapter.

18 In the latter context it is noteworthy that when the recent Tsunami disaster took place Grand Lodge voted an immediate £100,000, while at the date of writing (April 2005) individual Lodges and their members have subscribed in excess of £500,000.

Thomas Harper, jeweller and Goldsmith, has opened a shop in Broad-street, where all kinds of work in the above branches will be carefully executed upon the cheapest terms and with all possible despatch. N.B. The utmost value given for old gold, silver or Jewels.

On 31 January 1774 the *Gazette* announced that Harper:

At his shop in Broad-street near the Exchange, has just imported in the heart of Oak, Captain Gunn, from London, a neat assortment of Jewellery, also a quantity of Jeweller's and Silversmith's tools, which he will dispose of on the most reasonable terms ....

At Charleston he had, in 1770, been exalted in the Royal Arch (see caption 2) and in 1774 is on record as serving as Junior Warden of Lodge no190 there. As a result of the American War of Independence Harper, as a Royalist, was ultimately (after a peregrination to the Dutch West Indies) obliged to quit Charleston and go to England. Having married Elizabeth Edwards at St Philip's, Charleston in 1776, he was in London by 1783 and became a member of Lodge no5 of the Antients.<sup>8</sup> In 1787 he joined the Grand Master's Lodge, serving as master in 1792 and thereafter Lodge Treasurer for many years. From 1792 Harper was a member of the Lodge of Antiquity, and was a Grand Steward in 1796. He was awarded a gold medal for his services in 1790, became Deputy Grand Secretary in 1793 and from 4 March 1801 down to the Union served as Deputy Grand Master, in which capacity he was a leading figure of the Antients. He also joined Lodges of the Moderns.

Harper's membership of the Moderns had not gone smoothly. At a Committee of Charity held on 10 April 1801:

A complaint was preferred by Bro. F.C. Daniel, master of the Royal Naval Lodge No. 57 against Richard Barry of the Minories, Stationer, Francis Green of the Hermitage, slop seller, Thomas Harper of Fleet Street, Jeweller, Robert Gill of Union street, Bishopsgate, and William Burwood of Green Bank, Coal Dealer, for encouraging irregular meetings, and infringing on the privileges of the Ancient Grand Lodge of All England assembling under the authority of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.<sup>9</sup>

This would appear to have been a counter-attack by Sir Francis Columbine Daniel MD.<sup>10</sup>[6] A broadsheet of 1803 [8] is thought to have been part of Daniel's campaign, with Harper featuring as 'Tommy Pedler', Gill as 'Bobby Scout', and Burwood as 'Billy Paunch'.<sup>11</sup>

It will be no surprise to learn that Thomas Harper was closely concerned in the negotiations leading up to the Union of 1813, being selected by the Duke of Kent, Grand Master of the Antients, to assist him in the deliberations, which produced the Articles of Union, Harper signing as Deputy Grand Master of the Antients.

After the Union, Thomas Harper became a member of the first Board of General Purposes, and served down to the end of his days, his last attendance at Grand Lodge being on 2 March 1831.

Thomas Harper did not restrict his activities to masonry only. He was never free of the Goldsmiths' Company, but in February 1784 he obtained his freedom of the Turners' Company by redemption, serving as Master in 1798, 1813 and 1829. Livery badges of that Company bearing his mark have been noted. In addition, he served as a Common Councillor of the City of London for the Ward of Farringdon Without for the periods 1799–1809 and 1811–19.

Harper entered his mark<sup>12</sup> as a smallworker at Goldsmiths' Hall on 27 May 1790 from 207 Fleet Street, although he had been in

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Pat O'Rearney D. M.

MUNGO 1990 and Munger 1990).

Report by Jones, passed to the Liberman Renegade 1-2-2

Using the above information, we can find the total number of people who are not in the club.

8 Daniel's attack on Thomas Harper  
and his associates, 1803



London for some years before this, appearing in 1783 before a committee scrutinising Loyalist claims,<sup>13</sup> and possibly working for someone else in the trade. A smaller mark of the same type was entered by him in 1810 and finally one with a pellet between in 1829, but the Harper mark as commonly encountered is illustrated.[7] Many of his jewels are engraved with a numeral, which would appear to be a manufacturing serial number rather than a Lodge number. Many Lodge and Chapter records show purchases from Thomas Harper, and his business must have been very extensive. The minutes of Mount Moriah Chapter, no143, formerly no9 include the item for 7 May 1820:

Paid Thomas Harper for a Royal Arch Jewel in silver richly chased and gilt as per account voted by the Chapter to Ex. Comp. Gill, £6-15-0.<sup>14</sup>

The quality of Harper's work is consistently good and finish is excellent. His patterns were undoubtedly copied by other small-workers.

Thomas Harper 'late of Fleet Street but now of no1 Featherstone Buildings, Holborn' made his will on 11 March 1830.<sup>15</sup> Wife Elizabeth received 'all that my freehold house situate in Crane Court in the City of London, now in the



9 Junior Warden's collar jewel, silver-gilt, Thomas Harper, London 1813/14, 11x2cm ( $4\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in); in the form of a plumb rule



10 A Tyler's collar jewel, Thomas Harper, London 1818/19, 14x4.5cm ( $5\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$ in). The sword symbolises the Tyler's role as external guardian of the Lodge



11 Past Master's collar jewel, incorporating a sunburst of pastes, Thomas Harper, London 1801/02, 11x10cm ( $4\frac{3}{8} \times 4$ in). Now in use as the reigning Master's collar jewel in Middlesex Lodge no143

occupation of Messrs Kirkby Gregory and company'<sup>16</sup> for life, together with all the plate, china, furniture and books and 'money in the funds.' There were further bequests, some of them substantial, to numerous children, including Edwards, who also received '4 shares in the Southwark Bridge Company.'<sup>17</sup>

Harper's business was taken over by John P. Acklam who operated from 138 Strand and continued to provide Masonic jewels of good quality.

Thomas Harper's Masonic career demonstrates what a big contribution he made to the craft. As a silversmith, too, his standards were high. The many surviving jewels from his workshop are invariably of pleasing design and meticulous and well-crafted manufacture, proving that over many years Harper applied an excellent measure of quality control to a large business.

By way of tailpiece, fig [12] shows one of the largest and heaviest Past Master's collar jewels, 1813/14, not by Harper but by James Aldridge. It features the recurrent Masonic motifs of Faith, Hope and Charity.<sup>18</sup>

The author spoke to the Society on this subject at a meeting in December 2004.



12 Past Master's collar jewel, James Aldridge, London 1813/14, 18.5x14cm ( $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in), featuring Faith, Hope and Charity. It is one of the largest collar jewels recorded.

A high proportion of surviving jewels seemingly date from the year of the union (1813)

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# New Geneva

JULIA CLARKE

Last year Conor O'Brien wrote to me to enquire whether I had ever come across any gold objects purporting to bear the marks of the New Geneva Assay Office, 1784–1800. His interest had been sparked by a quiz question in this journal<sup>1</sup> asking the name of the only town in Ireland apart from Dublin authorised to assay silver, following the Act of 1784. The answer was 'New Geneva, near Waterford. A number of Swiss watchmakers and jewellers were given refuge there in the 1780s'. Conor O'Brien wrote, 'I have heard of but never actually seen a New Geneva piece, and anyway would have been inclined to dismiss it as spurious since the received wisdom here in Ireland has been that the New Geneva Assay Office never came into being ...'. At the time, I had to admit that not only had I never come across any pieces attributed to New Geneva but had never heard of the place.

Some months later, reading the memoirs of Nicolas Soret-Duval (1759–1830), a rather self-deprecating native of Geneva who was later to become a Court miniature painter to Catherine II in St Petersburg, I was intrigued to find an account of his visit to the short-lived Waterford settlement.<sup>2</sup>

Geneva had seen several years of violent political agitation by republicans against the old aristocratic order which culminated in the armed intervention of France, Savoy and Berne to whom the city surrendered in July 1782. Following this a large number of dissidents, mainly skilled workers in the Geneva watch and bijouterie trades, fled reprisals. In 1783 the rulers of Ireland had come up with a grandiose scheme to attract these artisans to Waterford by constructing a new protestant manufacturing township complete with churches and university: Irish and Genevois would learn together and work together in combined prosperity. The same year Nicolas Soret decided to try his fortune in the new community and set off via London where he joined two watch sellers similarly bound. Arrived in Dublin,

apart from the language, we could believe ourselves in France, finding again [after English chauvinism] at least some traces of worldliness and wit. We were well enough received and our letters of introduction made travel to Waterford easy. Nothing very extraordinary happened on the way apart from being pursued by pistol-waving bandits who, apparently having learnt that we were carrying

watches and jewellery, wished to appropriate them. We foiled them by taking a different route and finally arrived safely in Waterford. There I at once began to work on some portraits in enamel which were incredibly successful. Such a technique was unknown in that city and so I was sought out by a number of very rich persons who paid me handsomely. I was thus able to support several Genevois who did not have the means to wait for the establishment of the manufactory. A group of Genevois had already arrived, among whom I was delighted to find my father, step-mother and several good friends. They were all living on hope and the watchmakers, although not busy, had just enough work to get on with. This state of affairs continued for several months, but the watch merchants, seeing that the English government was in no hurry to keep its promises, neglected the needs of their workers, which led, after a number of complaints, to the departure of a good number of settlers. This was done in secret to the consternation of those who remained. From that moment we were a target for the insults and mockery of the locals; we were ashamed to leave our lodgings and if we had to, we were treated as deserters. People pointed at us in the street and shouted: Genevois gone away and go away! The orders for portraits vanished along with the trust of the Irish, although I did get paid for what I had already done.

Soret then departed himself and one doubts whether many remained. From this account, it seems that Conor O'Brien must be right and that just as the main project never got off the ground, so the Assay Office was never actually established. It would be interesting to know, however, what, if any, marks were put on the few watch cases that may have been made there.

<sup>1</sup> *The Silver Society Journal*, no15 2003, pp118 and 106.

<sup>2</sup> Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Genève.

MS VAR 20, partially transcribed by René Naville, *Souvenirs de Nicolas Soret, peintre ordinaire de Catherine II de Russie*, Geneva, vol XX, 1973–4, pp347–63.



# Elizabeth Montagu's service of plate

## Part 2

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*In 1777 Mrs Elizabeth Montagu [1] purchased a service of plate, mainly of silver but in part of Sheffield plate, from the partnership of Matthew Boulton & John Fothergill, based at the Soho Manufactory near Birmingham. Part 1 of this study, published in Silver Studies no16, concentrated on the design of the service in the light of Mrs Montagu's lifestyle, her financial position and her aesthetic and moral values. This, Part 2 of the study, seeks to reconstruct the service through surviving pieces and archive material and to interpret the service in the contexts of Mrs Montagu's domestic and dining arrangements.*

Mrs Montagu's service was conceived as a unified whole. That unity was in her generation widely expected in a service.<sup>1</sup> That was in part a matter of stylistic consistency; this in her case was a light and elegant form of Neo-classicism which was becoming popular in the 1770s and which was used for the whole service.<sup>2</sup> The service was appropriate for the then fashionable *service à la française* which derived from the court of Louis XIV in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> The essential elements of this mode of dining – individual sets of cutlery, cruets and casters, tureens, sauceboats, dishes, perhaps a centrepiece, dish-rings – created sets of pieces widely adopted amongst the aristocracy and gentry in England by the 1720s<sup>4</sup> and generally adopted by such classes in Europe throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.<sup>5</sup> *Service à la française* involved the symmetrical display of a large number of variously-shaped dishes on the dining table.<sup>6</sup>[6]

In a letter to Boulton of 8 April 1776 Mrs Montagu announced that she intended to buy a service of plate.<sup>7</sup> Boulton responded quickly on 13 April by instructing an agent to visit her to discuss the designs.<sup>8</sup> But in the summer it seems that little progress was made because Mrs Montagu spent time in France<sup>9</sup> and Boulton's silversmiths were stretched with other orders.<sup>10</sup> As late as April 1777 there was still some discussion about



1 Mrs Elizabeth Montagu. From a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, drawn by W. Evans, engraved by T. Cheesman. From The British Gallery of Contemporary Portraits, vol 11, London 1822

design.<sup>11</sup> The earliest parts of the order were sent on 5 January 1777<sup>12</sup> but a greater part was sent towards the end of January;<sup>13</sup> more was sent in the following month<sup>14</sup> with yet more in March<sup>15</sup> and April.<sup>16</sup> The last parts were sent in December.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs Montagu had wanted the service in November 1776<sup>18</sup> and by February in the following year felt that Boulton had been 'shamefully out of time with her'.<sup>19</sup> Delays in supplying plate were a frequent occurrence in Boulton & Fothergill's business in the mid-1770s when

1 James Lomax, 'Silver for the English Dining Room 1700–1820', in Ole Villumsen Krog (ed), *A King's Feast. The Goldsmith's Art and Royal Banqueting in the 18th Century*, Copenhagen 1991, pp118–33 (hereafter Lomax).

2 Kenneth Quickenden, 'Elizabeth Montagu's service of plate' Part 1, in *Silver Studies, The Journal of the Silver Society*, no16 2004, pp131–41 (pp134–38) (hereafter Quickenden 2004).

3 Roy Strong, *Feast: A History of Grand Eating*, London 2002, p224 (hereafter Strong).

4 Philippa Glanville, *Silver in England*, London 1987, p65 (hereafter Glanville 1987).

5 Strong (as note 3), p224.

6 Gilly Lehmann, *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain*, Totnes 2003, p324 (hereafter

Lehmann).

7 Matthew Boulton Papers (hereafter MBP), Box Montagu item 9, Elizabeth Montagu (hereafter EM) to Matthew Boulton (hereafter MB) 8.4.1776.

8 MBP Letter Book G p593, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 13.4.1776.

9 Quickenden (as note 2), p137.

10 MBP Letter Book G p608, John Hodges to William

Matthews, 11.5.1776.

11 MBP Box Montagu 10, EM to MB, 4.4.1777.

12 MBP Letter Book G pp797–98, Boulton and Fothergill (hereafter B&F) to EM, 6.1.1777.

13 MBP Letter Book G p812, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777.

14 MBP Letter Book G pp818–19, B&F to E.M., 5.2.1777.

15 MBP Journal 1776–78 p290, 17.3.1777.

16 MBP Box Montagu 10, EM to MB, 4.4.1777.

17 MBP Letter Book 1 p139, John Hodges to E.M., 13.12.1777.

18 MBP Box Wyatt Family 112, John Wyatt to B&F, 29.11.1776.

19 MBP Box Matthews & Barton, Matthews, William, William Matthews to B&F, 21 February 1777.



2 Mrs Elizabeth Montagu's coat of arms, from a set of twenty-four dinner plates, Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham 1776/77. (Courtesy Partridge Fine Art plc)



demand for their silver was at its height.<sup>20</sup> Boulton met her charges with excuses about his absences on business, promising on 12 November that the order would be complete in four weeks;<sup>21</sup> embarrassed, he blamed delay on 23 December 1776 on striking silversmiths and rashly promised a part of the order by New Year's Day.<sup>22</sup> The engraving of Mrs Montagu's arms caused unnecessary inconvenience. Responding to a request for her arms she sent a copy at the end of November 1776 with the instruction that they were not to be altered except that the arms were to be enclosed within a lozenge to indicate that she was now a widow, following the death of her husband Edward Montagu in 1775 and the firm was given licence to 'vary the ornamental part agreeable to the present taste'; this applies merely to the foliate borders which did vary from piece to piece.[2&11] The arms are of Montagu impaling Robinson.<sup>23</sup>

Not until the end of December 1776 did the partners raise the question of how many arms should be engraved, suggesting once on each plate and dish, but on both sides of the tureens;<sup>24</sup> that she accepted the recommendations can be seen on the plate and dish [8] and the double inclusion was executed on the tureens [7] and sauceboats.[3] The combination of Mrs Montagu's pressure and the slow progress with the order, together with the large number of arms (the firm reckoned about 200) and what the partners claimed was the illness of their principal engraver, leaving them with only two to carry out the work,<sup>25</sup> made it impossible to add arms

when pieces were basically completed; some of the plate sent in January and February had therefore to be returned for the arms to be added over the summer<sup>26</sup> and some at least of that was not returned from the Soho Manufactory until December.<sup>27</sup>

While Mrs Montagu was taxed about the lateness of delivery, Boulton was preoccupied with gaining prompt payment. He was operating the whole business, silver as well as many other products such as buttons and buckles, on an overdraft, which in December 1777 had reached £25,000. To minimise financial strain Boulton had negotiated a three-month period of credit with his bullion dealer and required customers for silver to pay immediately or at least within two or three months of receiving goods. Too many of Boulton's customers failed to pay within that period – delays in some cases were six months or even more<sup>28</sup> – but Mrs Montagu agreed to pay on receiving parts of the order as they were delivered.<sup>29</sup> By and large she did so for the main part of the order up to May 1777, making three payments to meet three demands, which with the credit of £74 6s 7d she received for 270oz 6dwt of old plate which was melted down for re-use,<sup>30</sup> met the partners' demand of approximately £900. However, perhaps to register her dissatisfaction with delays and put pressure on Boulton to deliver remaining parts of the order more speedily, she met his first demand for payment on 15 February 1777 of £802 6s 4d, with an initial payment of only £400 and that was not authorised by her bankers, Hoare & Co, until 27 February.<sup>31</sup> On that part of the order

20 Kenneth Quickenden, 'Boulton and Fothergill Silver: Business Plans and Miscalculations', *Art History*, vol3 no3, September 1980, pp274–94 (p287). (hereafter Quickenden 1980).

21 MBP Letter Book G p740, MB to EM, 12.11.1776.

22 MBP Letter Book G pp786–87, B&F to EM, 23.12.1776.

23 MBP Box Wyatt Family 112, John Wyatt to B&F, 29.11.1776. Information

about the arms is from John Burke and John Bernard Burke, *A General Armory of England, Scotland and Ireland*, London 1842. Advice also taken from Timothy Duke, Chester Herald, College of Arms, London. The arms of Elizabeth Montagu's husband appear on the dexter: 'quarterly 1st and 4th argent [though white was normally used for the backgrounds] three lozenges conjoined in fesse [touching] gules [red] a border sable [black] for Montagu; quarterly second

and third or [gold background] an eagle displayed vert [green] beak and membered [legs] gules [red] for Monthermer [from whom the Montagu's claimed descent in the female line]'. The arms of Elizabeth's family, the Robinsons, appear on the sinister: 'vert [green background] on a chevron between three bucks trippant [right front leg raised] or [gold] and three trefoils gules [red].

24 MBP Letter Book G pp791–92, B&F to EM, 30

December 1776.

25 BP Letter Book G pp791–92, B&F to EM, 30.12.1776.

26 MBP Letter Book G p844, B&F to EM, 25.2.1777.

27 MBP Letter Book I p137, John Stuart to EM, 10.12.1777.

28 Quickenden 1980 (as note 20), pp285–86.

29 MBP Letter Book G p832, B&F to EM, 15.2.1777.

30 MBP Ledger 1776–78 p292, 3.2.1778 (for 8.5.1778).

31 According to the MBP,

B&F charged 15.2.1777 £3 3s 0d (Ledger 1776–78 p176); 15.2.1777 £802 6s 4d (Ledger 1776–78 p214); 17.3.1777, £73 19s 3d (Journal 1776–78 p290) and 30.4.1777 £23 2s 9d (Letter Book G p90, B&F to EM; 1.5.1777) totalling £902 11s 4d. Hoare & Co's Ledger 96/405 shows the following payments from EM's account 27.2.1777 £400; 5.3.1777 £350; 9.5.1777 £77 10s 0d, which together with her credit of £74 6s 7d (MBP Ledger 1776–78 p292) totals £901 16s 7d.





3 Sauce tureen, one of a pair, silver, Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham 1776/77. (Courtesy Birmingham Assay Office)

Boulton lost on interest payments to his banker since the bullion was probably purchased in November 1776.<sup>32</sup> Much appeared in the Birmingham Assay Office Plate Register in December: six sauceboats, one soup tureen and 60 plates on 17 December and the second soup tureen and lining, two more sauceboats, and a soup ladle on 27 December.<sup>33</sup> One tureen with lining and ladle was sent to Mrs Montagu on 6 January<sup>34</sup> while six sauceboats, a soup tureen and three dozen plates were sent on 28 January<sup>35</sup> (the remaining two dozen plates not being sent until February).<sup>36</sup> Boulton's accountant was contributing to the firm's financial predicament by delaying a request for payment which meant that there was little likelihood of receiving payment from Mrs Montagu within three months from the purchase of the bullion, but Mrs Montagu's and Hoare & Co's action over the £802 6s 4d payment was financially serious. Nevertheless, her subtle rebuke seems to have worked since delivery and consequently payment proceeded smoothly later in the year; apart from the further two payments up to May, later payments were required in December 1777 amounting to £237 8s 0d;<sup>37</sup> according to Mrs Montagu, those were paid by the end of the year.<sup>38</sup>

Delay in payment was however not the only financial issue which raised anxiety, at least on Boulton's part. He feared Mrs Montagu would find the price of silver high, even though at 5s 7½d per ounce<sup>39</sup> for the 1000oz used to that point on her service, it was the same as he was charged by his bullion dealer. Boulton was adamant that to get silver through the Birmingham Assay Office

it had to be of the required standard (11oz 2dwt of fine silver and 18dwt of alloy in every troy pound)<sup>40</sup> while he reckoned the London Assay Office passed silver 2dwts or more worse than the legal standard making a difference of ½d per ounce more in the amount he was obliged to charge Mrs Montagu. However, fearing she might find charges too high, he pointed out that he, like any other silversmith, was bound to charge a little more for polished (which she asked for) rather than burnished plate since there was some loss of silver in the process. He also insisted that his fashioning charges and weights were lower than those of London rivals.<sup>41</sup> There is nothing to suggest that Mrs Montagu contested any of this, though on 6 March 1776 she obtained from the London silversmiths John Parker & Edward Wakelin some scales and weights, presumably to verify Boulton's calculations about the weight of her plate;<sup>42</sup> there is, however, no evidence that she found fault, and the average weight he gave her in a letter for the dinner plates – 16oz each<sup>43</sup> – was fair enough.<sup>44</sup>

Mrs Montagu's contact with Parker & Wakelin, and from 1776 their successors John Wakelin and William Paris Tayer,<sup>45</sup> though frequent, had little impact on the service being made by Boulton & Fothergill. She bought from the London firm unconnected items such as tea tongs. It was also convenient for her to employ the London firm for cleaning or burnishing articles;<sup>46</sup> failure to get work of this kind from London was characteristic of Boulton & Fothergill's silver business and according to one of their agents was a particular weak-

32 Although B&F purchased for the department which made silver plate 1600oz of Sterling silver in November 1776 from their bullion dealer R.A. Cox, apart from some very small quantities submitted by other customers for re-use, no more standard silver was issued (MBP Francis Eginton Ledger 1775–78 pp8–9).

33 Birmingham Assay Office, Plate register 1773–92 (hereafter BPR).

34 MBP Letter Book G pp797–98, B&F to EM, 6.1.1777.

35 MBP Letter Book G p812, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777.

36 MBP Letter Book G pp837–78, B&F to EM, 19.2.1777.

37 £138 6s 6d (MBP Journal 1776–78 p443, 11.12.1777); £40 4s 10d (MBP Journal 1776–78 p444, 13.12.1777); £58 14s 8d (MBP Journal 1776–78 p444, 15.12.1777) and £10 10s 0d (MBP Ledger

1776–78 p282, 16.12.1777) totalling £247 16s 0d. EM received an abatement on her account of £1 15s 2d (MBP Journal 1776–78 p449, 31.12.1777).

38 Huntingdon Library, California (hereafter HL) MO 6031, EM to Sarah Scott, 23 May 1778.

39 MBP Francis Eginton Ledger 1775–78 p8, 30 November 1776.

40 Quickenden 1980, as note 20, pp287–88.

41 MBP Letter Book G pp830–31, B&F to EM, 15.2.1777.

42 Victoria and Albert Museum (hereafter V&A) Garrard Ledger AAD/1995/7/11 VAM 11 p126, 6 March 1777 'To portorage of scales and weights to Hill St, 2s 6d.'

43 MBP Letter Book G p830, B&F to EM, 15.2.1777.

44 The plates in [2] are between 15.39oz and 19.2oz and the majority are 16.3oz (information kindly sup-

plied by Lucy Morton, Partridge Fine Art plc, 1.2.2005).

45 Helen Clifford, *Silver in London: The Parker and Wakelin Partnership 1760–1776*, New Haven 2004, p196 (hereafter Clifford 2004).

46 V&A Garrard Ledgers AAD/1995/7/11 VAM 11 p126; 16.12.1776 Tea Tongs 14s 6d; 17.12.1776. 'To Boiling & Burnishing 2 pr. Chased candlesticks and nozels £1 4s 0d'.



ness.<sup>47</sup> However, in one area – cutlery – Mrs Montagu's collection and the capacity of the London firm to repair, particularly knives, seems to have dissuaded her from buying new. In January 1778 she was sent by Boulton & Fothergill samples of spoons and forks, as well as the prices of those and dessert knives and forks; these had ribbon and reed borders, (which Boulton called 'bagett and ribbon') that would have matched the borders on other items in the service [7–10].<sup>48</sup> There is no evidence that Mrs Montagu bought any of these items but on 5 March 1778 she paid Wakelin & Tayler for fixing '5doz and one table blade to old handles ... = 6s 8d' and she paid for new blades on later occasions too.<sup>49</sup>

This cutlery was a part of her inheritance from her husband in 1775<sup>50</sup> but it is possible that this was the only plate in his collection used on her dining table, even though his collection was very large. He had been left silver plate worth £1500 in 1748.<sup>51</sup> In 1757 his plate weighed 1600oz but by 1759 this increased to 2000oz<sup>52</sup> where his total roughly remained.<sup>53</sup> There is very little evidence, two pairs of plated candlesticks and three decanter corks apart, that he bought any plate in his last few years, though he had much refurbished. But refurbishments to a perfume pot, a tureen, an inkstand, a glass frame, candlesticks, a cruet frame, a toasting fork, as well as cutlery, probably only give a limited indication of the range of plate in his possession.<sup>54</sup> Since Mrs Montagu only had 270oz 6dwt of her old silver melted for re-use in the new service,<sup>55</sup> she retained most of the old, which because of its age would have been stylistically inconsistent with her new service. While, as with cutlery, she might have allowed the odd old piece – such as the cruet frame – on to her new table, the extensive range of pieces bought from Boulton & Fothergill probably rendered that largely unnecessary. It is possible that the inherited silver was used for display on the dining room sideboards. Much English silver before the mid-eighteenth century focused on the buffet with massive cups, waiters, decanters, dishes, wine fountains and cisterns;<sup>56</sup> as *service à la française* spread so too did the French preference for bottles and wine coolers.<sup>57</sup> This made much early eighteenth-century English buffet silver redundant but it was often used from the mid-century for sideboard displays and was associated with

antiquarianism and in particular Horace Walpole,<sup>58</sup> a close acquaintance of Mrs Montagu's.<sup>59</sup>

### Preparations for dinner

According to contemporaries the defining characteristic of a meal at Mrs Montagu's was an emphasis on quality<sup>60</sup> and refinement;<sup>61</sup> she condemned excessive consumption as well as 'abstinence'.<sup>62</sup> She might, as she once claimed, have made a grouse pie for the actor David Garrick<sup>63</sup> but her vast correspondence suggests that she not only kept away from cooking but that she even had little to do with the management of meals. This, for a member of the gentry, had increasingly become the norm in the eighteenth century; cookery books were increasingly addressed to servants, whose literacy rate improved over the same period. As a result Mrs Thrale (one of Mrs Montagu's Bluestocking friends) once wrote that she did not know, until the food arrived on the table, what she was to have for dinner even in her own house, and yet she too had a reputation for a fine table.<sup>64</sup> Although as we shall see, Mrs Montagu made reference in her letters to food from time to time, there is hardly anything to suggest that she was interested in the detail of its preparation: on one occasion Mrs Montagu's discussion with Dr Messenger Mounsey of Chelsea Hospital about the ingredients of a custard became a whimsical excuse for ridiculous allusions and moralising.<sup>65</sup> The reputation of her table depended upon assembling an impressive group of servants.

In the homes of the upper classes in England there was an increase in the eighteenth century in the number of servants, and the wealthier members of the gentry kept from twelve to twenty servants;<sup>66</sup> the number working for Mrs Montagu was probably in that range since she once remarked that she had ten sick at once.<sup>67</sup> According to *The Ladies Library* of 1790,<sup>68</sup> the housekeeper should be knowledgeable in cookery and confectionary and able to organise other servants, organise supplies, draw up bills of fare, arrange desserts, lock up leftovers and distribute the rest to servants. Cooks, who in England in the second half of the century were usually female,<sup>69</sup> were key figures in delivering quality. Mrs Montagu was once recommended a female cook who

47 MBP Box Wyatt Family 72, John Wyatt to B&F, 29.1.1776.

48 MBP Letter Book 1 p160, B&F to EM, 23.1.1778.

49 V&A Garrard Ledgers AAD/1995/7/11 VAM 11 p126, eg new blades were fitted to old handles on 19.12.1777.

50 Edward Montagu left EM his whole estate apart from a legacy of £3000 to EM's nephew Matthew Robinson

who was also their adopted son and who took the name of Montagu (Reginald Blunt (ed), *Mrs Montagu 'Queen of the Blues'*, 2 vols, London 1923, vol 2 p301, hereafter Blunt). I am not aware of any evidence that EM bought cutlery earlier in her life, but there is substantial evidence that he had old cutlery renewed (V&A, Garrard Ledgers, AAD/1995/7/7 VAM 7 p3, 21.5.1772).

51 Emily J. Climenson, *Elizabeth Montagu: The Queen of the Bluestockings. Her Correspondence from 1720 to 1761*, 2 vols, London 1906 (hereafter Climenson), EM to Sarah Scott, 1748 vol 1 p262.

52 Kew National Archives, Duty on Silver Plate, T 47 5, 1757–62 p214.

53 Kew National Archives, Duty on Silver Plate, T 47 7, 1776 p27. This census was taken at Hill Street, the cou-

ple's home, the year after Edward Montagu's death which confirms that EM inherited all his plate.

54 V&A, Garrard Ledgers, AAD/1995/7/5 VAM 7 p3. This covers a period of Edward Montagu's orders from 21.5.1772 to 29.12.1774.

55 MBP Ledger 1776–78 p292, 3.2.1778 (for 8.5.1777).

56 Glanville 1987 (as note 4), p89.

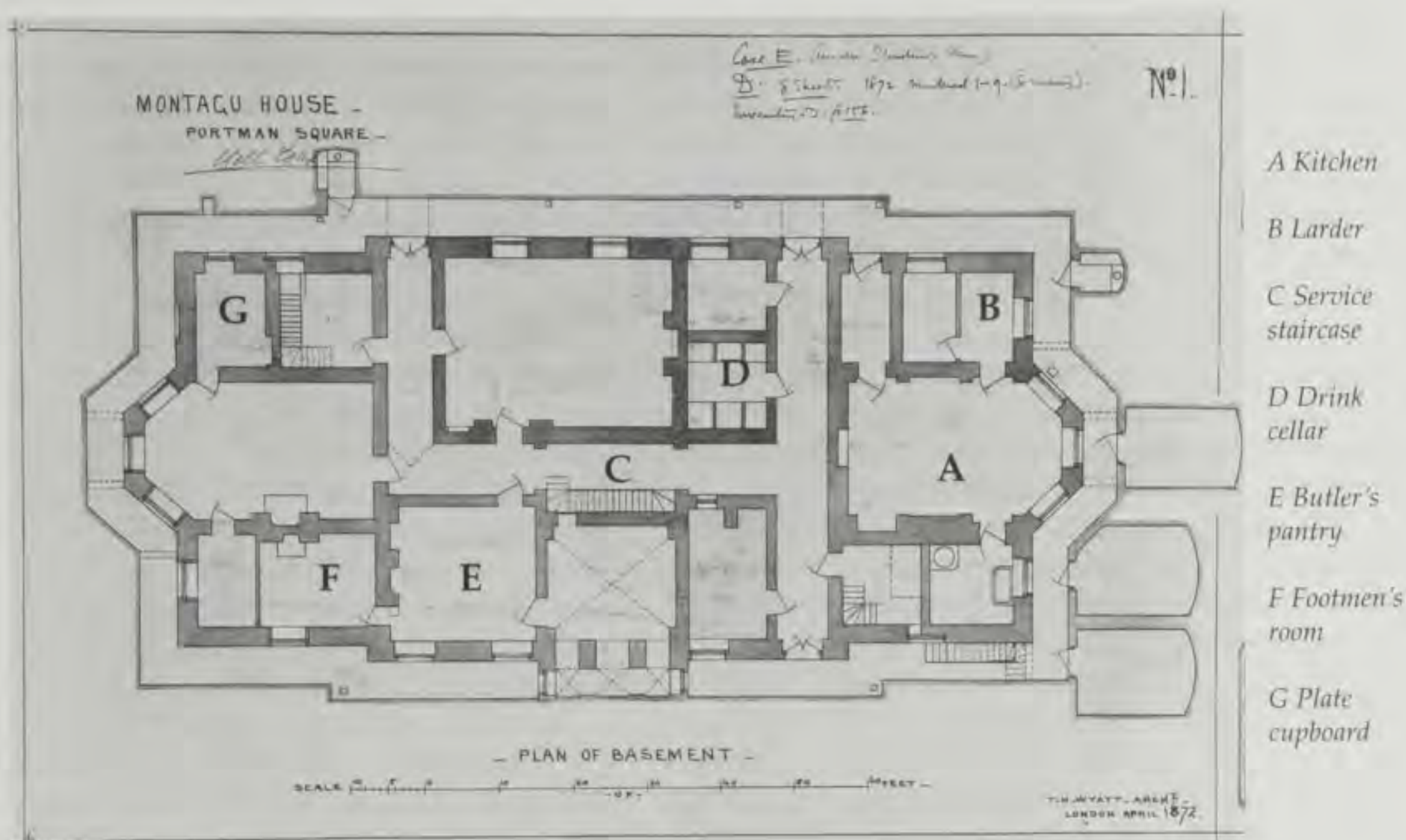
57 Ole Villumsen Krog,

'French Goldsmith's Work and the Danish Royal House' in Ole Villumsen Krog (ed), *A King's Feast. The Goldsmith's Art and Royal Banqueting in the 18th Century*, Copenhagen, 1991 pp92–105 (p95), (hereafter Krog).

58 Glanville 1987 (as note 4), p276.

59 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p133.





4 Montagu House, 22 Portman Square, London, by James Stuart, circa 1776. Basement plan drawn by T.H. Wyatt, 1872. (Courtesy The Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, no61/2/11)

had previously worked for Lady Selina Bathurst. Mrs Montagu was willing to pay the cook £15 per annum (at a time when she offered £6 as a starting wage to a footman)<sup>70</sup> and if necessary payments for cookery lessons.<sup>71</sup> The last provision was normally confined to the aristocracy.<sup>72</sup>

These mainly female servants worked in the kitchen in the basement of Montagu House [4A] in Portman Square, to which she moved in 1781 after leaving her earlier London house in Hill Street.<sup>73</sup> That area of the basement was separated from the rest of the house by an uninterrupted wall. This was partly motivated by the convention of keeping cooking smells from the rest of the house and insulated, too, noise from servants and the noises of cooking.<sup>74</sup> But the widespread fear of fire, likely to emanate above all from the kitchen,<sup>75</sup> was a major factor; Mrs Montagu experienced two at Sandleford, her country seat in Berkshire.<sup>76</sup> Thin fire-retarding iron plates were placed under the floor-boards

at Montagu House.<sup>77</sup> The consequence of the unpierced wall separating the kitchen from the rest of the basement was that, not untypically for the eighteenth century, food had to travel a long distance between kitchen and dining-room;<sup>78</sup> here food exited the house from a rear door and came back in through an adjacent door, along a corridor to a service staircase in the centre of the house. [4C]

The butler was traditionally in charge of male servants (apart from valets) as well as drink kept at [4D] and plate.<sup>79</sup> It was common for plate to be stored in a safe in the butler's pantry close to a room for footmen, so that they could jointly provide security.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps this was the case at Montagu House during Mrs Montagu's lifetime but the plan of 1872 indicates that then at least plate was stored at [4G], a little way from the butler's pantry at [4E] and the footmen's room at [4F]. Boulton provided two chests with partitions to store plate; these were strong enough to transport the

60 Geoffrey Scott and Frederick A. Pottle (eds), *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle*, vol IX *The Journal of James Boswell 1772-1774*, New York 1930, p81 (hereafter Scott and Pottle), *Journal* Spring 1772.

61 John Busse, *Mrs Montagu, Queen of the Blues*, London 1928, pp39-40 (hereafter Busse).

62 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp111-12.

63 John Doran, *A Lady of the Last Century*, London 1873, p355 (hereafter Doran).

64 Lehmann (as note 6), pp62-72.

65 K.C. Balderstone (ed), *Thraliana*, 2nd edn, 1951 vol 1 p416, *Journal* 5.1.1780 (hereafter Balderstone).

66 G.E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, London 1963, p230 (hereafter Mingay).

67 Doran (as note 63) p118, EM to Morris Robinson (her brother) 28.5.1762.

68 Lehmann (as note 6), p145, *The Ladies Library* 1790, vol 2 pp61-64.

69 Lehmann (as note 6), p379.

70 Climenson (as note 51), vol 1 p225.

71 Climenson (as note 51), vol 1 p139, EM to Mrs Donnellan, 28.12.1742.

72 Lehmann (as note 5),

pp74-76.

73 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p132.

74 Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House. A Social and Architectural History*, London 1978, p151 (hereafter Girouard). H.L. MO 6099, EM to Sarah Scott, 16.7.1784. EM showed mild irritation at noise made by servants at Sandleford.

75 Rachel Feild *Irons in the Fire. A History of Cooking Equipment*, Marlborough,

1984, pp9-10 (hereafter Feild).

76 Doran (as note 63), p323.

77 Kerry Bristol, '22 Portman Square, Mrs Montagu and her Palais de la vieillesse', *British Art Journal*, vol 2 no3, 2001, pp72-85 (p84 note 29), (hereafter Bristol).

78 Girouard (as note 74), p151.

79 Girouard (as note 74), p280.

80 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), pp189-90.



plate from place to place.<sup>81</sup> Moving plate between London and country seats was widespread with the upper classes.<sup>82</sup> Since Mrs Montagu entertained important guests at her Berkshire home, Sandleford, such as Hannah More<sup>83</sup> and Lord Shelburne,<sup>84</sup> it is quite possible that she used her plate in more than one place. The cleaning of plate was also the butler's responsibility.<sup>85</sup> For protection against the London air which Boulton reckoned quickly blackened and tarnished plate,<sup>86</sup> Mrs Montagu was supplied with appropriate paper bags.<sup>87</sup> Boulton advised Mrs Montagu to get her staff to use fine washed whiting to polish the plain parts, cleaning the matted, chased parts with a soft white brush and washing them with soap and warm water or spirits of wine. The process should be finished by washing all parts of the plate with warm water and wiping it dry with a soft linen cloth.<sup>88</sup> Despite the advice, Mrs Montagu returned plate for cleaning to Soho on at least one occasion.<sup>89</sup> To safeguard their beauty, Boulton further recommended that the soup tureens [7] should never be taken to the kitchens but that the liners should be filled there; he also felt that the sauceboats [3] should not enter the kitchen for the same reason,<sup>90</sup> but while Mrs Montagu bought liners for the soup tureens she rejected the firm's advice to do so for the sauceboats.

Dinner at Montagu House was at 4pm,<sup>91</sup> and although dining hours were normally later in London than in the country Mrs Montagu, like some other members of the wealthy gentry,<sup>92</sup> observed the same time at Sandleford.<sup>93</sup> Dinner at 4pm was the widely accepted hour for the gentry in the late 1770s,<sup>94</sup> but for the middle class it was earlier and for court and diplomatic circles later.<sup>95</sup> Given the varied social groups she invited for dinner, including both aristocracy and middle classes,<sup>96</sup> it was necessary for her when inviting guests to state her hour of dining and, at least when inviting the Duchess of Portland, to express a willingness to adjust the hour if she preferred.<sup>97</sup> The court and aristocracy in England pushed the hour of dining later and later; as the emulative middle classes followed<sup>98</sup> the dining hour, which for the gentry had been around 2pm early in the centu-

ry, had reached 6pm by the early 1790s<sup>99</sup> and became even later in the early nineteenth century.<sup>100</sup> The later dinner hour was a sign of social status since the dinner time for the lower classes remained at midday as it had been for them at the beginning of the century.<sup>101</sup>

The later hours for dining led to only modest compensatory changes in eating habits during the day in the eighteenth century. For the gentry the time for breakfast moved only from 9am towards 10am<sup>102</sup> and consisted usually of only a light meal from the bakery with hot drinks.<sup>103</sup> At Sandleford, to allow enough time for outdoor pursuits<sup>104</sup> Mrs Montagu left home at 10am;<sup>105</sup> on the assumption that she had some breakfast, it must have been at the customary hours. In London, however, she breakfasted rather later: she once remarked that she was writing a response at breakfast to a letter received at 11am from the Duchess of Portland,<sup>106</sup> and a public breakfast she gave in 1792 was at noon. While at that breakfast she provided meat and fish as well as bread and drinks,<sup>107</sup> her private everyday breakfast had no more than bread and butter.<sup>108</sup> Her tendency to breakfast in London later than the norm made it less necessary for her to have a midday snack, which some were taking to bridge the long gap between breakfast and dinner, though it was only in the nineteenth century that this became a formal meal.<sup>109</sup> Even at Sandleford, with an earlier start and a more energetic day, she made no reference in one letter to taking food or drink between breakfast and dinner. Consequently she would, as she once wrote, sit down to dinner with 'the good appetite'.<sup>110</sup>

Although Mrs Montagu organised many dinner parties in London prior to her husband's death in 1775<sup>111</sup> she did so less often than she would have liked, since her reclusive husband liked to spend longer than her at Sandleford rather than socialising in London.<sup>112</sup> Following his death she was freer to do as she pleased.<sup>113</sup>

Mrs Montagu's invitations to dinner corresponded with a pattern which she outlined to Boulton when ordering her service. She wrote that the service would not be for 'great entertainments' or for 'election feasts',

81 MBP Letter Book G pp831–32, B&F to EM, 15.2.1777.

82 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), p188.

83 W.S. Lewis (ed), *Horace Walpole Correspondence*, vol 31 Oxford 1955 p28 (hereafter Lewis) Hannah More to Horace Walpole, n.d.10.1788.

84 Doran (as note 63), p217. A visit in 1777.

85 Girouard (as note 74), p280.

86 MBP Letter Book G pp797–98, B&F to EM, 6.1.1777.

87 MBP Ledger 1776–78 p176, 15.2.1777.

88 MBP Letter Book G pp831–32, B&F to EM, 15.2.1777.

89 MBP Letter Book I p137, John Scale to EM, 10.12.1777.

90 MBP Letter Book G pp797–98, B&F to EM, 6.1.1777.

91 Nottingham University, The Portland Papers, PWE 44 10, EM to the Duchess of Portland, n.d.

92 Lehmann (as note 6), pp309–10.

93 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2

pp122–23, EM to Mrs Carter, circa 1780.

94 Lehmann (as note 6), p385.

95 Lehmann, p309.

96 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2,) p132.

97 Nottingham University, The Portland Papers PWE 44 10, EM to the Duchess of Portland, n.d.

98 Lehmann (as note 6), p318.

99 Lehmann (as note 6), p385.

100 Girouard (as note 73), p232.

101 Lehmann (as note 6), pp301–03.

102 Lehmann, p385.

103 Lehmann, p301.

104 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp122–23, EM to Mrs Carter, circa 1780.

105 Manchester University, Ryland English Manuscripts, 551 No17 circa 1780, EM to Mrs Thrale.

106 Nottingham University, The Portland Papers, EM's letters to the Duchess of Portland, 1740–60, PWE, 33 n.d. [circa 1740].

107 Joyce Hemlow (ed), *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madam D'Arblay)* vol 1 1791–92 Oxford, 1972,

p165 Journal 25.5.1792 (hereafter Hemlow).

108 Nottingham University, The Portland Papers, EM's letters to the Duchess of Portland, 1740–60, PWE, 33 n.d. [circa 1740].

109 Blunt (as note 50), p318.

110 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp122–23, EM to Mrs Carter, circa 1780.

111 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p5.

112 Climensson (as note 51), vol 2 pp71–72.

113 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 pp10–11.

114 MBP Montagu Box 9,



and that she 'should never invite more than a dozen or thirteen guests, rarely so many'.<sup>114</sup> This is consistent with other evidence. Hannah More recalled a dinner party of nine and 'some other persons of high rank and less wit' at Hill Street.<sup>115</sup> In 1778 Mrs Montagu listed eight guests on one occasion (including Lord and Lady Mahone and Edmund Burke and his wife) and six on another (including the French Ambassador, the actor David Garrick and their wives).<sup>116</sup> Mrs Montagu's lists may not have been complete but this smaller number certainly became the norm. In 1788 she remarked: 'Twice or three times a week I invite seven or eight agreeable persons to dine with me. On other days I often prevail on some intimate friend to partake of my mutton and chicken.'<sup>117</sup> The number of about seven was confirmed by Hannah More in 1788: 'On Tuesday we dined a very select little party at Portman Square, all gentlemen except Mrs Montagu and ourselves [ie Hannah More and Mrs David Garrick], Sir Joshua [Reynolds], Mr Jerminham, Mr Walpole and Dr Blagdon a new blue stocking and a very agreeable one'.<sup>118</sup> Mrs Montagu aimed at a variety of social and intellectual guests and a mixing of genders (at a time when that was not universal)<sup>119</sup> and gatherings of a size permitting her, as Sir William Forbes said, an 'unreserved interchange of thoughts with a few intimate friends'.<sup>120</sup> Her family gatherings were not dissimilar: to celebrate taking possession of her new house and dining room at Montagu House, she invited in December 1781<sup>121</sup> her sister Sarah Scott, her brother Charles and his wife, Mrs Jane Robinson (her sister-in-law) and Jane's son Matthew<sup>122</sup> (who, for reasons which were not entirely clear, was adopted by Mrs Montagu).<sup>123</sup>

Before her guests' arrival Mrs Montagu paid particular attention to her appearance<sup>124</sup> as did her guests: in 1780 Mrs Thrale asked Dr Johnson whether she should wear her 'fine new dressed hat' to dine at Mrs Montagu's; he thought she should.<sup>125</sup> For some, including James Boswell, the prospect of dinner with Mrs Montagu, was a forbidding experience.<sup>126</sup> Guests expe-

rienced that careful preparation and elaborate formality which foreign visitors noted as especially characteristic of dinner parties in large English houses.<sup>127</sup> Fanny Burney attending a Bluestocking dinner at the Thrales in 1778, where Mrs Montagu was present, recorded how 'when dinner was upon table, I followed the procession in a tragedy step, as Mr Thrale will have it, into the dining-parlour'.<sup>128</sup>

### Into the dining room

Entering what Mrs Montagu habitually preferred to call her eating room,<sup>129</sup> rather than the newer term 'dining room',<sup>130</sup> was by contemporary accounts an uplifting experience. James Boswell, describing his impressions of dinner at Hill Street, recorded in his *Journal* in 1772 that the house was grand, and as elegantly finished and furnished as he could imagine.<sup>131</sup> Even so, she felt that the eating room there was not 'large enough nor high enough for large dinners and numerous guests'.<sup>132</sup> Even though she never held banquets she took care to ensure an impressive eating room at her new house at Portman Square. Limited evidence suggests that the decoration was not specially rich compared with other rooms, but it was large, 40x25ft (12.2x7.6m), with an imposing Ionic screen.<sup>133</sup> These details could apply to a room on the ground floor at [5H] or to the room above on the second floor.<sup>134</sup> When complete she reported to a friend in December 1781 'I dined with good appetite in my new eating room yesterday. What pleasure I received in thinking my dear Mrs Vesey would eat her dinner some time in this charming room'.<sup>135</sup>

If the dining room was on the ground floor, it had a glazed door permitting direct access (via a bridge over the moat round the basement) to the garden designed by Lord Harcourt.<sup>136</sup> Whether on the ground floor or first floor, the dining room windows provided views to the hills of Hampstead.<sup>137</sup> The windows extended down almost to the floor,<sup>138</sup> and that feature together with direct access to the garden was generally characteristic of many large houses of the period where owners want-

EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

115 Busse (as note 6), pp49-50.

116 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp42-44, EM to Mrs Vesey [n.d.].

117 Doran (as note 63), p47.

118 Lewis (as note 83) vol31 p258, Hannah More to one of her sisters, 11.1.1788.

119 Although the French and Danish Courts invited spouses to royal dinners, Hanoverian monarchs did not. Philippa Glanville 'Dining at Court from George I to George IV' in Ole Villumsen Krog (ed), *A King's Feast. The Goldsmith's*

*Art and Royal Banqueting in the 18th Century*, Copenhagen, 1991 pp106-17 (p109), (hereafter Glanville 1991).

120 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p11.

121 HL MO 6568, EM to Elizabeth Vesey, 12.12.1781.

122 Climençon (as note 51), vol 11 p92.

123 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p198. See note 50. A part of the explanation was that EM's son died in 1744 (Doran as note 63 p44). Matthew's father, Morris, died in 1777 and his widow Jane was left without much money though EM and her

father both gave her an allowance, Doran (as note 63) pp228-31.

124 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp122-23, EM to Mrs Carter, circa 1780.

125 Balderstone (as note 65), vol 1 p416, *Journal* 5.1.1780.

126 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), pp81-82.

127 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), p182.

128 Charlotte F. Barratt (ed), *The Diary and Letters of Madam D'Arblay (Fanny Burney)*, 7 vols London 1854, vol 1 *Diary* p103 (hereafter Barratt).

129 eg Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 EM to Mrs Carter, [1782] and HL MO 6574, EM to Elizabeth Vesey, 18 and 22.6.1782.

130 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), p186.

131 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), pp81-82.

132 Doran (as note 63), p240.

133 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), pp132-38.

134 Although Wyatt's plan indicates that the dining room was on the ground floor [5H] a sketch plan by EM suggests the room was on the first floor (MBP

Montagu box 28, EM to MB, 20.8.1780). I did not consider the second possibility at Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p133 and I am grateful to Rosemary Baird for pointing this out to me.

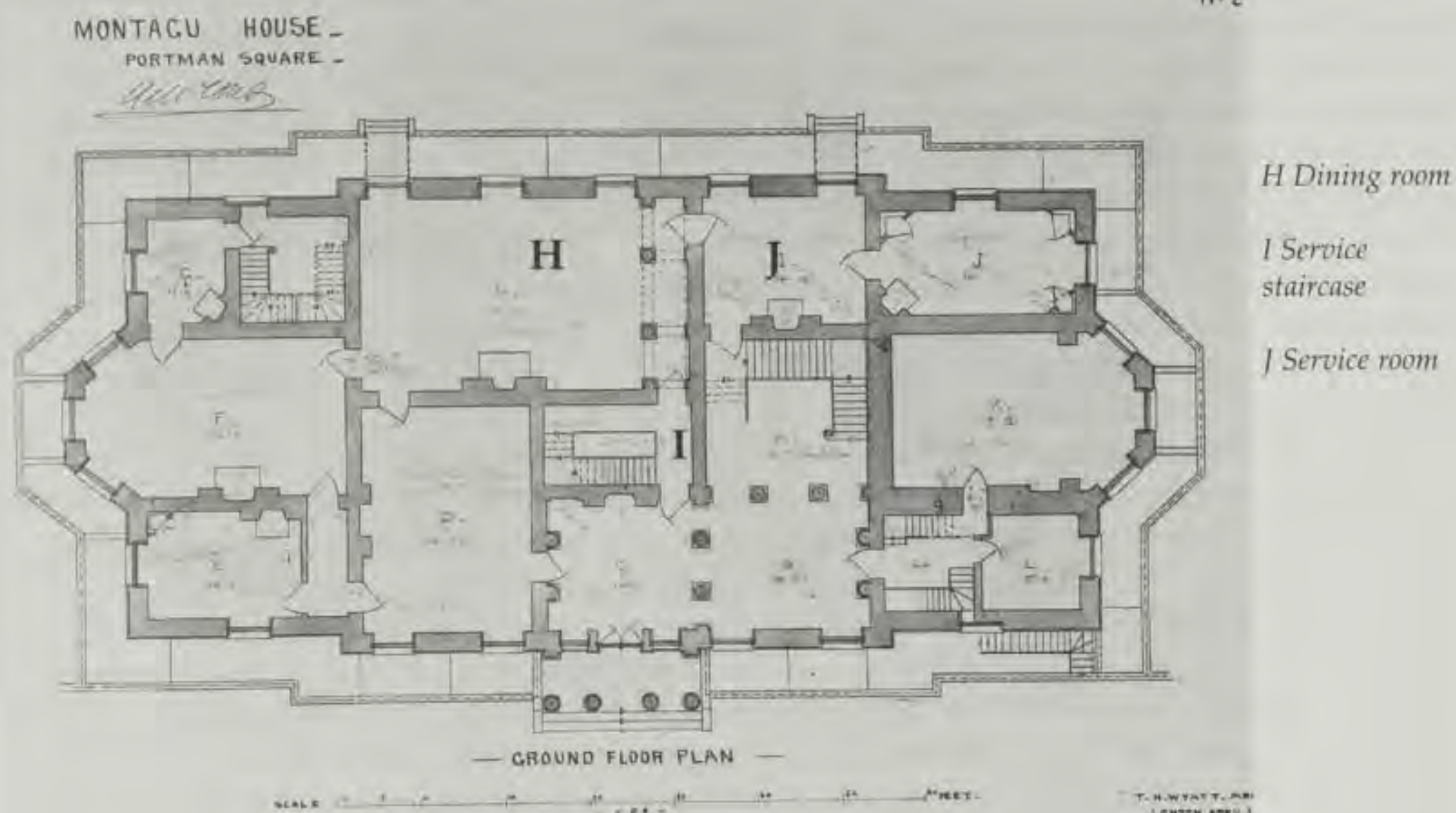
135 HL MO 6568, EM to Elizabeth Vesey, 12.12.1781.

136 Manchester University, Ryland English Manuscripts 551 no15, EM to Mrs Thrale [n.d.].

137 HL MO 6574, EM to Elizabeth Vesey, 18 and 22.6.1782.

138 Montagu House, West Elevation, drawn by T.H. Wyatt, 1872, The Sir John





5 Montagu House, 22 Portman Square, London, by James Stuart, circa 1776. Ground floor plan drawn by T.H. Wyatt, 1872. (Courtesy The Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, no61/2/12)

ed to enjoy to the full the growing appreciation of nature.<sup>139</sup> Shortly before the completion of her dining room at Montagu House, Mrs Montagu was able to report that she was dining 'everyday in my delightful new room at Sandleford', designed by James Wyatt,<sup>140</sup> which also has large windows, which open vertically to permit direct access to the garden and from which<sup>141</sup> she also gained 'the prettiest perspective scene imaginable'.<sup>142</sup>

Mrs Montagu bought furniture from the French ambassador<sup>143</sup> shortly before her move to Montagu House, and took all of her Hill Street furniture with her.<sup>144</sup> She had there a 'long table'<sup>145</sup> and later references in 1791 to the dining room at Montagu House by Fanny Burney suggest that such a table existed there though it was then loaded with food for a public breakfast.<sup>146</sup> Mrs Montagu's table, like other long rectangular tables of the period, probably consisted of several small tables added together so that the length could be adjusted according to the number of guests.<sup>147</sup> Tables were covered with cloths (white was traditionally preferred)<sup>148</sup>

and supplied with napkins;<sup>149</sup> Mrs Montagu bought a stock of both a few years after her marriage.<sup>150</sup> Fanny Burney also made reference to 'state chairs' in Mrs Montagu's eating room, a phrase which implies that the chairs were distinctive.<sup>151</sup> Other furniture in the room included sideboards under the pillars 'behind which hung the most beautiful and brilliant lustres [ie lights]';<sup>152</sup> these sideboards, prevalent in houses of this period,<sup>153</sup> were conveniently placed at Montagu House for servants laden with food and drink as they entered from the service staircase. [51]

The splendour with which Mrs Montagu and other owners of large houses in England endowed their eating rooms contrasted strongly with France, where dining generally took place in a mere anti-chamber. Robert Adam's explanation for this difference was the greater amount of time that the English spent in the dining room so that it became a room of conversation.<sup>154</sup> Mrs Montagu inherited conversational skills from her father and polished them during her trip to France in 1776.<sup>155</sup> In 1778 Mrs Thrale, giving marks out of twenty, gave

Soane Museum, no 61/2/17.

139 Girouard (as note 74), pp214-28.

140 HL MO 3513, EM to Elizabeth Carter, 26.7.1781.

141 I am grateful to Noel Erskine, Bursar of St Gabriel's School, Sandleford (formerly one of EM's country houses) for this information.

142 HL MO 3531, EM to

Sarah Scott? 23.7.1782.

143 Doran (as note 63), p240, EM to Sarah Robinson, 10.4.1778.

144 British Library Manuscript no40663 p102, EM to Sarah Scott, 2.11.1780.

145 Doran (as note 63), p268.

146 Hemlow (as note 107). On p163 Fanny Burney refers to 'the head of the table' and on p166 to the

'other side of the table'.

147 Rosamund Bayne-Powell, *Housekeeping in the Eighteenth Century*, London 1956, p37 (hereafter Bayne-Powell).

148 Strong (as note 3), p304.

149 Hemlow (as note 107), pp137-38.

150 Climensson (as note 51), vol 1 p187, EM to Sarah Robinson, July 1744, EM says she is ordering 6 table

cloths and 3 dozen napkins.

151 Hemlow (as note 107), p163.

152 HL MO 3523, EM to Sarah Scott, 15.12.1781.

153 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), p188.

154 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), p186.

155 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p329.

156 Balderstone (as note 65),

pp330-31, July 1778.

157 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p10.

158 Doran (as note 63), p283.

159 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p271.

160 Blunt, vol 2 p272.

161 Blunt, vol 2 p126.

162 Blunt, vol 2 p352.

163 Balderstone (as note 65) vol 1 p135 August to



Mrs Montagu full marks for conversational skills and such high marks for other attributes ('worth of heart 18, person mien and manner 18, good humour 15, useful knowledge 15, ornamental knowledge 15') which gave her a total of 101 when her nearest rivals were given only 76: these were Lady Burgoyne and Mrs Thrale herself! Dr Johnson, regarded by Mrs Thrale as the leading male intellectual,<sup>156</sup> felt that Mrs Montagu's powers in conversation compared favourably with anyone<sup>157</sup> and that she displayed impressive variety in her conversation.<sup>158</sup> On the whole people felt she showed exceptional wit<sup>159</sup> but some, including Fanny Burney,<sup>160</sup> Mrs Hervey<sup>161</sup> and Sir Nathaniel Wraxall<sup>162</sup> felt otherwise. Conversation was primarily about literature,<sup>163</sup> politics<sup>164</sup> (though this was a matter she found tiresome)<sup>165</sup> and must have included her philanthropic interests.<sup>166</sup> One of the fullest accounts of a conversation at Mrs Montagu's dinner table was by James Boswell. Other guests were the Archbishop of York, his two sons, Thomas Anson of Shugborough and 1st Lord Lyttleton, only the last of whom could be counted a Bluestocking.<sup>167</sup> Boswell reflected on 'how excellent a place London is, when one is in real good company'; the Archbishop he found to be 'one of the pleasantest men I ever saw... who spoke Italian with a fluency and a perfection of accent that was wonderful...' However, not all of the conversation was so elevated:

Mrs Montagu got a great packet about her husband's coal work [a reference to his coalmining activities at Denton in Northumberland]<sup>168</sup> which is a considerable part of their riches. Lord Lyttelton joked calling her 'You cinder-wench'. She found fault with some kind of husbandry where they sow wheat and barley, as I think, together. 'Because' she said 'they are not ripe at the same time'. Said the Archbishop 'We see many such kind of marriages'. The truth is Mrs Montagu's own marriage was of that kind. Her husband [Edward born 1691] is much older than she [born 1720].<sup>169</sup> They have not been ripe at the same time.<sup>170</sup>

Given Mrs Montagu's strong convictions over religion and virtue<sup>171</sup> she might have registered disapproval but according to Boswell's account did not do so. Generally, Mrs Montagu's parties had a more even balance between the genders<sup>172</sup> and the tone of the conversations was more likely to have shown regard for female

delicacy.<sup>173</sup> Fanny Burney summed up her impressions of Mrs Montagu as a woman accustomed to being distinguished<sup>174</sup> and 'allowing a little for parade and ostentation which her power in wealth and rank in literature offer some excuse for, her conversation is very agreeable, she is always reasonable and sensible, and sometimes instructive and entertaining'.<sup>175</sup>

The company and conversation were key attractions and comment on those was seemingly more important than comment on the meal itself not only by Mrs Montagu but her guests too; this is consistent with a tradition stretching back to antiquity, and revived in the Renaissance. Though most apparent with scholars and humanists, their attitudes spread, so that even in accounts of banquets comment on food and drink was limited. The wish to stress the intellectual element of conversation, rather than the merely sensual pleasures of eating was a part of what was meant by good manners and was allied to a belief in the importance of restraint in the actual consumption of food and drink.<sup>176</sup> In the eighteenth century writers in England like Steele and Addison (the latter admired by Mrs Montagu)<sup>177</sup> advocated restraint<sup>178</sup> and this was reinforced in France by the Enlightenment. These developments were picked up in cookery books in France (Menon's *La Cuisinière bourgeoise*, 1746) and England (Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, 1747) with middle-class markets in mind<sup>179</sup> but even the culinary habits of George III were, in comparison with royalist traditions, characterised by moderation.<sup>180</sup> This emphasis applied particularly to women where journals like *The Tatler* and the *Spectator* promoted the ideal of female delicacy, precluding large appetites,<sup>181</sup> and effectively promoting the widespread virtue of slimness in girls.<sup>182</sup> Hannah More described Mrs Montagu's 'form (for she has no body) as delicate even to fragility'<sup>183</sup> and that was the general view.<sup>184</sup> Part of this was due to her restlessness, which led her friend the Duchess of Portland to refer to Mrs Montagu as 'Fidget'<sup>185</sup> but Mrs Montagu admired slimness too.<sup>186</sup>

Time after time she emphasised her own moderation in eating: she once remarked that a guest at a dinner party talked so much that 'his conversation gave me a dinner',<sup>187</sup> on another that she was irritated that she was obliged to stop letter-writing to eat.<sup>188</sup> Although

September 1777. A reference to Joseph Addison as 'a good man as well as a fine writer'.

164 Balderstone (as note 65), vol 1 pp330-31, July 1778.

165 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp122-23, EM to Mrs Carter circa 1780.

166 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p133.

167 Quickenden 2004, p132.

168 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p101.

169 Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses 1670-1830*, London 2003 pp169-73 (hereafter Baird).

170 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), p81 Spring 1772.

171 Doran (as note 63), EM to Mrs Robinson, 29.12.1779.

172 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p132.

173 Quickenden 2004, p140.

174 Barratt (as note 128), vol 1 p101 [1778].

175 Barratt (as note 128), vol 3 p275 [1792].

176 Strong (as note 3), pp159-61.

177 Balderstone (as note 65), vol 1 p135, Aug-Sept 1777.

178 Mingay (as note 66), p145.

179 Strong (as note 3), pp229-30.

180 Glanville 1991 (as note

119), pp106-07.

181 Lehmann (as note 6), p283.

182 Barratt (as note 128), vol 1 p393, 5.7.1779.

183 Busse (as note 61), pp49-50.

184 Fanny Burney described EM as 'middle-sized, very thin and looks infirm' (Barratt, as note 128) vol1 p101 [1778]. Exceptionally a group of friends joked circa 1782 that there was a

rumour she has growing fat, which threatened to comprise the likeness of EM portraits (Blunt as note 50, vol 2 p129).

185 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p362.

186 Matthew Montagu, *The Letters of Elizabeth Montagu with some of the Letters of her Correspondents*, 4 vols. London 1809-13, vol 1 p70 (hereafter Montagu), EM to Duchess of Portland, 1739.



she might want to reassure a friend that she was in good spirits by stressing her capacity to deal with a hearty meal,<sup>189</sup> and when providing meals for the poor delighted in filling often empty stomachs,<sup>190</sup> when her new dining room at Montagu House neared completion in 1781 Mrs Montagu declared to Sir William Pepys that 'my dinners will be thought by all but gluttons, the most elegant entertainments in London'.<sup>191</sup>

Boswell characterised his dinner at Mrs Montagu's as 'fine',<sup>192</sup> an emphasis given by others.<sup>193</sup> Boswell highlighted drinking 'Burgundy, Champagne... and in short a rich variety of wines'. Burgundy and champagne were the wines most favoured by the aristocracy.<sup>194</sup> Other wines mentioned in Mrs Montagu's correspondence included port, claret and Madeira;<sup>195</sup> on one occasion she claimed that just one glass of Madeira depressed her spirits for an hour.<sup>196</sup> She served, as was the norm,<sup>197</sup> beer and ale to workers on her estates,<sup>198</sup> but had a horror of drunkenness: she withdrew feasts from adult workers at Burniston in Northumberland in 1775 because of drunkenness at earlier feasts<sup>199</sup> and claimed in 1782 that she no longer dined anywhere except her own home 'for fear that [her] servants get drunk with hospitality of her friends when visiting them'.<sup>200</sup> According to John Trusler's *The Honours of the Table* (1788), which stressed the virtue of female delicacy, it was appropriate for women to ask men to call for drinks on their behalf; this was convenient, because of the recently introduced pattern of men and women sitting alternately round the table.<sup>201</sup>

Boswell noted that his party was waited on by seven or eight servants,<sup>202</sup> some of these, following normal practice, may have been brought by guests, to wait at table.<sup>203</sup> Although, according to John Trusler, it was normal for the hostess to tell diners what drinks were available, it was for servants to carry them on request<sup>204</sup> in glasses from the sideboard with the help of salvers.<sup>205</sup> Wine coolers or ice-pails for a single bottle was a French refinement introduced to England in the early eighteenth century which had by the mid-century generally replaced the earlier system of an ice-filled cistern under the sideboard.<sup>206</sup> Monteiths, bowls for cooling glasses,

another French refinement of the late seventeenth century,<sup>207</sup> appeared in England soon after.<sup>208</sup> Mrs Montagu was sent an ice-pail and monteith in February 1777 by Boulton, though in neither case was the metal specified.<sup>209</sup> In December 1777 she received two Sheffield plate ice-pails, costing £10 10s 0d.<sup>210</sup>

Just as increasing preference for a modest display of sideboard plate replaced the early eighteenth-century taste for a magnificent display of plate on the buffet,<sup>211</sup> Mrs Montagu avoided the use of an *épergne* or elaborate table centrepiece. First recorded in 1697 on the table of Louis XIV at Marly and holding condiments, bowls and candlesticks which could be replaced with a bouquet of flowers, *épergnes* stood on the table throughout the meal.<sup>212</sup> The *épergne* was introduced into England early in the following century and became both more popular and more elaborate towards the mid-century,<sup>213</sup> often involving sculptures with mythological and architectural forms.<sup>214</sup> Such richness ran counter to Mrs Montagu's determination to avoid excessive ornamentation in her service,<sup>215</sup> but she said she rejected the *épergne* on the grounds that it was out of fashion.<sup>216</sup> This trend started in France, where the *épergne* declined in favour at the court of Louis XV, though still used on grand occasions and<sup>217</sup> this trend influenced Christian VII in Denmark following his return from France and England in 1769.<sup>218</sup>

Mrs Montagu offered two courses,<sup>219</sup> plus a dessert<sup>220</sup> and this to virtually all of her guests would have seemed entirely acceptable. Although Charles Carter's aristocratic and strongly French-influenced *The Complete Practical Cook* (1730) offered up to five courses plus dessert<sup>221</sup> this was a number normally only followed for banquets;<sup>222</sup> for regular entertaining even the extravagant Duchess of Newcastle, during the period 1761–74, did not extend above three courses (plus dessert).<sup>223</sup> Although in France three courses, together with a dessert, was widespread for entertaining amongst the upper and middle classes, in England the norm was two (plus dessert)<sup>224</sup> and was almost certainly the pattern in Mrs Montagu's circle: when Fanny Burney had a three-course dinner and dessert at Mrs Thrale's in 1778 she

187 Montagu (as note 186), vol 2 1809 p13, EM to Mrs Robinson, 1741.

188 Montagu (as note 186), vol 1 1809 p195, EM to Duchess of Portland, 13.5 [n.d].

189 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp122–23, EM to Mrs Carter, circa 1780.

190 A feast for children at Newbury Sunday School in 1786 (Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p211).

191 HL MO 4069, EM to Sir William Pepys, 14.8.1781.

192 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), p82.

193 Busse (as note 61), pp49–50.

194 Strong (as note 3), p225.

195 Climenson (as note 51), vol 2 p91.

196 Montagu (as note 186), vol 2 1809 pp62–64, EM to Sarah Robinson 1741.

197 Lehmann (as note 6), p374.

198 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p208.

199 Doran (as note 63), p200.

200 Doran (as note 63), p321.

201 Lehmann (as note 6), pp345–46.

202 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), p82.

203 Bayne-Powell (as note 147), pp137–38.

204 Lehmann (as note 6), pp345–47.

205 Glanville 1987 (as note 4), p64.

206 Glanville 1987, p89.

207 John Whitehead, *The French Interior in the Eighteenth Century*, London

1992, p224 (hereafter Whitehead).

208 Glanville 1987 (as note 4), p70.

209 MBP Letter Book G pp819–20, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 7.2.1777.

210 MBP Journal 1776–78 p444, 16.2.1777.

211 Glanville 1991 (as note 119), p116.

212 Krog 1 (as note 57), p93.

213 Lomax (as note 1), p123.

214 Krog 1 (as note 57), p94.

215 Quickenden 2004 (as

note 4), pp134–41.

216 MBP Montagu box 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

217 Whitehead (as note 207), p223.

218 Ole Villumsen Krog 'The Royal Table in the 18th Century' in Ole Villumsen Krog (ed), *A King's Feast. The Goldsmith's Art and Royal Banqueting in the 18th Century*, Copenhagen 1991, pp134–44 (p135), (hereafter Krog 2).

219 MBP Montagu box 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1777.

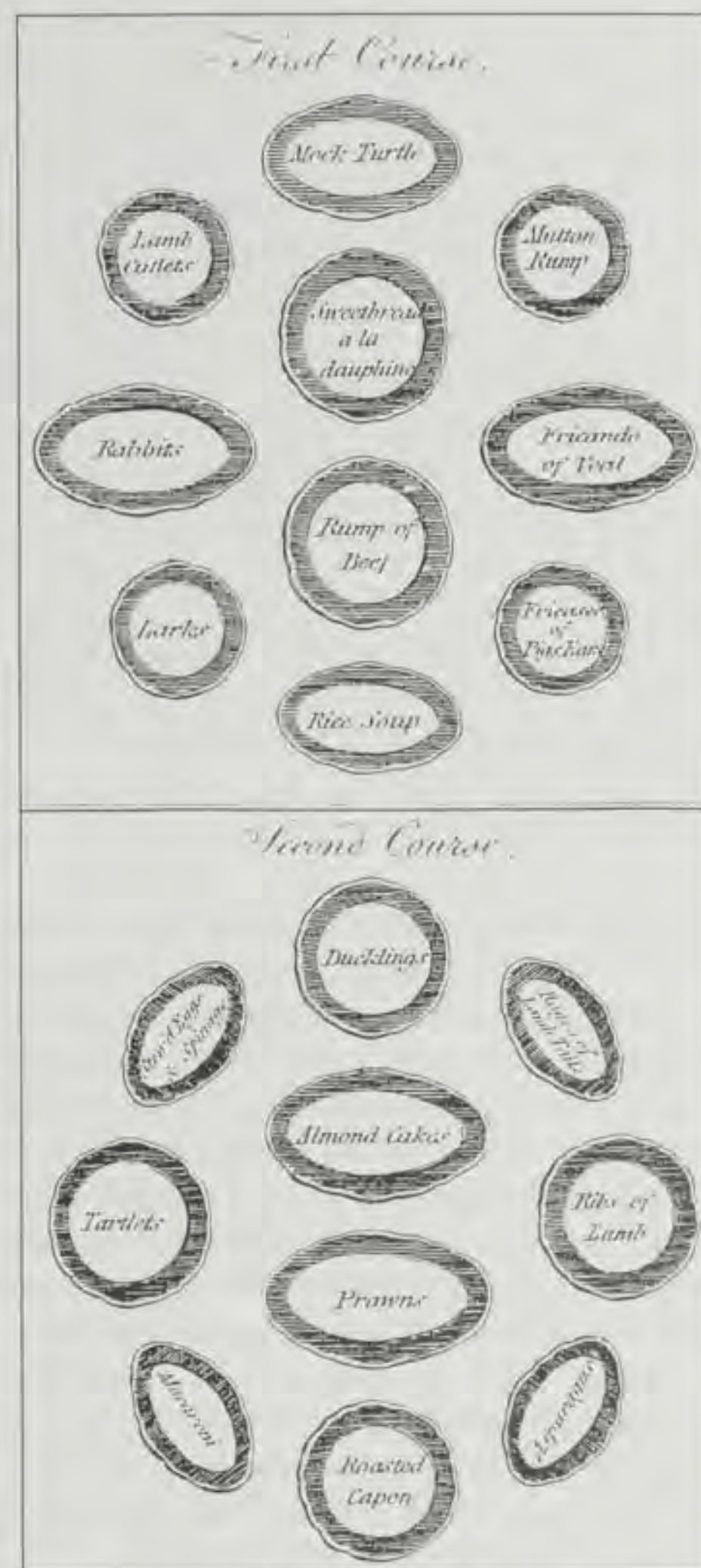


described it as 'sumptuous'.<sup>225</sup> A two-course dinner was a sign of social status in England;<sup>226</sup> when Parson Woodforde, in his meticulous records of dinners he enjoyed between 1758–1802, recorded a dinner in 1783 with the Bishop of Norwich there were two courses as well as a dessert; when he dined with squires it was usually two courses (sometimes with dessert) but when he received friends of his own standing it was one course (often with dessert). One-course meals applied widely for family meals<sup>227</sup> and for those below the gentry, though perhaps with some fruit to follow.<sup>228</sup>

Mrs Montagu purchased two silver soup tureens<sup>229</sup> [7] and originally ordered nine dishes for each of the two main courses but made no mention then of covers;<sup>230</sup> the exact number she finally bought is not clear but there were more than 19 dishes,<sup>231</sup> at least 12 of which were silver (four in the assay year 1776/77<sup>232</sup> and eight in the following year.<sup>233</sup> [8] Two large and two small Sheffield plate covers<sup>234</sup> plus the pair in silver at [9] were purchased and probably more as well.<sup>235</sup>

For her class, social group and number of guests, the number of dishes<sup>236</sup> she purchased was entirely appropriate. Following the symmetry and grandeur of the French system, a two-course meal for the Duchess of Newcastle in 1761 gave fifteen dishes at each course (including two soups at the first and additionally four 'removes' (ie replacement dishes) at each course. A three-course meal later in the year was even more lavish: 37 dishes (plus eight 'removes' and further sideboard dishes) for the first course, 28 for the second and 38 for the third.<sup>237</sup> Parson Woodforde's visit in 1783 to the Bishop of Norwich involved 20 dishes for each course while 20 were at table.<sup>238</sup> While those aristocratic menus clearly surpassed Mrs Montagu's provision, John Farley's *The London Art of Cookery...* (1783), which shows some influence from French recipes and though not the most expensive cook book at 6s 0d, nevertheless provided for the upper end of the market, shows, typically, eight dishes and two soups for the first course and ten for the second, intended for what he describes as a small company.<sup>239</sup> The same pattern applies to W.A. Henderson's later *The Housekeeper's Instructor*.<sup>240</sup> [6]

While that equates to Mrs Montagu's provision it was a little above Parson Woodforde's bill of fare with the squirarchy of five dishes for the first course and six for the second and well above the parson's four to seven dishes for one course only when dining with his equals in the Church (though all of these meals, like Mrs Montagu's, were followed by dessert). When receiving his parishioners he typically provided just roast beef, vegetables and plum pudding.<sup>241</sup>



6 'A Table of Two Courses for a Small Company' from William Augustus Henderson's *The Housekeeper's Instructor*, circa 1792

220 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), p82.

221 Lehmann (as note 6), p324.

222 eg the banquet given by the Duke of Northumberland for the visit of Denmark's King Christian VII in 1768 (Helen Clifford 'King Christian VII's Visit to England in 1768' in Ole Villemssen Krog (ed), *A King's Feast. The Goldsmith's Art and Royal Banqueting in the 18th Century*, Copenhagen 1991, pp11–29 (p23) (hereafter Clifford 1991),

223 Lehmann (as note 6), pp360–61.

224 Lehmann, pp324–26.

225 Barratt (as note 128), vol1 p117.

226 Lehmann (as note 6), pp370–74.

227 Lehmann, p360–61.

228 Lehmann, p378.

229 MBP Letter Book G pp797–98, B&F to EM 6.1.1777 and Letter Book G p812, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777.

230 MBP Montagu box 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1777.

231 '15 more dishes' sent (MBP Letter Book I pp137–38, John Hodges to EM, 11.12.1777).

232 4 silver dishes costing £22 18s 3d. (MBP Journal 1776–78 p320, 30.4.1777).

233 A reference to the 'remainder of dishes forwarded 6th February' implies that some were sent then and some before. (MBP Letter Book G pp837–38, B&F to EM, 19.2.1777).

234 MBP Letter Book I p139, John Hodges to EM, 13.12.1777.

235 A reference to getting done all 'additional orders' for dishes and covers perhaps implies that some covers were made early in 1777. (MBP Letter Book G p837, John Hodges to John Wyatt 19.2.1777). These and the dishes (note 233), could have formed part of the consignments sent in the late winter and spring of 1777, (see notes 13–16).

236 Montagu box 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

237 Lehmann (as note 6), pp360–61.

238 Lehmann, pp245–49.

239 John Farley, *The London Art of Cookery and Domestic Housekeeper's Complete Assistant...* London 1773, eg Bills of Fare for March and August (hereafter Farley).

240 William Augustus Henderson, *The Housekeeper's Instructor or Universal Family Cook*, London 1805. A Table of Two courses for a Small Company (hereafter Henderson).

241 Lehmann (as note 6), pp370–74.





7 One of a pair of soup tureens, silver, Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham 1776/77. (Partial and promised gift, Mr James C. Codell Jr, courtesy The Speed Art Museum, 1993.9.8ba,b)

Soup characterised the start of formal meals in well-to-do houses<sup>242</sup> and two were widely offered; these varied according to the season, Farley for example suggesting mock turtle and rice for March and almond soup paired with *soupe à la reine* for January;<sup>243</sup> Henderson's recipe for the last consisted of a meat and vegetable broth, finely strained, with cream, ground almonds and hard eggs, finely sieved and poured over a crisp French bread.<sup>244</sup> On one occasion Mrs Thrale's company felt that if Mrs Montagu was to be likened to any one food it would be the exquisite *soupe à la reine*.<sup>245</sup> The French connection was reinforced by the utensil in which it was served since the tureen emerged in France during the reign of Louis XIV, but early in the eighteenth century it started to become a standard part of English services. In France soup tureens invariably had a stand but in England that was much less true.<sup>246</sup> Here Mrs Montagu was closer to France: she was supplied with one at least in silver and another in Sheffield plate<sup>247</sup> and perhaps more in silver.<sup>248</sup> She was also supplied in silver with a tureen weighing 75oz 6dwt<sup>249</sup> a lining weighing 23oz 19dwt 12gr<sup>250</sup> and the other tureen and lining weighed together 98oz 14dwt 12gr.<sup>251</sup> The liners have wire rings

as handles fixed on the inner rim at each end; Boulton felt they were too rigid and asked for them back so that an alteration could be made<sup>252</sup> but there is no evidence that happened<sup>253</sup> and Boulton's comment still seems valid. The oval shape used for the tureens was the most popular shape at this period.<sup>254</sup> Mrs Montagu was supplied with at least one tureen ladle weighing 8oz 13dwt.<sup>255</sup>

The two soup tureens were usually either replaced by 'removes' either of two dishes of fish<sup>256</sup> or one of fish and one of meat,<sup>257</sup> offered as a choice after soup. In the eighteenth century both fresh and sea-water fish were used.<sup>258</sup> In September 1787, since the trout season was then over, Mrs Montagu asked her sister Sarah Scott to obtain sea fish for her.<sup>259</sup> In this period fish was eaten with a fork and a piece of bread.<sup>260</sup> Other seafood dishes could appear in the first course: Farley included oyster patties.<sup>261</sup>

Soup and fish were placed at the top of the table, where the mistress sat, and at the bottom of the table where the master sat.<sup>262</sup> Following Edward Montagu's death in 1775 it is likely that on many occasions Mrs Montagu's adopted nephew, Matthew, sat in the mas-

242 Bayne-Powell (as note 147), p78.

243 Farley (as note 239), Bills of Fare for January and March.

244 Henderson (as note 240), p7.

245 Balderstone (as note 65), vol 1 p347 December 1778.

246 Lomax (as note 1), p124.

247 MBP Letter Book G pp797-98, B&F to EM, 6.1.1777.

248 BPR shows two dish stands assayed 7.1.1777

which may have been sent to EM as part of her later consignments (MBP Letter Book G pp818-19, B&F to EM, 5.2.1777).

249 BPR 17.12.1776.

250 BPR 7.1.1777.

251 BPR 27.12.1776. The tureen and liners were sent 5.1.1777. (MBP G pp797-98, B&F to EM, 6.1.1777) and about 28.1.1777. (MBP Letter Book G p814, B&F to EM, 30.1.1777).

252 MBP Letter Book G pp797-98, B&F to EM,

6.1.1777.

253 I am grateful to Scott Erbes of The J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville for this advice.

254 Lomax (as note 1), p126.

255 MBP Letter Book G p812, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777 and BPR 27.12.1776.

256 Farley (as note 239), Bill of Fare for January.

257 Lehmann (as note 6), p360.

258 Strong (as note 3), p224.

259 Doran (as note 63), p341.

260 Strong (as note 3), p305.

261 Farley (as note 239), Bill of Fare for January.

262 Lehmann (as note 6), p339.

263 Edward A. Bloom and William D. Bloom (eds), *The Piozzi Letters: Correspondence of Hester Lynch Piozzi, 1784-1821* (formerly Mrs Thrale), vol 3 1799-1804, Newark 1993, p175 note 8. Matthew was born in 1762 and died in 1831 (hereafter Bloom & Bloom).

264 Scott and Pottle (as note 60), p259, 2.8.1774.

265 Busse (as note 61), pp49-50. A dinner party recalled by Hannah More.

266 British Library, Manuscript No40663 p113. EM to ?, 2.3.circa 1782.

267 Doran (as note 63), pp327-40.

268 Ann Eatwell 'A la Française to à la Russe 1680-1930' in Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young (eds), *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in*



ter's place; though only 13 in 1775,<sup>263</sup> he had already come to the attention of visitors.<sup>264</sup> He attended Mrs Montagu's dinner parties at Hill Street<sup>265</sup> and Montagu House<sup>266</sup> where he continued to live after his marriage in 1785.<sup>267</sup> It was normal practice for the host and hostess to serve soup and carve fish and the meat,<sup>268</sup> usually placed in large dishes down the centre of the table.<sup>269</sup> [6] It seems likely that this was Mrs Montagu's practice: according to Madame du Boccage, a guest at a public breakfast held by Mrs Montagu in 1750, the hostess excelled herself at serving guests.<sup>270</sup> It was then the job of servants to distribute partly filled plates to guests in order of precedence<sup>271</sup> and provide from a side table on demand oil, vinegar and bread (as well as replenishing drinking glasses and rinsing them).<sup>272</sup> Apart from the oval dishes [8] Mrs Montagu ordered others of different shapes<sup>273</sup> and that was normally the case;<sup>274</sup> the surviving set of oval dishes contains two of 35.5cm (14in), two of 39.5cm (15½in), two of 44.5cm (17½in) and two of 47.5cm (18¾in).<sup>275</sup> The smaller ones were normally placed along the sides of the table and were therefore close to diners to help themselves. Although meal planning under the *service à la française* system tried to minimise the problem by providing similar kinds of food at all parts of the table,<sup>276</sup> diners sometimes wanted food some distance from where they were seated and a variety of solutions were proposed to cope with the problem. Alternatives included, in the reign of Louis XIV, sending servants to collect from dishes;<sup>277</sup> Martha Bradley's observation in *The British Housewife* (1756) that many send 'his plate to the person who sits near to what he likes' or Matthew Towle's advice in *The Young Gentleman and Lady's Private Tutor* of 1770 that rather than reach across a neighbour it was better to ask a servant to bring a dish. Trusler's *The Honours of the Table* 1788 emphasised that the new mode for men and women to sit alternately was 'for the better convenience of a lady's being attended to and served by the gentleman next to her'.<sup>278</sup> None of these was the perfect solution to Vincent La Chapelle's concern in the *Modern Cook*, 1736 to avoid 'disturbing the company on serving or taking away'.<sup>279</sup> The essence of *service à la française* involved a reduction in the role of the hostess in serving

food with guests doing more for themselves.<sup>280</sup>

It is widely held that food on the Georgian table was rather cold.<sup>281</sup> This view is due to the long distances between kitchens and dining rooms,<sup>282</sup> and the length of the meal (where just the eating part occupied two hours according to François de la Rochefoucauld's account of his travels in England in 1784).<sup>283</sup> However, the eighteenth century employed a variety of devices including hot-water plates, dish-crosses with lamps, plate-warmers and chafing dishes, to combat the problem;<sup>284</sup> Mrs Montagu may have employed these and Boulton mentioned in correspondence with her the warming of plates in vertical plate racks in front of fires<sup>285</sup> and her interest at least in utensils which warmed plates is indicated by her return of a venison lamp, presumably for warming a venison dish.<sup>286</sup> Metal dish covers, a late seventeenth-century innovation to keep food warm, were widely used in the eighteenth.<sup>287</sup> Some of Mrs Montagu's were in Sheffield plate.<sup>288</sup> Since dish covers were heavy and expensive in silver and could cost about eight times more than one in Sheffield plate it is not entirely surprising that even Boulton's aristocratic customers bought covers in the substitute material;<sup>289</sup> that decision was probably also determined by the fact that the covers only appeared briefly to guests in the early part of the course and were only handled by servants. 'Removes' for fish having just been brought from the kitchen would be hot, and the covers for the dishes brought to the dining room before guests arrived<sup>290</sup> were only taken off by servants at this point and then quickly taken from the dining room.<sup>291</sup> Fig [5] indicates at [J] a service room adjacent to the dining room [H] which may have been used to warm food from the distant kitchen; however, this plan was drawn in 1872 and I have not found evidence to show that the room was used in that way during Mrs Montagu's lifetime.

Normally salads were a part of the first course and would not have required covers but otherwise they were desirable for the hot dishes. There was a well-established pattern in England throughout the century of providing the most substantial dishes in the first course and these principally consisted of butcher's

Style, London 2002, pp48–51 (p48).

269 Lehmann (as note 6), p332. (Large dishes of meat were sometimes placed on the sidetable.)

270 Busse (as note 61), p56.

271 Thomas Cosnett, *The Footman's Directory and Butler's Remembrance...*, London, 1823 (hereafter Cosnett).

272 Lomax (as note 1), p120.

273 MBP Box Montagu 10, EM to MB 4.4.1777.

274 Lomax (as note 1), p127.

275 MBP Letter Book I pp282–83, John Hodges to Matthews and Barton, 27.7.1778. The dimensions in the text are from Christie's sale catalogue 21.6.1778 lot 62.

276 Lehmann (as note 6), p332.

277 Whitehead (as note 207), p224.

278 Lehmann (as note 6), pp337–46.

279 Vincent La Chapelle, *The Modern Cook*, London,

vol 1 pviii (hereafter La Chapelle).

280 Lehmann (as note 6), p337.

281 Feild (as note 75), p178.

282 Molly Harrison, *The Kitchen in History*, Reading 1972, p75 (hereafter Harrison).

283 Lehmann (as note 6), p315.

284 Sara Pennell 'Four Hundred Years of Keeping Food Hot' in Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young (eds), *Elegant Eating Four*

*Hundred Years of Dining in Style*, London 2002, pp68–71 (pp68–70) (hereafter Pennell).

285 MBP Letter Book G pp831–32, B&F to EM 15.2.1777.

286 MBP Letter Book I p191, John Hodges to John Stuart, 25.3.1778.

287 Pennell (as note 284), p68.

288 MBP Letter Book I p139, John Hodges to EM, 13.12.1777.

289 The Duke of Montague

bought four at £10 11s 6d. (MBP Letter Book G p42, B&F to the Duke of Montague, 25.6.1774) and Lord Craven too bought such covers for silver dishes (MBP Letter Book G p23, B&F to Lord Craven, 10.6.1774). B&F quoted one customer £17 11s 5d for a silver cover weighing 46ozs (MBP Letter Book G pp709–10, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 4.10.1776).

290 Cosnett (as note 271), p92.

291 Cosnett, p103.



meat. Generally boiled meats characterised the first course, but baked and roasted meats were also served.<sup>292</sup> Venison was the dearest, then beef, followed by mutton;<sup>293</sup> lamb was thought to be insipid and pork not favoured by the upper classes.<sup>294</sup> Venison was regarded as a sign of landowning status<sup>295</sup> and was referred to as a gift in Montagu correspondence<sup>296</sup> and at least on one occasion provided the principal dish in a family celebration.<sup>297</sup> Mrs Montagu regarded venison as preferable to mutton<sup>298</sup> but ate the latter with enthusiasm<sup>299</sup> thinking both mutton and chicken as easy of digestion.<sup>300</sup> Mrs Montagu particularly liked the combination of chicken and ham<sup>301</sup> (an expensive meat<sup>302</sup>) widely used as a first-course dish,<sup>303</sup> though she also used it as a picnic *en route* to her estates.<sup>304</sup> Beef usually occurred in Mrs Montagu's correspondence in connection with her estate dinners,<sup>305</sup> but the meat was losing its medieval image as a 'gross' meat<sup>306</sup> and it was included in Mrs Montagu's diet.<sup>307</sup> The consumption of meat characterised upper-class menus.<sup>308</sup> Elizabeth Montagu adhered to that position, even though when young she was reluctant to consume her farmyard friends<sup>309</sup> and later noted that a meat-free diet resulted in less petulant behaviour.<sup>310</sup>

Amongst the upper classes straightforward English dishes, such as roast beef, were often provided alongside French 'made' dishes. Smaller dishes often had a French influence. This was especially strong in menus for Whig grandees in the mid-eighteenth century, such as the Duke of Newcastle who employed a French chef and who in a first course of 1761 was served amongst other dishes 'Neck Veal Glasse au Chicore' and 'Filets of 2 Pullets à la Creame'. Strong French influence probably did not penetrate down beyond the gentry,<sup>311</sup> though in the mid-century cooks like Hannah Glasse devised cheaper imitations of what she deemed to be generally expensive French dishes.<sup>312</sup> Fricasseees were especially associated with French influence<sup>313</sup> and these occurred widely in first-course menus.<sup>314</sup>[6]

As Gilly Lehmann has observed, there was considerable freedom in devising Bills of Fare in the second half of the eighteenth century<sup>315</sup> and some items could

appear at either course. Some egg dishes, ducks, geese, lamb, pickles and pies occur in different courses in different cookery books. The same could apply to puddings.<sup>316</sup> On one occasion Mrs Montagu received a gift from a relation of a turkey and ham pie.<sup>317</sup>

The provision of a second course, though generally provided for guests in upper-class homes, was seen by some as unnecessary. Horace Walpole, a member of Mrs Montagu's circle, once wrote 'I am surprised that no economist has retrenched second courses, which always consist of the dearest articles, though seldom touched, as the hungry at least dine on the first'.<sup>318</sup> Invariably roasted game birds appeared at the second course,<sup>319</sup> and like venison were a sign of status,<sup>320</sup> and they appear as a gift in Montagu correspondence<sup>321</sup> and for celebration dinners.<sup>322</sup> Except as a garnish, shellfish normally appeared at the second course;<sup>323</sup> on one occasion in 1787 Mrs Montagu was keen that her sister obtained a crab and a lobster for her.<sup>324</sup>

Vegetables appeared mainly at the second course.<sup>325</sup> Asparagus was favoured amongst the upper classes<sup>326</sup> and Mrs Montagu purchased a pair of asparagus tongs from Boulton in 1777,<sup>327</sup> then a relatively new item of tableware.<sup>328</sup> Although there was an increase in the consumption of vegetables amongst the upper classes from the reign of Louis XIV onwards<sup>329</sup> still relatively few vegetable dishes appeared on upper-class dinner tables<sup>330</sup> and Mrs Montagu thought that a vegetarian diet led inevitably to colic.<sup>331</sup> Sweet dishes such as fruit tarts appeared at the second course;<sup>332</sup> Mrs Montagu once referred to rhubarb tart and custard as a purgative.<sup>333</sup>

In 1776 Mrs Montagu remarked to Boulton that she liked to entertain her guests with ragoûts,<sup>334</sup> which according to Lehmann were 'the identifying characteristic of French cookery as practised in England'.<sup>335</sup> Ragoûts could either be used as a garnish for first-course entrées or on their own as entremets (a light dish) as part of the second course.<sup>336</sup> B. Clermont in *The Professed Cook...* (1769) follows the expensive classic French method, in this case for a mushroom ragoût which, to make one to accompany meat, involved combining mushrooms with butter, herbs, lemon, salt and

292 Lehmann (as note 6), pp330–31.

293 Bayne-Powell (as note 147), p67.

294 Strong (as note 3), p224.

295 Lehmann (as note 6), p196.

296 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p357. EM's father sent venison to Edward Montagu circa 1750.

297 HL MO 3523, EM to Elizabeth Carter, 15.12.1781.

298 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp108–09. EM to Sarah Scott, circa 1781.

299 Manchester University, Ryland English Manuscripts 551 No7, EM to Mrs Thrale 18.1.1780.

300 Doran (as note 63), p263, EM to ?, 21.11.1780.

301 BL 40663 p143, EM to Sarah Robinson, 12.7.1785.

302 Bayne-Powell (as note 147), pp67–68.

303 Lehmann (as note 6), p350.

304 Doran (as note 63), p330.

305 Doran (as note 63), p200, 1775 dinner for children of coal workers in

Northumberland and pp226–27 reference to diet of workers.

306 Lehmann (as note 6), p36.

307 Montagu (as note 186), vol 3 pp12–16, EM to the Duchess of Portland 3.9.1745.

308 Doran (as note 63), pp226–27, EM to Sarah Scott 26.9.1777.

309 Montagu (as note 186), vol 1 p196, EM to the Duchess of Portland, 13.5.[circa 1741].

310 Climenson (as note 51),

vol 2 p52, E Robinson (ie EM) to Edward Montagu, 15.6.1754.

311 Lehmann (as note 6), pp355–79.

312 Lehmann, pp111–13.

313 Lehmann, p286.

314 eg Farley (as note 239), March Bill Fare fricassee of pig's ears. August Bill of Fare fricassee of soles.

315 Lehmann (as note 6), p328.

316 Lehmann, p330.

317 Climenson (as note 51), vol 2 p8. The gift was from

a Mrs West the wife of one of EM's cousins, on 1.1.1752.

318 Lewis (as note 83) vol25 1971 p609. Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 4.10.1785.

319 Lehmann (as note 6), p330.

320 Lehmann, p126.

321 Climenson (as note 51), vol 2 p203, EM to her father Edward Montagu 26.9.1760.

322 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p113. Partridge occurs as a dish celebrating the move to Montagu House in 1781.

323 Lehmann, p330.





8 Meat dish, one of a set of eight, silver, Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham 1777/78. (Christie's)



9 Dish cover, one of a pair, silver, Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham 1777/78. (Christie's)

pepper as well as gravy and a cullis (a brown sauce, derived from veal or ham, with a brown roux liaison, simmered at great length before being skimmed and passed through a hair-sieve).<sup>337</sup> If the ragoût was required for a second-course dish the cullis and gravy were omitted but the other ingredients were combined with cream and yolks of eggs and served with fried bread.<sup>338</sup> Ragoûts, like fricassees, had entered English cooking from France in the late seventeenth century,<sup>339</sup> and while some like Clermont maintained recipes from that source others produced cheaper recipes for a wider market; Elizabeth Raffald's *The Experienced English House-keeper...* (1769) omitted any receipt for cullis arguing that 'Lemon Pickle and Browning answers both beauty and Taste (at a trifling Expense) better than Cullis, which is extravagant'.<sup>340</sup> Whether Mrs Montagu or her kitchen staff were tempted by cheaper alternatives is not clear for while she liked to avoid unnecessary expense, it is very unlikely that a judge like Lady Louisa Stuart would have decided that Mrs Montagu's cook was excellent if much economy was apparent.<sup>341</sup>

Sauceboats first evolved in France in the late seventeenth century and the type was followed in England from early in the following century.<sup>342</sup> The use of sauces was most prevalent amongst those cooks mostly strongly influenced by France,<sup>343</sup> though again books like Raffald's offered cheaper substitutes.<sup>344</sup> Mrs Montagu

regarded 'sauce Robert' as French (she once remarked that at a friend's she had 'made a patriot sick by giving him some').<sup>345</sup> This brown onion sauce with much butter, flour, salt and pepper, mustard, vinegar, lemon juice, garnished with parsley and lemon, was recommended for use with beef steaks<sup>346</sup> and occurred in a very similar form in both Clermont's French-inspired *The Professed Cook...* and Farley's *The London Art of Cookery*. Some sauces were linked to particular dishes and hence often to particular courses: for the first, venison sauces were rich, based on red wine or currant jelly, while bread sauces were recommended for game birds in the second course. The last was an essentially English sauce, as were butter sauce or gravy;<sup>347</sup> Boulton assumed that the latter two would be used, or more elaborate sauces based on them would be used, in Mrs Montagu's sauceboats.<sup>348</sup>

She was almost certainly supplied with eight sauceboats; six of different sizes were sent in January 1777 (with six ladles)<sup>349</sup> which had been assayed in mid-December weighing 165oz 2dwt<sup>350</sup> and the 'remainder' were sent in February<sup>351</sup> which must refer to the two which had been assayed and weighed at 53oz 14dwt at the end of December 1776.<sup>352</sup> Two of these have come to light,<sup>[3]</sup> though six others to the same design, probably made for another customer,<sup>353</sup> are now at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Sauces were sometimes kept on

324 Doran (as note 63), p341, EM to Sarah Scott 14.9.1787.

325 Lehmann, p330.

326 Lehmann, pp367-68.

327 MBP Letter Book I p139, John Hedges to EM, 13.12.1777.

328 Lomax (as note 1), pp130-31.

329 Strong (as note 3), p225.

330 Farley (as note 239), eg out of the 11 second-course dishes for the January Bill of Fare only 2 were of vegetables and for the August Bill of Fare 3 dishes out of 10

were of vegetables. In neither case did the first course contain a vegetable dish.

331 Montagu (as note 186), vol 1 pp166-67, E Robinson [ie. EM] to the Duchess of Portland, 5.5.[circa 1741].

332 Lehmann, p330.

333 Montagu (as note 186), vol IV 1813 pp337-38, EM to Mrs Vesey [1782].

334 MBP Box Montagu 8, EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

335 Lehmann (as note 6), p235.

336 Lehmann, p244.

337 Lehmann, p211.

338 Lehmann, p244.

339 Lehmann, p246.

340 Lehmann, p248.

341 Baird (as note 169), pp193-96.

342 Lomax (as note 1), p126.

343 Lehmann (as note 6), p251.

344 Lehmann, p132.

345 Nottingham University Library, The Portland Papers, PWE 56, EM to the Duchess of Portland, 21.2.[1741].

346 Mrs Rundell's *Domestic Cookery*, London 1848, p125.

347 Lehmann (as note 6), p251.

348 MBP Letter Book G pp797-98, B&F to EM, 6.1.1777.

349 MBP Letter Book G p812, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777.

350 BPR, 17.12.1776.

351 MBP Letter Book G pp837-38, B&F to EM, 19.1.1777.

352 BPR, 27.12.1776.

353 The possibility that the 6 V&A sauceboats together with the 2 Birmingham Assay Office sauceboats

formed Mrs Montagu's set is undermined by the fact that she had sauceboats of different sizes (MBP Letter Book G p812, B&F to John Wyatt 28.1.1777) but the weights of the surviving pieces are similar: Birmingham AO 335 28oz and 27oz VAM circ513-1953 24oz M432 1936 A/C 28oz M432(B) 1936 28oz circ511-1953 24oz circ512-1953 24oz and circ510A 1952 21oz. Although the last is lighter its dimensions are similar: circ510A 1953 is 135mm in height and 250mm in length; Birmingham AO





10 and 11 Soup plate from a set of twelve, silver, Boulton & Fothergill, Birmingham, 1776/77, with a detail of the armors. (Courtesy Birmingham Assay Office and Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. 2000M2.14; AO1442N/M)

the sideboard<sup>354</sup> but since Mrs Montagu's sauceboats were stylistically consistent with the tureens (a development which was characteristically English)<sup>355</sup> it would seem more probable that they were displayed on the table, though probably for the second course, as was sometimes shown on table plans.<sup>356</sup>

Under *service à la française* diners were individually provided with a place setting which included a napkin, bread and salt.<sup>357</sup> Eight salts<sup>358</sup> were provided by Boulton with glass linings;<sup>359</sup> presumably the salts had the pierced sides which were then popular.<sup>360</sup> The court of Louise XIV expected a salt for each guest;<sup>361</sup> but a sharing of salts, necessary when Mrs Montagu had a large party, was nevertheless acceptable in the highest quarters.<sup>362</sup> A cover also required a set of knife, spoon and, as a result of the influence of the court of Louis XIV, a fork was also required.<sup>363</sup>

Mrs Montagu's order included at least one dozen silver soup plates even though she had initially thought of using ceramic.[10] She was unsure of how many plates to order, asking for a 'suitable number';<sup>364</sup> eventually she agreed on eight dozen which was a familiar number for a silver dinner service.<sup>365</sup> Five dozen assayed in December and weighing 1120oz 8dwt<sup>366</sup> were sent to Mrs Montagu in January<sup>367</sup> and February;<sup>368</sup> a dozen weighing 224oz 1dwt<sup>369</sup> were sent in March<sup>370</sup> and two dozen weighing 467oz 13dwt<sup>371</sup> were sent in April 1777.<sup>372</sup> In addition to the soup plates, three dozen dinner plates have come to light.<sup>373</sup>[2] It has been supposed that diners were given one clean plate per course<sup>374</sup> but contemporary accounts show that footmen were required to observe when diners required clean plates (and cutlery) as they selected food from one dish after another within each course.<sup>375</sup> In Thomas Cosnett's experience as a

butler and footman it was necessary to have available six plates per person excluding dessert plates,<sup>376</sup> a level of provision which would have roughly been available to Mrs Montagu's guests even when she had what she regarded as her maximum number of dinner guests: thirteen.<sup>377</sup>

Servants were also required to clear plates, dishes and cutlery after each course and after the second the top cloth and leather was removed to reveal either the undercloth<sup>378</sup> or the polished mahogany surface,<sup>379</sup> and Mrs Montagu adopted the widespread practice<sup>380</sup> of ordering perfume-burners 'to make their entry with the Dessert and chase away the smell of dinner'.<sup>381</sup> For Mrs Montagu's service neither she nor Boulton thought of silver plates or dishes; as a correspondent had informed Boulton in 1769 at a time when the latter had thought of making metal dessert services, china and glass had become the favoured materials.<sup>382</sup> While silver was vulnerable to the acids in fruit (which formed a substantial part of the dessert course) this could have been overcome with gilding,<sup>383</sup> but it is very unlikely that Mrs Montagu would have been willing to meet the high cost. Moreover, although earlier in the century gilding had been popular it was less so in the second half of the century: the taste for restraint encouraged by the Neo-classical style, to which Mrs Montagu's plate belonged, led the connoisseur Sir William Hamilton to warn Josiah Wedgwood that gilding would make his pottery in the classical style unacceptable.<sup>384</sup> Mrs Montagu enjoyed peaches, nectarines and apricots (from her estate in Yorkshire);<sup>385</sup> these and similar fruits were also enjoyed by members of the upper classes.<sup>386</sup> Other dessert dishes included creams, jellies, ice-cream, pastry, and biscuits. Elaborate sculptures, in edible or inedible materi-



als were popular. Cheeses were also served<sup>387</sup> and Mrs Montagu, on a journey through Stilton, hoped to pick up some cheese for her husband.<sup>388</sup> Mrs Montagu had coffee served after dessert.<sup>389</sup>

Following dinner, the Bluestocking circle followed the norm of women retiring, while men remained at the bottle in the dining room for a period variously estimated by contemporaries at between one and three hours. Then the men joined the women for tea with, generally, bread, butter and cakes;<sup>390</sup> Mrs Thrale once chided Dr Johnson for spending too long at table and thus missing a musical performance arranged for the company.<sup>391</sup> In 1788 Mrs Montagu, influenced by the Duke of Dorset, who brought back from France a fashion for a heavier tea, unsuccessfully introduced the fashion in England; though taking place at the familiar hour of 8pm the meal was too substantial given the later dinner hour compared both with France and earlier decades in England.<sup>392</sup> Presumably Mrs Montagu used the Sheffield plate tea-urn she had bought from Boulton in 1773 for £9 9s 0d.<sup>393</sup>

Sometimes Mrs Montagu's guests left at about this time,<sup>394</sup> though sometimes in her circle invitations were for dinner through to supper and on other occasions her invitations were just for the evening.<sup>395</sup> Gambling was a

very popular evening entertainment as were dancing and music;<sup>396</sup> Mrs Montagu and her circle disapproved of the first,<sup>397</sup> but put on recitations<sup>398</sup> or musical events.<sup>399</sup> When without company she devoted time to study, but some evenings each week involved conversation<sup>400</sup> often with her Bluestocking friends in her drawing room, especially in her Great Room on the first floor of Montagu House.<sup>401</sup> She had supper at 10pm<sup>402</sup> which was a popular hour during her lifetime.<sup>403</sup> She took little supper when alone<sup>404</sup> and Mrs Thrale on one recorded occasion offered her guests no more than biscuits, toast and water,<sup>405</sup> though many in their social class would offer rather more.<sup>406</sup> Mrs Montagu liked company to stay late: on one occasion in 1780 she mocked her visitors for leaving before midnight.<sup>407</sup>

## Tailpiece

Mrs Montagu was an important customer for Boulton. The service of plate was her most striking commission, but she had earlier in the 1770s purchased ormolu and Sheffield plate<sup>408</sup> and later Boulton helped her complete Montagu House by providing 'mechanical paintings' (ie engravings after paintings sometimes with hand additions)<sup>409</sup> produced at the Soho Manufactory. He also

pair are both 140mm in height and 267mm in length. All of the V&A sauceboats have a common provenance (gifts by L. Horn). The V&A sauceboats have a crest upon a wreath 'On a mount of dog statant over a pile of canon balls'. This was the crest of the Crawshay family of Welsh ironmongers, but it is extremely unlikely that the sauceboats were originally made for this family since Richard Crawshay was only granted the crest on 2.3.1793 and there is no record at least in the 1770s of B&F supplying silver to the Crawshays (information provided by Timothy Duke, Chester Herald, College of Arms London 28.10.2003). The most likely customer for the V&A sauceboats was the banker Charles Vere, who bought sauceboats in the same assay year (MBP Box V item 63, Charles Vere to MB, 20.1.1777).

354 Charlotte Mason, *The Ladies Assistant*, London 1775, p10.

355 Carl Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith 1430-1830*, London 1977, 2 vols, vol 1 p189.

356 eg Henderson (as note 240), 2nd course, Bill Of

Fare for a large company.

357 Bayne-Powell (as note 147), pp137-38.

358 MBP Letter Book G pp818-19, B&F to EM, 5.2.1777.

359 MBP Letter Book G p844, B&F to EM, 25.2.1777.

360 Clifford 2004 (as note 45), pp96-97.

361 Whitehead (as note 207), p207.

362 eg Robert-Joseph Auguste's Hanover Service for George III from 1770, lecture by Philippa Glanville, Barber Institute of Fine Art 13.11.2003. Thomas Cosnett thought 8 salts appropriate for 14 persons. (Cosnett, as note 271, p124).

363 Cosnett (as note 207), p224.

364 Box Montagu 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

365 Lomax (as note 1), p127.

366 BPR 17.12.1776.

367 MBP Letter Book G p812, John Hodges to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777.

368 MBP Letter Book G pp837-38, B&F to EM, 19.2.1777.

369 BPR, 4.3.1777.

370 MBP Ledger 1776-78 p230, 17.3.1777.

371 BPR, 11.4.1777.

372 MBP Letter Book G pp876-77, B&F to EM, 22.3.1777 and Box Montagu 10, EM to MB, 4.4.1777.

373 A dozen soup and a dozen dinner plates owned jointly by Birmingham Assay Office and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery since 1999 (see Quickenden 2004 as note 2) [4] (information supplied by Glennis Wild), and two dozen dinner plates in the possession of Partridge Fine Arts plc 2004-05 (information supplied by Lucy Morton).

374 Lomax (as note 1), p120.

375 Cosnett (as note 271) p104 and Alexander Davison, executor of Lord Horatio Nelson's will, required that his under-footmen kept 'your eyes about you ready and alert on waiting and sharply removing dirty plates and replacing them with clean ones...' (Martyn Downer, *Nelson's Purse*, London 2004, p99).

376 Cosnett, p84.

377 MBP Box Montagu 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

378 Lomax (as note 1), p120.

379 Lehmann (as note 6), p368.

380 Lomax (as note 1), p130.

381 MBP Box Montagu 8,

EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

382 MBP Box P2 136, J Downall to MB, 8.9.1769.

383 Advice from Jeremy Weston, silversmith 25.6.2005.

384 Neil McKendrick 'The Commercialization of Fashion' in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and JH Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, London 1982, pp34-99 (pp75-76).

385 Doran (as note 63), p35, EM to the Duchess of Portland [1742].

386 Lehmann (as note 6), p373.

387 Lehmann, pp267-73.

388 Climençon (as note 51), vol 2 p215. EM to Edward Montagu 17.11.1760.

389 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 p117.

390 Lehmann, p314.

391 Barratt (as note 128), vol 1 p120, Diary 1778.

392 Doran (as note 63), p345.

393 MBP Walker Z, Box 1, 12, Inland Debts Due, 26.4.1773.

394 Doran (as note 63), p59.

395 Manchester University, Ryland English Manu-

scripts, 551 32, EM to Mrs Thrale (n.d).

396 Anthony Burton, 'After-dinner Games and Pastimes' in Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young, *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in Style*, London 2002, pp112-13 (p112).

397 Busse (as note 61), p51.

398 Doran (as note 63), p276.

399 Manchester University, Ryland English Manuscripts 551 No32, EM to Mrs Thrale [n.d].

400 Blunt (as note 50) vol 2 pp122-23, EM to Mrs Carter [circa 1782].

401 HL MO 6005, EM to Sarah Scott 6.7.1777.

402 Blunt (as note 50) vol 2 pp122-23, EM to Mrs Carter [circa 1782].

403 Lehmann (as note 6), p385.

404 Blunt (as note 50), vol 2 pp122-23.

405 Bayne-Powell (as note 147) p107.

406 Lehmann (as note 6), p316.

407 Balderstone (as note 65), vol 1 p453, 13.8.1780.

408 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p132.

409 HW Dickinson Matthew Boulton, Cambridge, 1937, pp104-05.



provided her with a steam engine for her colliery in Northumberland in 1778.<sup>410</sup>

Their relationship grew into one of friendship and mutual admiration. Boulton, for example, went to enormous lengths to obtain mirror and glass to her very exacting requirements for Montagu House;<sup>411</sup> they met<sup>412</sup> and corresponded, and in the mid-1770s their relationship was such that she would chide him for not calling on her when in London.<sup>413</sup> She would flatter him: 'You have render'd the town of Birmingham important and honourable to this Kingdom, ye Industry you have awakened, the taste you have imparted make your Manufacturers a great National object'.<sup>414</sup> Mrs Anne Boulton was not excluded: in 1773 Mrs Montagu's Sheffield plate tea kitchen was sent to her in a trunk Anne had borrowed from Mrs Carter,<sup>415</sup> one of Mrs Montagu's closest Bluestocking friends.

Apart from her own purchases, Mrs Montagu helped with the development of Boulton's silver and Sheffield plate business in various ways. She was almost certainly recommending Boulton to members of her circle even in the early 1770s: the earliest evidence for a link between the two occurred in 1770;<sup>416</sup> in the following year the Duchess of Portland, a friend of Mrs Montagu's since childhood,<sup>417</sup> had a candlestick mended at Soho<sup>418</sup> and Benjamin Stillingfleet, another prominent Bluestocking<sup>419</sup> bought a Sheffield plate cheese toaster in 1773<sup>420</sup> and this was followed by further purchases of Sheffield plate candlesticks by him from Boulton in later years.<sup>421</sup> Perhaps to put pressure on him to hurry up with her own order, she advised Boulton in 1777 that she was hoping to show her new service to James Harris, 1st Earl of Malmesbury, recently appointed ambassador to Russia, who was due to dine with her in a week or ten days; subsequently he was sent silver plate to the value of £1,386 3s 4d in July 1778<sup>422</sup> and further silver items worth £159 16s 9d in the following month.<sup>423</sup> Parts of Mrs Montagu's service were shown to Charles Vere, a London banker, to help him deter-

mine the design of his own.<sup>424</sup>

Despite her general approval and support, Mrs Montagu was critical of Boulton's constant delays. She had lent him a perfume-burner by the beginning of 1772,<sup>425</sup> to provide him with design ideas;<sup>426</sup> a year later she was still waiting for its return saying that her friends 'reproach me that I do not regale their noses with fine odours after entertaining their palates with soup and ragoûts'.<sup>427</sup> That case, together with Boulton's many other delays, probably influenced her actions in 1776. Wanting to commission more perfume-burners with lamps she asked Boulton for designs,<sup>428</sup> which were sent a month later, either for silver or ormolu with white marble.<sup>429</sup> However, she did not ask Boulton to make them but, perhaps armed with his sketches, went instead to the London firm Wakelin & Tayler, who on 22 March 1777 provided her with two perfume vases with lamps and stands supplied with two red leather cases, totalling £25 5s 6d.<sup>430</sup> These pieces were not however, commissioned to go with her service: they were a gift for a Madame du Deffand,<sup>431</sup> a prominent hostess with literary accomplishments whose company Mrs Montagu had enjoyed in France in 1776.<sup>432</sup> This loss and her partial postponement of one substantial payment in the same year were a price Boulton probably paid for delays in delivering her orders.

Although Mrs Montagu paid generally within a reasonable period, many other customers did not, and the effect of that on a firm working on an overdraft and on modest fashioning charges caused losses. Mrs Montagu's commission highlighted other fundamental difficulties with the silver business: the trouble involved with meeting individual customer's requirements, the reluctance of customers in London, who were a substantial part of Boulton's customers for silver, to ask him to do repair work because of the distance involved, as well as the irritation and loss of orders due to his firm's reputation for delays. From 1777 the silver business was run down but Sheffield Plate production thrived.<sup>433</sup>

410 Kerry Bristol, '22 Portman Square. Mrs Montagu and her Palais de la Vieillesse', *British Art Journal* vol 2 No3 2001, pp72-85 (pp84-85) (hereafter Bristol).

411 Bristol (as note 410), pp77-82.

412 Quickenden 2004, (as note 2) p132.

413 MBP Box Montagu 9, EM to MB, 8.4.1776.

414 MBP Box Montagu 10, EM to MB, 4.4.1777.

415 MBP Portions of a Letter Book p105, AJ Cabrit to William Matthews, 29.4.1773.

416 Quickenden 2004 (as

note 2), p132.

417 Climensson (as note 51), vol 1 p49.

418 MBP Letter Book E p163, B&F to William Matthews, 3.8.1771.

419 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), p132.

420 MBP Cash Book Soho B&F 1772-82, 31.12.1773.

421 MBP Cash Book Soho B&F 1772-82, 27.12.1774 (one pair) and MBP Journal 1778-81 p26, 30.9.1778 (one pair).

422 MBP Letter Book I p273, John Hodges to Matthews and Barton, 9.7.1778.

423 MBP Journal 1778-81 p1, 12.8.1778.

424 MBP Letter Book G p812, B&F to John Wyatt, 28.1.1777.

425 MBP Box Montagu 3, MB to EM, 16.1.1772.

426 MBP Box Montagu 2, EM to MB, n.d.

427 MBP Box Montagu 8, EM to MB, 23.1.1773.

428 MBP Box Wyatt family 112, John Wyatt to B&F, 29.11.1776.

429 MBP Letter Book G pp786-87, B&F to EM, 23.12.1776.

430 V&A Garrard Ledgers, AAD/1995/7/1 VAM 11 p126.

431 Lewis (as note 83) vol 8 p204, Madame du Deffand

to EM 16.11.1777 and vol 7 p24, Madame du Deffand to Horace Walpole 1.3.1778.

432 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p322.

433 Quickenden 1980 (as note 20), pp284-88.

434 Lehmann (as note 6), p355.

435 Glanville 1987 (as note 4), pp82-88.

436 Lomax (as note 1), pp118-33.

437 Glanville 1987 (as note 4), pp106-16.

438 Quickenden 2004 (as note 2), pp136-38.

439 Blunt (as note 50), vol 1 p330, EM to Sarah Scott,

24.7.1776.

440 Lehmann (as note 6), p355.

441 Doran (as note 63), pp355-56.

442 Bloom & Bloom (as note 263), vol 3 p175, note 8.

443 PROB 11/1346 Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 29.8.1800. Will of Elizabeth Montagu.



The service supplied by Boulton for Mrs Montagu provided the generous number of dishes and plates required by *service à la française*. Although no definitive list of the articles she bought from Boulton survives, her purchases appear to have excluded certain items – dish-rings, condiment sets, mazarines (fish strainers), cutlery – which might have been expected.<sup>434</sup> However, she already had cutlery and by the 1770s these other items were sufficiently well established types for them to have perhaps been amongst the plate she inherited.<sup>435</sup> Equally striking is Mrs Montagu's apparent avoidance – asparagus tongs apart – of that enormous range of 'toys' such as cucumber slicers, bottle tickets, funnels, silver topped corks, bottle stands which became popular from the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>436</sup>

What Mrs Montagu created at Montagu House was superbly devised for her role as a leading hostess. She adopted the fashionable Neo-classical style. The house was imposing, the dining room acquired the English preference for a large and comfortable space and the lightness and delicacy of her plate remained fashionable to the end of the century.<sup>437</sup> She avoided French excess in her silver in ornament, size and number of dishes but, in England, these were only adopted by royalty and a few members of the nobility. Yet she, like the upper classes generally, was ambivalent about the French;

while she condemned their lack of morality,<sup>438</sup> she was stunned by 'their ease, politeness and grace in ye manners of ye people of fashion as we see rarely with us'.<sup>439</sup> Those remarks, based on her experience in France in 1776 sharpened her sensitivity towards those exquisite standards of taste which her contemporaries saw in her. Moreover she, like the upper classes generally in England, adopted *service à la française* and served French dishes alongside English.<sup>440</sup> All of this, together with her intellect, her imposing character, her charitable works, her literary achievements, her pleasantness, led Hannah More to remark after Mrs Montagu's death in 1800 that she was 'the finest lady I ever saw'.<sup>441</sup> Yet what she created also conditioned her adopted nephew Matthew, who became an MP and the 4th Baron Rokeby;<sup>442</sup> it was to him that she left her estate, except for her plate which she left to his wife, Elizabeth.<sup>443</sup>

### Acknowledgements

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## Nelson memorabilia and his Nile service

2005 marks the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805. Items of silver and gold relating to Lord Nelson include personal effects such as jewellery, and memorabilia. Of the latter snuff-boxes and vinaigrettes are most commonly seen, though the decoration on some items may not be contemporary.

Following the Battle of the Nile in 1798 Lloyd's raised a fund for the bereaved and wounded and its management committee voted £500 to Nelson 'to be laid out in plate'. A similar gift was made after the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, and the service (known as the Nile service) was extended. Items from it are today divided between several venues, both museums and private collections (see below). In 1803 the Patriotic Fund resolved to reward 'our defenders by sea and land' and to alleviate physical and monetary hardship and acknowledge 'successful exertions of valour or merit'.<sup>1</sup>

Included in the collection of Alexander Davison, sold in 2002, were a sketched layout for the dishes Nelson ordered from Rundell & Bridge, together with their estimate [4 & 5] and bill [6] for the first part of the service.<sup>2</sup> The estimate was endorsed in November 1800. Following the second Lloyd's gift, a letter from Captain Edward Thornborough Parker to Alexander Davison (who acted as Nelson's prize agent), conveyed Nelson's wish for him to get Rundell & Bridge to 'make what you think necessary to add to the rest, to make a complete set, such as plates or whatever you may think right'.<sup>3</sup> The documents are particularly interesting for the description of how the dishes might be placed for each of two courses with soup tureens at either end 'opening' the meal. The estimate for the dishes came to £570 and the final invoice was for £627 2s.

While not directly relevant to Nelson, Davison's instructions to his own servants may be of interest:

... you will keep your eyes about you ready and alert on waiting and sharply removing dirty plates and replacing them with clean ones carefully avoiding awkwardness and on no account holding conversation with any one in the room, nor allow your voice to be heard – and when going to the kitchen for any dish or message, nor to wait a moment but return to the dining room – this rule to be strictly obeyed – look how you set down your feet, lest you hit against a plate or any thing else to the annoyance of the company – avoid rattling the knives and forks upon the plates – let your voice never be heard above your breath.<sup>4</sup>

Davison commissioned medals for those who served in the Battle of the Nile and probably arranged the commissioning of the crocodile-hilted swords following that battle for members of the Egyptian Club.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of silver, the Patriotic Fund is best known for the series of 73 vases awarded for distinguished service during the Napoleonic wars. Following Nelson's death at Trafalgar, a vase was awarded to his widow and another to his brother, in 1810.<sup>6</sup>



1 Snuffbox, Matthew Linwood, Birmingham 1806/07, the underside with a view of the Victory, 6.5cm (2in). (Sotheby's)



2 Vinaigrette, Matthew Linwood, Birmingham 1805/06, the grille pierced with the Victory, 2.5cm (1in). (Sotheby's)



3 Vegetable dish from Lord Nelson's service of plate, Paul Storr for Rundell & Bridge, London 1800/01. (The Nelson Museum, Monmouth)

1 See Leslie Southwick, 'The silver vases awarded by the Patriotic Fund', *The Silver Society Journal*, no1 1990.

2 Sotheby's London, 21 October 2002, lots 24 & 25. Alexander Davison (1750–1829) met Nelson in 1782; he went on to act as his treasurer, prize agent and business adviser. He married Harriet Gosling in 1788 and acquired Swarland Park, in Northumberland, in 1795 and a house in St James's Square, London, in 1798.

Davison had a chequered career, spending time in prison for electoral fraud in 1804 and in Newgate in 1808, again for fraud.

3 Quoted Sotheby's (as note 2).

4 Martyn Downer, *Nelson's Purse*, Bantam Press, 2004 p99. Thanks to Peter Greenhalgh for this quotation.

5 See, for example, lot 13 in the Davison sale.

6 Southwick, as note 1.



4 Rundell's description of how the dishes in Lord Nelson's service might be used. (Sotheby's)

**First Course**  
2 oval dishes for top & 2 bottoms, one removed with the tureen from each end, and serves for top & bottom dishes in the second course.

4 new pattern double oblong Dishes which come on in the first course with covers, which covers take off & are used as Dishes in the second course.

4 deep fashionable Casserole dishes, with covers, standing in 4 round shallow Dishes, which four shallow Dishes are used in the second course.

2 oval Flank shallow dishes.

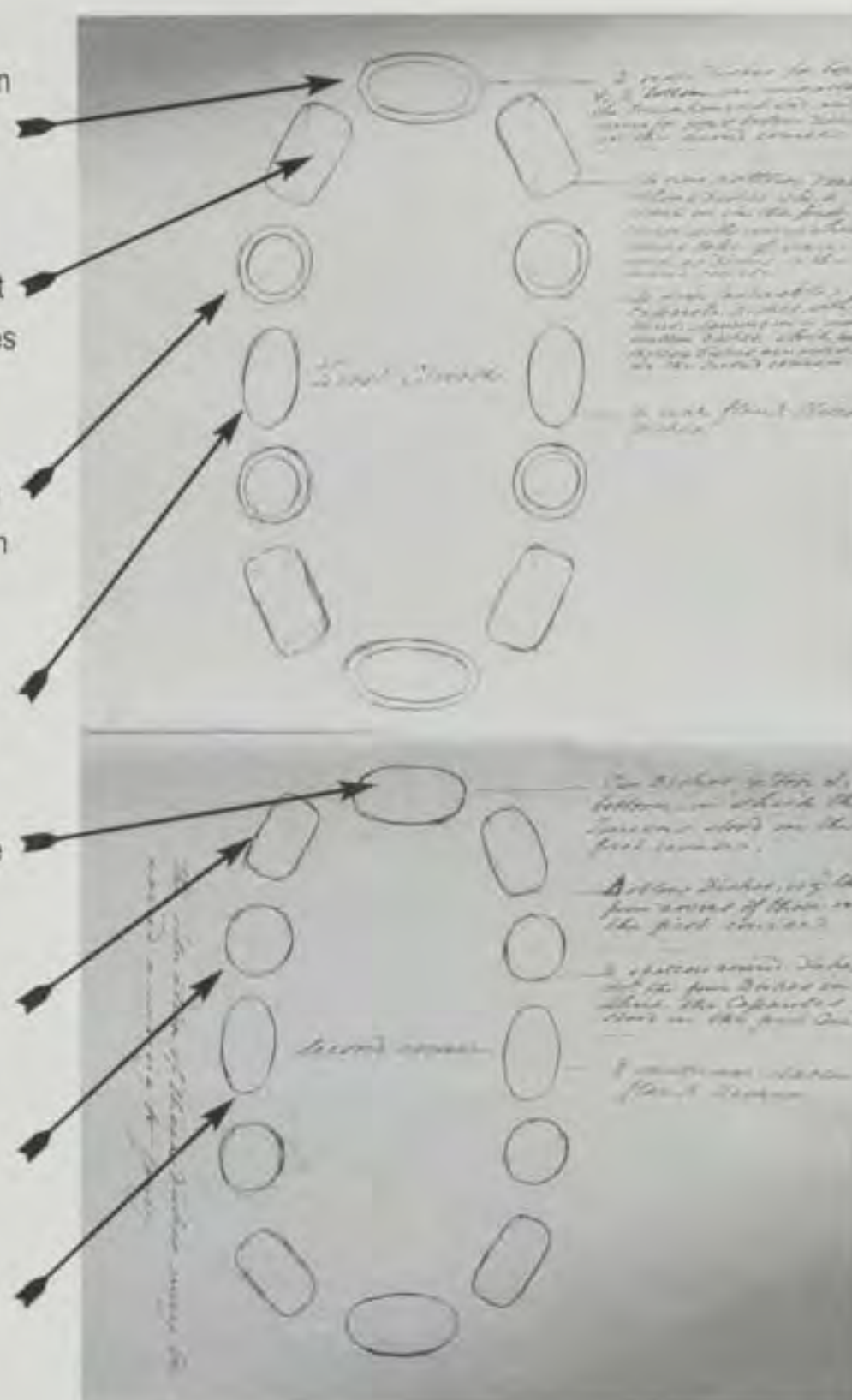
**Second Course**  
Two dishes for top & Bottom in which the tureens stood in the first course.

4 oblong dishes, vizt the four covers of those in the first course.

4 shallow round Dishes vizt the four dishes in which the Casseroles stood in the first course.

2 small oval shallow flank Dishes

The situation of these dishes may be varied according to fancy.



		Oz	£
<b>First Course</b>			
2 large oval Dishes for top & bottom	23 In long	220	} abt 220
2 Do .... Do .... removes, to serve as top & bottom in the second Course	20 - D <sup>o</sup>	190	
2 Do .... Do .... flanks	17 D <sup>o</sup>		
4 oblong double Dishes with chasd Crests to screw off, the covers to serve for 4 Dishes in the second Course		200	abt 110
4 circular Cassaroles & covers, to be placed between the flank ovals & corner oblongs, wth chasd Crests		180	abt 98
<b>Second Course</b>			
2 oval Dishes top & bottom, used in the first Course for the Tureens to stand in			
2 Do for the flanks		80	abt 34
4 oblong dishes for the corners; the covers of the four double Dishes in the first Course			
4 round Dishes used in the first Course under the 4 Casseroles		90	abt 38
			£550 .. ..
Qu 2 plated Covers for the large top & bottom dishes & 2 Do for the flanks			} abt 20
The whole of the first Course would then be covered			
Qu Dish Warmers		abt 90/ea	



5 Estimate for the service. (Sotheby's)





Lord Nelson, Plate  
paid for by Lloyd's Coffee House

SILVER STUDIES 2005



# The Pingo family and eighteenth-century hallmarking

DAVID MCKINLEY AND CHRIS BELL

As far as the Goldsmiths' Company was concerned, the adage 'cometh the day cometh the man' was certainly apt in the early summer of 1756, for Thomas Pingo was the man who came and bore the brunt of what must be one of the most significant changes in the marking of plate which the Company has ever undertaken.

Thomas Pingo's origins are uncertain although Christopher Eimer, in his work on the Pingo family,<sup>1</sup> has established a plausible background to the family that played such an important part in the affairs of the Goldsmiths' Company in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Forrer<sup>2</sup> stated that Pingo was of Italian origin, was born about 1692 and came to England between 1742 and 1745, but Eimer dismissed this as unlikely and set out a convincing family tree that descended from a North Devonshire family. In his hypothesis he makes strong connections with members of a Pingo family who were associated with clock making and this background, together with that of engraving, certainly helps to explain the mechanical skills of the Thomas Pingo who became connected with the Goldsmiths' Company.

In 1732 this Thomas Pingo was apprenticed to his father, also Thomas, who was an established engraver and almost certainly engraved seals. It is also true that he had a well equipped workshop producing medals and seals and had established himself as a master of his craft by the time, in 1755, he took his son John as an apprentice and later, a second son Lewis joined the family business.<sup>3</sup> Protecting and demonstrating the quality and standard of silver and other precious metals by testing them (assaying) and stamping them with specific marks, now known as hallmarks, has been required in England since the reign of Edward I. The goldsmiths' guild (Goldsmiths' Company), granted its first Royal Charter in 1327, was responsible for managing and operating the assay system. All the major decisions of the Company were taken by the Court of Assistants, the governing body of the Company, whereas more routine matters were dealt with by wardens elected by the members of the Company.<sup>4</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century hallmarks were stamped near the maker's mark,[1] which was applied by the maker before sending an item in for assay, to indicate that a silver item had passed the assay. These included the Sterling or Britannia standard mark, the mark indicating the assay office town (such as London) and a letter encoding the year of assay.

Sending articles to the Goldsmiths' Company for assay and marking of course cost the makers money and some resorted to fraudulent methods to avoid these additional costs, for example using counterfeit hallmarks. This also enabled some of them to use sub-standard silver. Such fraud had always been of great concern to the Goldsmiths' Company and on 1 March 1753 its Standing Committee

1 C. Eimer, *The Pingo Family & medal making in 18th-Century Britain*, The British Art Medal Trust, London 1998.

2 L. Forrer, *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists (coin, gem and seal engravers, mintmasters etc. ancient and modern) with reference to their works BC500-1900AD*, Burt

Franklin, New York, 1904 reprinted 1970.

3 As note 1.

4 A similar system applies today. J.S. Forbes, *Hallmark - A History of the London Assay Office*, The Goldsmiths' Company & Unicorn Press, London 1998.



met to discuss the problem of counterfeiting (the use of false punches).<sup>5</sup>

Then the Comee resumed the further consideration of the matter of an order of Reference made the 26th. day of October last concerning the forwardness of the workmanship of plate before it be markt and the manner of marking it the better to prevent Counterfeits and the Comee having been sundry times attended by Mr. Long the Ingraver who produced two Sorts of patterns of Engines to strike the marks more true and regular than by the former method both as to order and visibility They directed him to prepare a proper set of Engines and Tools for the purposes by him proposed with what expedition he can at the Charge of the Company's Assay Office.

This reference reflects the Company's concern with the problem and shows that efforts were being made to overcome it. Thomas Long, the engraver to the Goldsmiths' Company, had been working on his invention for mechanically marking plate when he died in 1754 and his 'engine' had not, at this time, been put to the test.

Long's successor was Henry Yates who, presumably, was responsible for producing the 1755 assay punches, but not only did Yates apparently take no interest in Long's machine, but Yates' work was not regarded very highly.

...And it being observed that the marks of late have been engraved in a very ordinary manner, the Court ordered that Mr. Thomas Pingo do engrave Two Sizes of each of the marks...<sup>6</sup>

The first punches that Pingo engraved for the Company, therefore, were those for 1756 and the minutes of the Court of Assistants meeting of 29 May of that year read as follows:<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Thomas Pingo the Ingraver delivered to the Wardens six new puncheons vizt. Two of the Leopards Head Crowned, Two of the Lyon and Two of the new Letter being a Great Old English (A) to be used in the Assay Office for the year ensuing The Impressions whereof are struck in the Margin and the Court Ordered Mr Pingo to make Duplicates thereof And all the Old Puncheons were broken in the presence of several Members of the Court.

He was paid five guineas for these trial punches in June 1757.

It is unclear whether or not Yates engraved punches for 1756 but Pingo's punches were obviously considered



*1 Marks for 1756/57, the first year that dies cut by Pingo were used. By the mid-eighteenth century the Assay Office struck their marks close to the maker's mark, which had already been struck by the silversmith (right)*

satisfactory and it was thus that he was engaged as engraver to the Goldsmiths' Company in that year.

In addition to work for the Goldsmiths' Company, Pingo's services were highly sought after; he engraved dies for the Mercers' Company in 1757 and secured the contract to execute the Royal Society of Arts prize medal in 1758.<sup>8</sup> In 1763 his work gained him membership of the Free Society of Artists and in 1769 he was commissioned by Wedgwood to model representations of the battles of Plassey and Pondicherry.<sup>9</sup> He became third engraver at the mint in 1771. His work for the Goldsmiths' Company was however increasing, and in 1759 he petitioned for an increase in salary, reference being made to what today would be called a retaining fee, more or less equating to a standing charge designed to cover any engraving work which he undertook for the Company during the year.

### Development of the fly press

The complexities of die-sinking and all that goes with medal making, which included the use of screw presses,<sup>[2]</sup> indicates that the Pingos were familiar with machinery. The following entry in the Court records for the 28 May 1757<sup>10</sup> comes as no surprise:

At this Court Mr. Thomas Pingo offered to perfect and compleat the Iron Fly Press and the Table and punches for the more exact and regular .... marking of Plate in the Company's Assay Office and he undertook to do it at his own charge unless it should be made fit to strike the marks to th[---?] the Company and then to Submit himself to their pleasure for a Reward of his Service therein, And it being moved and seconded that Mr. Pingo be employed to perfect the said Fly Press according to his said Proposal and Undertaking, The Question was put and carried in the affirmative.

Pingo must have been confident of his ability to produce an efficient working machine as he was offering to do so at his own expense, whereas Long's experiments were to be 'at the Charge of the Company's Assay Office'.<sup>11</sup> His self-confidence was justified as it was only a month later that the following entry was made in the minute book of the Standing Committee:<sup>12</sup>

At this Committee Mr. Thomas Pingo the Engraver produced several Proofs of marks or Impressions made on a piece of Copper with the Iron Fly Press intended for the use of the Assay Office; and he struck some more Impressions or Marks with the Press on Buckles and Spoons in the presence of the Committee which were approved by them Whereupon they Resolved that the said Press be used in the Assay Office under the Direction of the Deputy Warden in the marking all such plate as may conveniently be marked therewith, but this without altering the usual mode or form of marking such plate till further Order.

Considering the urgency with which the Committee obviously viewed the matter of introducing this highly



efficient, innovative method of marking using the fly-press, a screw press with a hand wheel, it is surprising that no record of its immediate use appears to exist. Indeed, according to the records, things seem to have been allowed to drift on and the next mention of it is a year later:<sup>13</sup>

Then were audited & passed sundry Bills ... delivd by Mr Tho. Pingo for sundry Alterations made in Mr Long's Great Fly Press & for one New smaller press wth many extraordinary Punches amoung to £27-11-00.

As far as the records are concerned, therefore, it seems that no use was made of the press during the plate marking year 1757/58. If indeed it was not used, this may have been because Pingo was working on the smaller press and it was considered desirable to introduce mechanical marking in the two sizes at the same time. The delay may also be accounted for by the need for more experimentation, since a new spring had to be made for one of the presses:<sup>14</sup>

Then was recd. & read a ltr from Mr. Thos Pingo the Engraver of the Punches for ye Ass: Off: alledging he had been employed therein 3 yrs had made 23 first ye 30 Ps & 4 stakes ye 2d year & 45 Puns wth a new Spring for the press the 3d year that he had now not only double the quantity of Busins that former Engraver had but had really done it well & witht delay & therefore desiring an additional Salary And the matter being taken into Consideration & found that the Engravers Salary is only 10l a year the Comee were of Opinon Mr Pingo well deserves a better reward and therefore they Resolved that he be pd the sum of Ten pounds by way of Gratuity for his last years extraordinary services and that Mr Pingo's Salary from 29th May last for the time to come be Twenty pounds a year during pleasure instead of the old Salary of Ten pounds a year ...

Thus, the first record of a fly-press mark appeared in the margin against the entry for 29 May 1760.<sup>15</sup>

Until the introduction of mark plates<sup>16</sup> following the parliamentary inquiry of 1773, the record of punches used in a given year was kept by means of impressing the punches using printer's ink in the margin of the Court of Assistants' book against the entry, usually for 29 May each year.<sup>17</sup> The record for 1760 shows, in addition to the individual marks, two sizes of fly-press mark as would be expected as there were, by then, two sizes of press. It appears that these marks were used for example, on salvers and waiters, but not on spoons at this time and this is surprising since spoons had been used by Pingo as demonstration pieces. It is also surprising, given that counterfeiting was a problem and that there was an urgent need to speed up the process of marking due to the considerable increase in the amount of plate passing through 'Hall', that no method was found, at this time, of using the press on hollow-ware, ie jugs, salts, bowls etc, which continued to be marked by hand.

It was not until 1781 that the press was first regularly used to mark spoons and in that year it was used on table and dessert spoons but not on teaspoons.<sup>18</sup> Until 1781 spoons had been bottom marked (marked on the narrow part of the stem near the bowl) but it was found to be impractical to use the fly-press for bottom marking, perhaps because of damage caused to the stem or the difficulty of presenting the spoon stem to the press, and on 1 November of that year top marking (marking on the wide end of the spoon handle) was approved. Spoons and forks have usually been marked in this way since then.<sup>19</sup>

By now, the volume of engraving work undertaken by Thomas

5 Goldsmiths' Company Committee Book (hereafter GC Cttee Bk) 9, p233, 1 March 1753.

6 Goldsmiths' Company Court of Assistants' Book (hereafter GCCB) 16, p69, 8 April 1756.

7 GCCB 16, p77, 29 May 1756.

8 As note 1.

9 As note 2.

10 GCCB16, p109, 28 May 1757.

11 As note 5.

12 GC Cttee Bk 10, p56, 30 June 1757.

13 *ibid*, p85, 8 June 1758.

14 *ibid*, pp120–21, 21 June 1759.

15 GCCB 16, p198, 29 May 1760.

16 These are metal plates kept by the Goldsmiths' Company on which were impressed examples of all the punches used in a given year.

17 See John S. Forbes, 'Change of date letter at the London Assay Office', *The Silver Society Journal*, no12 2000, p82.

18 The press was first used on teaspoons when the duty mark was combined with the hallmarks in 1786. D. McKinley, 'The Fly-Press', *The Finial*, 12/05 April/May 2002, pp150–53.

19 A.B.L. Dove, 'Top marking on flatware', *The Silver Society Journal*, no14 2002, p123.



20 GCCB 17, p382, 29 May 1776.

21 It is also recorded in printer's ink, together with the intaglio head duty mark, as a footnote dated 1 December 1785 (this must be a mistake by the writer

as it should be 1784) under the last minute for the meeting held on the 28 May 1784 in the Assay Office and Court Book no2.

22 GC Assay Office Court & Committee book 2, p15, 27 May 1786.

Pingo for the Goldsmiths' Company had increased dramatically and the Company acknowledged this fact at a meeting of the Court of Assistants held on 29 May 1776 at which the following resolution was minuted:<sup>20</sup>

That the Sum of One hundred pounds be given to Mr. Thomas Pingo Engraver of the puncheons for the Assay Office as a Gratuity for his past Services and that in future an additional Salary of Ten pounds a year be paid him to commence this day and that the same be placed to the Assay Office account.

Unfortunately this rise in salary came too late to benefit Thomas Pingo as he died in that year, but his son John was to benefit from his endeavours and the Company's acknowledgement of them. Whilst Thomas's son Lewis inherited his position at the Mint, John took over as engraver to the Goldsmiths' Company although when, in 1780, Lewis became chief engraver at the Mint, John accepted the post of third engraver whilst retaining his position at Goldsmiths' Hall.

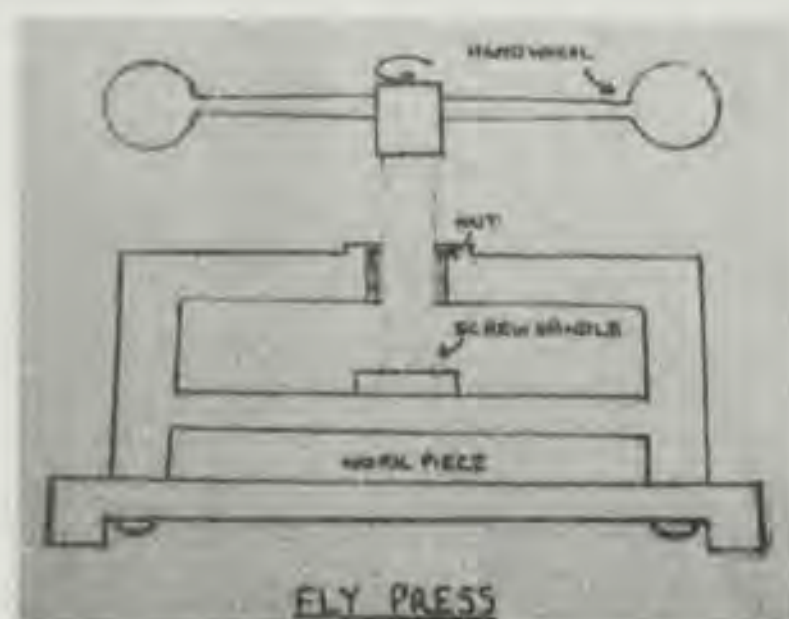
### John Pingo

John, like his father, found himself caught up in change; the Government re-introduced duty on plate in 1784 for which the Company engaged John to engrave two punches for them which were to be used on plate on which duty had been paid. The first was the duty mark, an intaglio impression of a bust of the monarch, that was to be used as a receipt for duty collected, and the second was the exportation mark, now known as the drawback mark, which was an incuse stamp of the standing figure of Britannia. This was used to show that duty paid at the time of hallmarking had been refunded in cases where the plate was exported and therefore not subject to duty.

Pingo probably only made one production of this latter mark. Not only was it unpopular, since it damaged the finished silverware, but it was deemed not wholly necessary and was used therefore only between 2 December 1784, when the duty was introduced, and 24 July 1785 when the decision was taken to withdraw it. As this mark was introduced after the beginning of the 1784 marking year, the only record of it on a mark plate is that for 1785.<sup>21</sup> The punches were kept with the hallmarking punches, and whereas initially the duty mark was applied separately before the application of the hallmarks, in 1786 it was decided to add it to the sequence of hallmarks on the stub used in the fly-press. It was applied in this way from then on although, of course, for items where the press could not be used, marks were applied individually by hand.

It is possible that John Pingo originally tried to incorporate the incuse duty mark with the cameo hallmarks on a single stub (which of course is not practical) and, as we now know, from 1786 onwards the duty mark was made in cameo to match the hallmarks. Whatever the circumstances, he experienced some difficulty in producing the new stubs, as can be seen from a letter he wrote to the Company in 1786:<sup>22</sup>

... The first of March last I was ordered to add the new Duty Mark to those of the Company against the 29th of May, which entirely alters the whole form of the marks throughout; Duty Marks were only made on Single punches before, & of a contrary relief to the Company's Marks, consequently was oblige to re engrave the whole of the marks over



2 Diagram of a fly-press. Mechanical presses may be operated by different drive systems. In the screw press, a screw spindle is rotated in a fixed nut. On rotation, a downward force develops in the spindle, one end of which impacts on the work-piece placed directly under it. A fly-press is a screw press that is fitted with a cross-piece for rotating the spindle.

The drawing is based on a diagram in *How things work – the universal encyclopaedia of machines*, vol 1, Paladin Granada Publ, London 1972, pp18–19 (translated from C. van Amerongen, *Wie Funktioniert Das?*).



again, by uniting the Duty marks with the others, this last alteration have been a very perplexing and difficult piece of business ...

For the Goldsmiths' Company this was a time of considerable experimentation in the marking of plate and, just as the significant practical tasks associated with the introduction of the fly-press fell to his father, the large amount of work involved in this later experimentation fell to John Pingo. In common with his father, who had sought an increase in salary for the extra work, so John also made a similar petition. The following gives some insight into the sort of experiment being tried at this time:<sup>23</sup>

.... an additional press mark for Watch case lids which never were marked before-. I have also made double marks on Single punches for Tea Spoons...Likewise additional marks for a Large new press for Table and Desert Spoons....At another time I was ordered to make an entire new sett of marks in a low relief for experiment consisting of upwards of 100 Marks, in consequence of which all the other good Marks in Office were destroyed; in a short time afterwards the above mentioned shallow or low relief marks that were newly made, were thought not to make a sufficient bold appearance on the plate, therefore they were all destroyed. I was then ordered to make another entire new set of Marks of a bolder relief, which were approved....

Experimentation continued and in 1792 the workload falling on John Pingo from the Company had become so great that he had to give up his own business in order to cope with it and this gave rise to a further petition in which he enumerates this growing workload:<sup>24</sup>

.....59 Marks only were delivered in 1790 - 240 Marks delivered in 1791 - 262 Marks delivered this day besides 39 delivered since January last, making in all 301 Marks delivered in 1792.

It is obvious from this that, although frustrated by the Company's vacillation and burdened by their continuing requirements of him, John Pingo was conscientious in his work, even to the extent of sacrificing his own business. It is equally obvious that he must have been highly thought of by the Goldsmiths' Company because, although he was not a liveryman of that Company, he was given the rare privilege of a seat at livery dinners and when he retired due to failing eyesight in 1815, he was granted a pension amounting to his full annual salary of £200.<sup>25</sup>

Apparently John Pingo never married and after his father's death he continued to live with his mother Mary in the family home at Gray's Inn Lane. She died in 1790 and in 1792 John Pingo gave up the family home and sold off the contents of his workshop which, interestingly, included a fly-press. The following year he moved into lodgings provided at the Mint for their engravers, where his brother Lewis was already in residence. When he died in 1827 he was, therefore, without issue. Thus ended the Pingo association with the Goldsmiths' Company, but it has to be said that, between them, father and son had seen the Company through one of the most important periods of change in hallmarking history.

### Acknowledgements

We are indebted to Mr David Beasley, Librarian of The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths for his assistance in this study.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, 29 May 1786.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p293, 29 May 1792.

<sup>25</sup> As note 4.



A2A website, Records of the Parliament Office, House of Lords, Journal office, main papers 1509–1700:

Papists in London

HL/PO/JO/10/1/383/36; 30 November 1678.

Petition of Henry Gilmans, Gold Beater, Peter Van Melder, his servant, Lewis Casteels, Her Majesty's Framemaker, Thomas Oubrechts, and Giles Bowels, his servant, John Sleider, Silver Chaser, John Leissens, Tailor, and Giles Malvoe, Goldsmith, natives of the Spanish Netherlands inhabiting in St. Martin's Le Grand, and now prisoners in the Gatehouse, Westminster.

Peter Cameron

*The London Gazette*, 17–20 March 1689:

On Friday 11th April – being the Coronation Day of King William & Queen Mary the Right Honourable The Lord Lovelace doth give a Gold Plate of 50 pounds value to be run for in Woodstock Park in Oxfordshire...

Eileen Goodway

*The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1737, p513:

Monday 29

About Eight o'Clock in the Evening, the young Princess was christened Augusta by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The King and Queen were Godfather and Godmother, and represented by the Duke of Grafton and the Countess of Burlington; the Dutchess Dowager of Saxe-Gotha was likewise Godmother, and represented by the Lady Torrington. The young Princess was in a magnificent Cradle, elevated two Steps under a Canopy of State. The Princess afterwards was laid in the Nurse's Lap upon a rich Cushion embroidered with Silver, and Silver Tassels and Fringes, with the most exquisite fine laced Linnen. The Princess of Wales had on an exceeding rich Stomacher, presented by his Royal Highness, adorn'd with Jewels, and sat upon her Bed of State, with the Pillars richly adorned with fine Lace, embroidered with Silver. The Prince of Wales was present, and richly dressed, with his Star set round with precious Jewels, and attended by the Lords of his Bedchamber. The Font and Flaggons for the Christening were brought from the Tower, and were those used for the Royal Family for some hundred Years past. The Cradle, valued at £500 was made by Mr Williams, his Majesty's Cabinet Maker, the Inside and Curtains white Satin, lac'd with Silver Lace: The Covering, Crimson Velvet, with Gold Lace, Fringes and Tassels: At the Feet four Lyons, finely carv'd and gilt.

Vanessa Brett

*The Daily Advertiser*, Thursday 8 August 1745:

Whereas Henry Barnet and William-Hugh Jones, Apprentices to Mrs Wilder, Water-Gilder, in Chapel-Court, Long-Acre, absented themselves from their Mistress's Service on Tuesday last; this is to warn all Persons not to entertain them; and if they will return, they shall be receiv'd; Whoever brings them home, shall have an old Scratch-Brush for their pains.

Robert Harvey, *Cochrane, The Life and Exploits of a Fighting Captain*, 2000, p70:

When he reached Plymouth, Cochrane's masthead was adorned with three exquisitely worked golden candle-sticks five feet tall taken from a prize. The ship was instantly dubbed the 'Golden' *Pallas*. However, customs at Plymouth insisted he pay full duty for them. This was too much for him and they were broken up and admitted as much cheaper 'old gold'.

Thomas Cochrane, Earl of Dundonald (1775–1860) was the model for Jack Aubrey, the central figure in Patrick O'Brien's series of novels about the navy during the Napoleonic wars. Cochrane entered the navy in 1793. In 1800 he received the command of a tiny brig, the *Speedy*, with which he took in 15 months over 50 prizes. His most dashing achievement was the capture of a Spanish 32 gun frigate with the loss of only 3 killed and 18 wounded. His skill as a sailor and his mastery of gunnery, combined with use of false colours and other ruses, enabled him to capture vessels many times his size. In 1814 Cochrane was framed in a Stock Exchange scandal and imprisoned and disgraced. In 1832 he received a free pardon.

Peter Greenhalgh

*The Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 24 February 1823:

Ministers have adopted a new regulation as a matter of economy respecting the services of plate allowed to ambassadors and Ministers appointed to foreign courts, who have been allowed from time immemorial a certain number of ounces of plate, according to the rank of their appointment, and which on their recall or resignation became their perquisite. This custom has been abolished, and a service of plate is to be kept at every foreign Court with the King of Great Britain's arms engraved on it for the use of the ambassador or Minister as the case may be. The Marquiss of Londonderry, who has resigned his embassy at Vienna, is the last who will enjoy the perquisite of the service of plate at that Court. Sir H. Wellesley who is appointed to succeed the Noble Marquiss takes out the service of plate, which is to remain there for all future Ambassadors and which is to be issued from the Lord Chamberlain's Office.

[previously in SS Newsletter 43]



## Miscellany

Extracts from *The Public Advertiser* in 1767

24 July 1767

On Tuesday Morning died, of a Paralytic Disorder, Mr Richard Gurney, some time since a working Silversmith in Foster Lane. He was drank to for Sheriff in the Mayoralty of Sir Samuel Fludyer.

28 August 1767

[On Wednesday]...one Josiah Simpson was committed to [Clerkenwell Bridewell] charged with stealing 12 ounces of silver from Mess Deane and Co. Silversmiths in Old Street, with whom he worked as a Journeyman.

17 October 1767

Yesterday died Mrs Wakelin, Wife of Mr Wakelin an eminent Silversmith in Panton-Street, Leicester-Fields.

17 October 1767

A tradesman in London has lately received a great Quantity of Pewter shavings from Winchester, sent to him for Silver Lace burnt. Several Jews deceived the shop keepers at the Place in the above Commodity. This is inserted as a Caution to Country shop-keepers; and they are advised to take a hot Poker to try it: if Pewter, it will melt; or if they squeeze it in their Hands burnt Silver will rise, but Pewter will remain flat.

19 October 1767

Watches in Gold, Silver, Metal and Shagreen, in good condition second-hand and by eminent Makers, selling cheap at John Stamper's at the Star, facing Water-Lane, in Fleet Street. Where are made Mourning Rings, with Elegance and Expedition.

10 December and 18 December 1767

Plate and Jewellers Work selling cheap at the Star, No148 the Corner of Hind Court and facing Water-Lane, Fleet-Street, John Stamper continues to sell all Sorts of Plate, made after the most approved Patterns, and finished in the best polished Manner at the lowest Price, and which is affixed to each Particular, viz. Tankards, Mugs, Waiters, Candlesticks, Kitchens, and Bread, Cake and Sugar Baskets, Cruet Frames and Casters, Bottle and Writing Stands, Coffee pots, Funnels, Orange Strainers, Skewers, Cases of Knives, Forks and Spoons, &c. Also all Sorts of Paste and other Stone Buckles, Necklaces and Earrings, Coque de Pearl and other Earrings clustered with Marcasites, Gold Seals, Stone Robe Buttons, Bracelets and Pictures Set Rings, Crosses, Shirt Buckles, Mourning Rings, and all kinds of Work in the Jewellers Branch.

Watches in Gold, Silver, Metal, Enamel and Shagreen, second-hand of eminent Makers, having many to sell.

*The Times*, London, Monday 4 July 1803

SALES AT AUCTION. ..

'Diamonds and Jewellery, Plate and Plate Working Tools,

By Messrs. SKINNER, DYKE, and Co.

On the Premises, in Aldersgate-street, To-morrow, and following Day, at 11 o'clock,

The excellent WORKING-TOOLS and IMPLEMENTS, a general Assortment of Metal and Lead Patterns, an elegant Epergne, and about 500 Ounces of Plate, a Pair of valuable Diamond Ear-rings, and some Jewellery, the Property of Mr. CHARLES ALDRIDGE, Working Gold and Silversmith, retiring from that Branch of Business. The Tools consist of a general Assortment, in excellent condition, fit for immediate use, and well worth the attention of the Trade. – To be viewed one Day preceding the Sale; Catalogues to be delivered in due time on the Premises, and at Messrs. Skinner, Dyke, and Co.'s, Aldersgate-st.'

## Library acquisition



A large number of books from the library of Father Peter Hawker, a former chairman of the Society, were kindly donated to the Society by his widow. These were sold to members at a meeting of the Society and the proceeds are being used to fund publication of *The Warning Carriers*. The illustration above is the title page from an annual livery list, bound in red leather and dated 1822, that was given to the Goldsmiths' Company library from the collection. The list belonged to John Garratt, Prime Warden in 1826–27, who was an ancestor of Peter Hawker and whose family is portrayed in the school of Lawrence painting in the front hall in Goldsmiths' Hall.



# Museum focus

## Rochester

Members of the Society visited Rochester, in Kent, in February 2005. The museum is in the old Guildhall; one of many fine seventeenth-century buildings in the town, it dates from 1687. The museum houses the interesting altar set, bearing the hound sejant maker's mark now attributed to Richard Blackwell II, London 1653/54, originally made for James, 4th Duke of Richmond and Lennox.<sup>1</sup> It passed by marriage to Sir Joseph Williamson (1633–1701), MP for Rochester, who bequeathed it to Rochester Cathedral.

Another Member of Parliament for the town was Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell, whose portrait hangs in the chamber of the museum. He paid for the decorated plaster ceilings of the chamber and main staircase in 1695. Born in 1650 the admiral was murdered after his ship, *HMS Association*, was wrecked off the Isles of Scilly in 1707; his monument in Westminster Abbey is attributed to Grinling Gibbons. The museum has a dinner plate engraved with his arms and it was this item that enabled divers to identify officially the wreck of the ship, when it was recovered in the late 1960s. Although apparently unmarked, the plate bears a scratchweight: '16=1=1/2' on the reverse.

There is also a good group of corporation plate in the museum, including a mayoral chain and maces. References to the use of maces by the mayor date back to 1448 and to the present great mace from 1650. The Mayor of Rochester also holds the title of Admiral of the River Medway. It is reputed that oyster dredging was taking place in the Lower Medway as early as the thirteenth century and the oyster fishery industry was of considerable importance from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Water Bailiffs collected dues, fines and tolls on the river and recorded imports through the port of Rochester. They also helped to administer the Admiralty Court (provided for under an Act of 1728) that dealt with all matters to do with work and trade on the Medway and still meets at the Guildhall. Ceremonial oars are used at the court as a symbol of its authority.

At the time of the Society's visit, a special exhibition was being prepared of presentation plate of local interest. While few of the pieces were of any great artistic merit, being mainly manufactured objects of the last 150 years, the sum of the parts made for a very good display of Rochester's interests. Long-service awards, corporate gifts, sporting trophies and prizes from local societies, reminded us that silver has had its place in the structure of local life for many centuries. The cruet set illustrated is a scale model of a lorry of a local firm of hauliers,

R. Swain & Sons Ltd. The exhibition epitomised a core purpose of regional museums : to tell the local community, including its schoolchildren, of the working and social history of their town.



On visits such as this, it is a pleasure also to see objects that are not silver-related. One of Rochester's prize possessions is a magnificent tool chest, containing one of the most complete surviving examples of the tools of an eighteenth-century cabinet-maker. It was made by Benjamin Seaton (1775–1834) who, according to family tradition which cannot be authenticated, intended to emigrate to America but was prevented from doing so by illness. The tools are little used, possibly because the family were 'upwardly mobile' and moved into the professional and academic classes.

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Steven Nye, curator, for help with this article and for a most interesting visit to the museum.



1 Illustrated in Eric Smith, 'Richard Blackwell & Son', *The Silver Society Journal*, no15 2003, p31.

1 (above) Cruet in the form of a lorry, Mappin & Webb, London 1962/63

2 (left) Water Bailiff's oar, indecipherable maker's mark, London 1723/24, inscribed, retrospectively, 'Robt Danson, Water Bailly 1721'. Danson is recorded administering fines for not complying with the Act in 1729

3 (below) Detail of a recent oar, London, 1996





# Robert Gordon, goldsmith and Richard Cooper, engraver

## A glimpse into a Scottish atelier of the eighteenth century

JOE ROCK

In the 1950s, Charles Oman identified a gap in our knowledge of engraved silver and published his highly informative book, *English Engraved Silver 1150–1900* in 1978, since when little has been added to the corpus. The occasional auction house cataloguer now leaps gleefully on the slightest hint of identity for an engraver but we are really little further forward in understanding the complexity of relationships between silversmiths and engravers. In relation to Scottish silver engravers or the atelier system in Scotland, scholars have been silent, which makes the discovery of a manuscript in the National Archives of Scotland with its statement of professional relationships between silversmiths and engravers, all the more important. Not only this but the document gives a voice to previously unrecorded apprentices or journeymen and highlights once again Oman's observation that engravers' apprenticeships are irregular, unrecorded, or recorded in unlikely places. The inclusion of legal depositions by each of the craftsmen adds considerably to our knowledge and in the case of Richard Cooper, augments research carried out by the present author. Cooper has emerged as a very significant figure in the development of the arts in Scotland and he made a particular contribution in training the artists and craftsmen who underpinned the briefest of flowerings of the Rococo in Scotland. His possible contribution to this aspect of Robert Gordon's work will be touched on here.

The document, found in the Kennedy family papers lodged in the NAS, is a decree in favour of the creditors of Sir John Kennedy of Culzean dated 19 March 1745, issued by the Deputy Commissar Principal of Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> The decree was produced in relation to a posthumous summons against Kennedy, dated 17 August 1744, for goods supplied by a group of Edinburgh tradesmen; Thomas Dundas, merchant, Robert Gordon, goldsmith, George Dunbar & William McGhie, merchants, Richard Cooper engraver, Robert Barclay, tailor and William Gellatly, merchant. The main depositions were taken in Edinburgh on 7, 17, 26 and 29 December 1744 with further depositions on 22 March 1745 from Thomas Dundas and Robert Gordon, to the effect that they did not retain in their hands any items mentioned in their accounts.

Sir John Kennedy, 3rd Bt of Culzean, was a descendant of Thomas, second son of Gilbert, 3rd Earl of Cassillis (1515–58). Thomas (died 1602) had been knighted at the Coronation of the infant James I and VI in 1567 and his great-grandson Archibald (died 1711) was created a baronet of Nova Scotia in 1682. He was succeeded by his son John, who died in 1742, followed by John, 3rd Bt who died without issue and apparently without any testament, on 10 April 1744. John's brothers Thomas and David would become 9th and 10th Earls of Cassillis respectively, the 10th Earl commissioning Robert

THAT, upon Thursday the 12d instant, at Ten o'Clock in the Forenoon, there is to be exposed to Sale by publick Roup, the whole HOUSHOLD FURNITURE, which belonged to the deceased HUGH CLERK junior, Merchant in Edinburgh, at his House the second Story of Peacock's Land, opposite to the City Guard; such as, Beds, Mahogany Tables and Chairs, Mirrors, China, Silver Plate, a large Quantity of Bed and Table Linen, Matched Twills, and several other Sorts of Household Furniture. The Roup to continue till all be sold off.



GOLDSMITH and JEWELER,

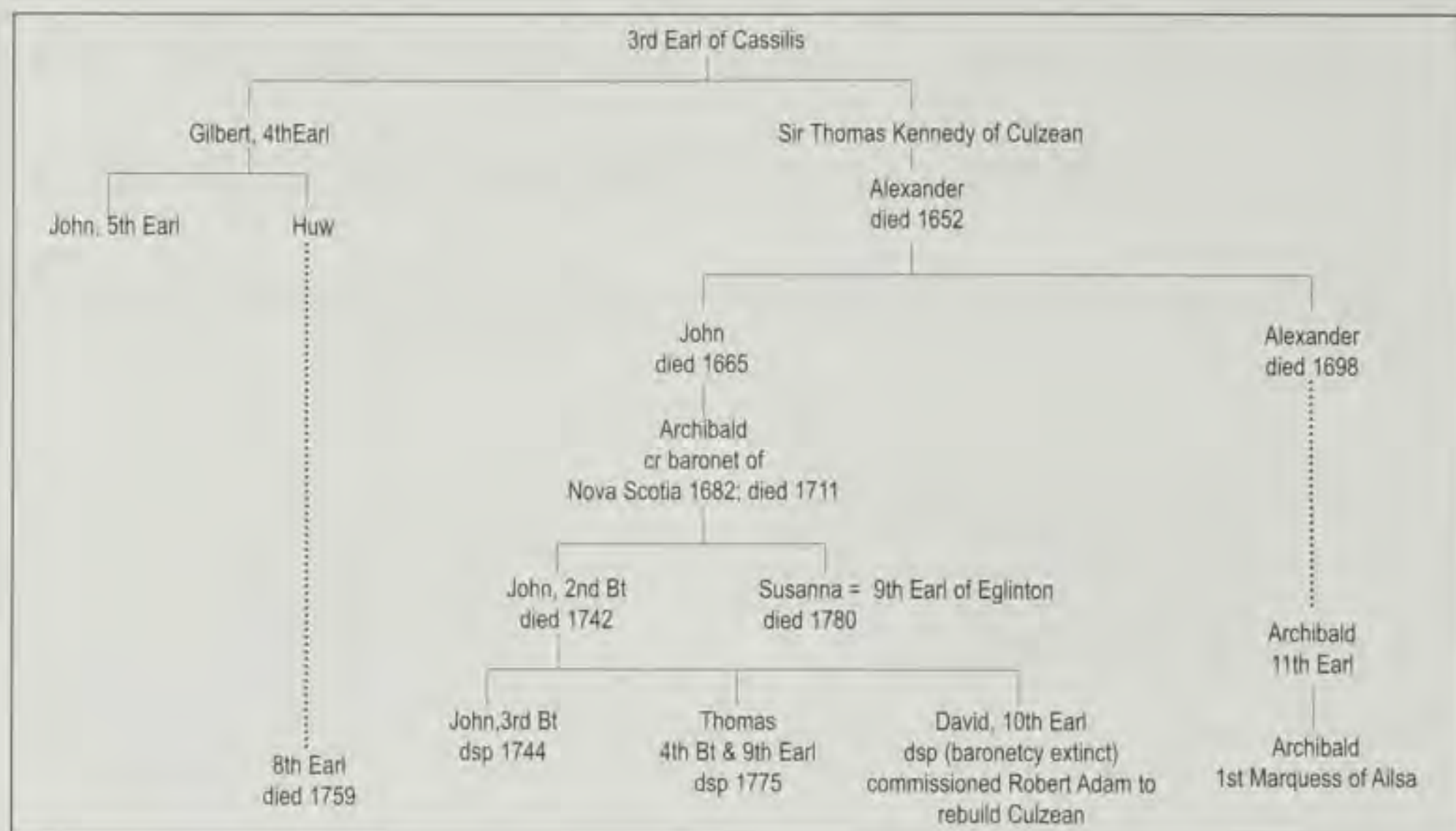
At his Shop South-side of the Crofs, Edinburgh, acquaints the Publick, that he has just now ready for Sale, a large Collection of Second-hand Silver PLATE, Gold Watches chased and plain, with enameled Dial-plates, Diamond Rings and Ear-rings, great Choice of metal and ornamental Plate, exceeding cheap; also, all Sorts of large and small new Plate, in the most fashionable way. Where may be had, great Choice of Scots Pe-dles, set or unset, for Ear-rings, Buttons, Seals, cut one in four boxes, Picture-backs, &c.

N. B. He takes in all sorts of Pebbles to cut; he also takes all kinds of old Jewels in Exchange, and gives large Prices for old and Spent Jewels there.

1 Advertisement placed by Robert Gordon in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, 15 March 1750. (Edinburgh Public Library)

<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Scotland (NAS hereafter), GD25/8/1141 and 1142a, 19 and 26 Mar 1745.





2 Family of Kennedy, Earls of Cassilis and Marquesses of Ailsa

Adam to rebuild Culzean Castle in 1792. But such a succession of misfortune in 1744 clearly had an impact on the family finances and John's affairs were in some disorder at his death. The tradesmen in Edinburgh were quick off the mark in pursuing their debt, spurred on by the looming clouds of political uncertainty in the years before Culloden.

The manuscript lists Sir John's outstanding debts to the tradesmen. Perhaps the most revealing item for an understanding of the man, is the account from his tailor Robert Barclay, for 'a snake skin coat trimmed with a gold binding, a scarlet Huzzar's vest' and 'a pair of snake skin breeches'! This article will however concentrate on silver items supplied by Robert Gordon and the engraving services provided by Richard Cooper and his atelier. Before exploring the individuals in question it is necessary to set out the bills presented by Gordon and Cooper.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Gordon, goldsmith Edinburgh: account dated 16 March 1743.

To setting a gold seal	1. 11. 6
To setting a seal with your coat of arms, set very strong and gold furnished	3. 3. 0
Sagerine [Shagreen] case for it	0. 2. 0
Nossele to a candlestick	0. 10. 0
To a big salver, wt. 39oz: 1dr. at 8/ per oz	15. 12. 6
Kings duty at 6d per oz	0. 19. 6
To chasing it	1. 15. 0
A packing box	0. 1. 0
12 spoons and 12 forks and 12 knife handles all weigh 81 oz: 12½ drop at 5s 4d per oz	21. 16. 2
Kings duty at 6d per oz.	2. 0. 10
To making the spoons at 2s 6d per piece	1. 10. 0
To making the handles and silver forks at 3/ per piece	3. 12. 0
To engraving the spoons and forks at 6d per piece	0. 12. 0
To sagerine case for holding them	1. 5. 0
To 12 blades for the knives	0. 10. 0
To a marrow spoon	1. 6. 0
Total	56. 6. 6

Approximate equivalent values of the pound (Bank of England)

1743	2000
£ s d	decimal £
6	2
6 0	24
10 0	40
12 0	49
2 2 0	171
3 10 6	285
15 12 6	1,251
21 16 2	1,745
56 6 6	4,589



Richard Cooper, engraver, Edinburgh: account dated 16 March 1743.

To engraving a full arms on an Arran stone	2.	2.	0
To an Arran stone for ditto	0.	10.	0
To engraving a full arms on a large flat	0.	12.	0
To a crest on a spoon	0.	0.	6
To 12 crests on knives	0.	6.	0
Total	3.	10.	6

2 NAS, GD25/9/Box 7, bundle of financial papers 1743–57, William Blair, factor to Sir Thomas Kennedy, purchased some of the items listed above, at a sale

of the 3rd Baronet's effects in Ayr, before 30 September 1745. The knives, forks and spoons in their case, £9 5s and a 'big silver server', at 5s 8d per oz., £8 15s 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d.

The document goes on to record depositions made in December 1744, by each of the men who assisted in the production and they are transcribed here in the order in which they appear in the document. It is interesting that while the other merchants had to explain their charges personally, in the case of Gordon and Cooper, their assistants simply verified their master's accounts. Some punctuation has been added for clarity.

Deposition of Robert Proctor, seal cutter in Canongate, aged forty three, married. Deponed that in February or March one thousand seven hundred and [blank] three, the deponent was employed by the said Richard Cooper to engrave on an Arran stone the coat of Arms of the deceased Sir John Kennedy of Culzean. That accordingly the deponent did engrave the said stone being in the form of a seal and that the said stone was furnished by Mr. Cooper from his own collection. Deponed that the two guineas stated in Mr. Cooper's account for engraving the said coat of arms was the common and ordinary price he got from his customers for the like work.... and he saw Mr. Cooper take the stone from his own collection and this was the truth as he should answer to God. (p16)

Deposition of Andrew Hay, servant to Richard Cooper, engraver in Edinburgh, aged forty years, married. Deponed that he knew that Robert Proctor the preceding witness did at Mr. Cooper's desire engrave ane iron Arran stone which was furnished by the said Mr. Cooper, the coat of arms of Sir John Kennedy of Culzean, deceased and likeways that in Mr. Cooper's shop the said coat of arms were engraven on a large silver flat pertaining to the said Sir John Kennedy of Culzean. Also the crest of said arms upon a silver spoon and on each of twelve silver hefted knives. All which were delivered into Mr. Gordon, goldsmith in Edinburgh, the maker of said silver work...[confirmed prices etc]. The deponent had been long servant to Mr. Cooper and had had occasion to see and know as he had deponed. (p17)

Deposition of Alexander Coutts, journeyman goldsmith in Edinburgh, aged thirty years and upwards, not married. Deponed that he knew the whole articles in the [accompt?] due by the deceased Sir John Kennedy of Culzean to Robert Gordon were furnished to the said defunct by the said Robert Gordon at the time mentioned in the said accompt and that the prices stated ...were the ordinary prices. He saw them weighed and they were as stated. The deponent had been a journeyman goldsmith these twenty years past. That he was in the said Robert Gordon's service at the time of the furnishings mentioned and assisted at working most of the articles and saw the rest made. (p21)

Deposition of Charles Simpson, apprentice to Robert Gordon, aged sixteen, not married. He was serving in the said Robert Gordon's shop when the articles were made and furnished, saw them weighed and assisted at making some of the articles.

Deposition of Andrew Bell, apprentice to Richard Cooper, engraver in Edinburgh, aged eighteen, not married. Deponed that he engraved the deceased Sir John Kennedy of Culzean's crest upon the twelve knives mentioned in the said Richard Cooper's account and his coat of arms upon the large flat... (p23)



3 NAS, GD1/482/13, Incorporation of Goldsmiths, Edinburgh, Apprenticeship Book p85.

4 If Robert was 15 in 1731, he may have been christened at Drumblade, a parish in NW Aberdeenshire, about five miles from Huntly, on 9 September 1716. International Genealogical Index (Familysearch website). This is the only entry for a Robert, son of John Gordon in Scotland in 1716 but his mother is unnamed. Partially corroborates evidence in fn23, as Drumblade and Forgue are neighbouring parishes.

5 NAS, GD1/482/4, Minutes of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths, Edinburgh (Minutes hereafter) vol 4 p108, 26 May 1741.

6 Minutes vol 4 at rear of volume, p12.

7 Minutes vol 4 p149, 11 Sep 1742; p163, 17 Sep 1743; p239, 15 Sep 1750; p250, 14 Sep 1751. Also p195, 25 Nov 1746; p202, 12 Sep 1747.

8 Minutes vol 4 p169, 13 Sep 1744; p179, 12 Sep 1745; p201, 10 Sep 1747; p250, 14 Sep 1751; p259, 14 Sep 1752; p266, 13 Sep 1753.

9 Minutes vol 4 p214, 17 Sep 1748; p227, 16 Sep 1749.

10 Minutes vol 4 pp252–53, 5 Jan 1752. See also George Dalgleish and Stuart Maxwell, 'A Family Concern: Thomas and James Ker', *The Lovable Craft 1687–1987*, Edinburgh (Royal Museum of Scotland) 1987 pp14–15.

11 Minutes vol 4 p262, 13 Feb 1752.

12 Minutes vol 4 p302, 13 Sep 1755.

13 *The Trial of Archibald Stewart – Before the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland, For Neglect of Duty, and Misbehaviour in the Execution of his Office, as Lord Provost of Edinburgh ... in 1745*. Printed for Gideon Crawford, Edinburgh 1747. The evidence shows that the hall of the Incorporation played a crucial role in the proceedings and Stewart held planning meetings there. Archibald was the son of Sir Robert Steuart of Allanbank (1643–1707) and his sister Helen married Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, later Lord Minto.

14 Anonymous (David Hume), *A True Account of the Behaviour and conduct of Archibald Stewart, Esq; late Lord Provost of Edinburgh. In a letter to a Friend*, Edinburgh 1748. Sotheby's London, 19 November 1987 lot 71.

15 NAS, B22/18/3, Register of Insurance Bonds f85v–89r.

Robert Gordon made a further statement in March 1745:

Robert Gordon deponed that he was not 'oweing anything to the defunct at the time of his decease nor had the deponent any effects of the defunct in his custody except a marrow silver spoon which came into the deponent in order to get a crest engraved on it and a gold ring with the setting enamelled on both sides in order to be mended. And which spoon and ring the deponent was ready to deliver to any having right to them... (p24)

### Robert Gordon (?1716–67)

Of the two master craftsmen Robert Gordon is the less well known. It has not been possible to confirm his date and place of birth but he first appeared in the records of the Edinburgh Incorporation of Goldsmiths as an apprentice to James Tait, on 21 July 1731.<sup>3</sup> His indenture states that his father was John Gordon of Carbonie, a place that cannot be found in the gazetteers.<sup>4</sup> Robert petitioned the Incorporation to complete an essay on 26 May 1741 and the resulting work – a silver milk pot and a plain gold ring, was made in the workshop of Laurence Oliphant.<sup>5</sup> His essay masters were Alexander Campbell and Adam Tait and he was admitted a freeman on 11 August 1741, becoming a Burgess of the City of Edinburgh a month later. The wine merchant Archibald Steuart (occasionally Stewart) stood as his cautioner and there may have been a family relationship as he was married to Grizel Gordon, daughter of John Gordon of Edinburgh.<sup>6</sup>

Robert was an active member of the Incorporation and held various offices including Quartermaster in 1742, 1743, 1750 and 1751 and Treasurer in 1746 and 1747.<sup>7</sup> His name was often in the list of nominations sent to the Town Council for the post of Deacon (1744, 1745, 1747, 1751, 1752 and 1753<sup>8</sup> – six names were submitted, three were returned, out of which the Incorporation elected their Deacon) and he was elected Deacon in 1748 and 1749.<sup>9</sup> Even when not in office, Gordon had authority and when James Ker was Deacon in 1750 and 1751, his duties as an MP kept him in London for such an extended period that he wrote to Gordon, asking him to chair the meetings of the Incorporation.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in 1752 William Gilchrist was unable to attend his first meeting as Deacon through illness. James Ker, his natural deputy as old Dean was in London and once again it was Gordon who took the chair.<sup>11</sup> His influence waned after 1755 when he was proposed as Quartermaster by Deacon William Robertson, but most of the nominees, including Gordon, were rejected by the members, probably the result of factional infighting.<sup>12</sup>

Elections for office bearers normally occurred in the middle of September each year, but with Bonnie Prince Charlie demanding the surrender of the city on 16 September, normal business was disrupted. A meeting of the Incorporation was finally arranged for 25 November, the Prince by this stage, apparently unstoppable, having taken Carlisle and arrived in Lancaster. An Act of the Privy Council was read, demanding that an election be held and James Ker, a leading Whig and later MP for Edinburgh, was elected Deacon and Robert Gordon, Treasurer. This may have been a judicious balance between the two leading factions at the time. Archibald Steuart of Mitcham (1697–1780), Gordon's cautioner in 1741, was by now an MP and Lord Provost (head of the Council) where his decision not to defend the city was regarded with suspicion and he was arrested.



He was tried before the Cabinet in London and again in Edinburgh in 1747, for his alleged part in the fall of the city, where James Ker, 'jeweller' and Charles Dickson, goldsmith were called in his defence. The goldsmiths Dougal Ged, Adam Tait and his servant James Gillespie were called by the prosecution. Steuart was acquitted although there is little doubt that he supported the Prince.<sup>13</sup> The philosopher David Hume (1711–76) published an anonymous pamphlet in support of Steuart in 1748 and it seems very likely that the cake basket bearing the Hume arms, made by Robert Gordon in 1747–48 is related to this event.<sup>14</sup>[3]

While Gordon's progress in the Incorporation is well documented in their Minutes, his personal life is something of a mystery. He lived in a rented garret room with a cellar at the foot of the stair, in a tenement near the head of Jameson's Close, a building that was demolished to make way for Bank Street in 1798. The room on the third storey (and he may have had only one) 'formerly possessed by Robert Gordon, goldsmith' is described in 1787 as having 'a view to the north', towards the Firth of Forth and the Highlands beyond.<sup>15</sup> He kept a separate shop, 'at the sign of Robert Gordon' in the High Street, 'at the south side of the Market Cross' which suggests somewhere near the head of Borthwick's Close.<sup>16</sup> On 16 March 1766, Robert married Sophia Siveright (born 1738) the daughter of the deceased John Siveright of South House and his wife, Elizabeth Philp.<sup>17</sup> John's father, David Siveright, had purchased a large house called Meggetland, close to Edinburgh in 1712 and it was here, according to his obituary in *The Scots Magazine* that Robert died on 1 June 1767.<sup>18</sup> The Siverights were a well-to-do family and Captain John Siveright of South House, who may have been Robert Gordon's brother-in-law, left an impressive collection of pictures and sculpture at his death in Bristol, in 1767.<sup>19</sup>

Robert died without making a will and his testament dative was presented by executors appointed by the Court; his nephew Alexander Forbes, writer (lawyer) in Edinburgh and David Beatson, Minister of the Gospel at Dumbarnie, husband of Amelia Forbes, Robert's niece.<sup>20</sup> The only reference to property of any kind is an outstanding bill for £9 10s stg due by the Hon Charles Elphinstone of Cumbernauld dated 22 July 1763.<sup>21</sup> Gordon had pursued payment in the Court of Session in July 1764 and the amount had apparently not been paid at his death.<sup>22</sup> Strangely, the testament makes no mention of his wife of only eighteen months.<sup>23</sup>

Robert Gordon's early association with Archibald Steuart, his list of known clients with a distinctly Jacobite lean and his eventual marriage into the Siveright family, a sept of the Mackintosh clan who fought at Culloden, suggest a sentimental attachment to the Jacobite cause. This is greatly reinforced by his association with Richard Cooper, who it will be seen was a staunch supporter with strong, aristocratic Jacobite connections after his marriage to Ann Lind in 1738. In common with many artists and craftsmen of the period, Gordon (and certainly Cooper) looked back to the time of Stuart rule with some nostalgia for the level of patronage, and he may even have seen the arrival of Bonnie Prince Charlie as an opportunity to recreate that golden age. Indeed, the flowering of the Rococo in Scotland was in imitation of France, towards whom the Scots had looked with political expectation since 1715. However, direct action was another matter and it would be the servants of both Gordon and Cooper who would bear arms at Culloden.

16 J. Gilhooly, *The Edinburgh Recorder*, Edinburgh 1993.

17 Francis J. Grant, *The Register of Marriages in the City of Edinburgh, 1751–1800*, Edinburgh 1922, p291.

18 *The Scots Magazine*, vol 29, June 1767, p334(b). According to tax records, the house had 19 windows in 1759. NAS, E326/1/77 p7.

19 NAS, GD237/16/22/3. Testament dative and inventory, 19 May 1768. Included works thought to be by Ostade, Lely, Guercino, Rubens, Vandyke, Brill, Rembrandt, Holbein, marble statues of Mercury, Minerva, Apollo and Hercules, Caracalla, Hadrian, Cleopatra, Lucretia, and a bronze of Julius Caesar.

20 NAS, CC8/8/120 ff915–16.

21 This may be the 10th Lord Elphinstone (1711–81) who succeeded his brother John in 1753. Why he should be 'the Hon.' in 1763 is strange. The Elphinstones were one of the great Jacobite families.

22 NAS, RD3/233, 20 Jul 1764.

23 His niece married David Beatson in Edinburgh on 11 July 1762. Her father is given as Alexander and as the only Emilia Forbes who appears in the IGI for the eighteenth century was christened at Forgue in Aberdeenshire on 3 March 1734, this may be Gordon's niece. Her brother Alexander and fellow executor was possibly christened at the same place on 9 September 1743 but unfortunately in neither case does the IGI name their mother, presumed to be Robert Gordon's sister.



3 Cake basket, Robert Gordon, Edinburgh 1747/48, assay master Hugh Gordon, engraved with the arms of Hume. (Sotheby's)



Gordon worked in troubled times and there is some evidence that he expected payment on delivery or very shortly afterwards and was quick to pursue his debtors in the court. Not long after the Kennedy action he was in pursuit of David Gardener, the son of Col Gardiner, who was killed at the battle of Prestonpans while fighting on the Government side. David owed Gordon £72 7s 4d (almost £6,000 today) 'for value delivered' and payable one month after 4 June 1751.<sup>24</sup> In July 1764 he was pursuing Lt Archibald McDonald 'late of Barrisdale' (Inverness-shire)<sup>25</sup> for £10 15s 2d, outstanding from 12 December 1763, payable on '1st May next' and £33 16s 6d from John McLeod, younger, of McLeod on 17 April 1764, an amount outstanding from 4 May 1763, payable on 22 November.<sup>26</sup> His living arrangements certainly suggest that he was not well-to-do and it is worthy of note that he never owned a property in Edinburgh. This is in marked contrast to Richard Cooper and most of his artist and engraving associates, who owned their houses and business premises. If, as appears likely, many of Gordon's clients were from Jacobite families, the period after 1745 would have been particularly difficult with many forfeiting their titles and estates. Gordon's response was unprecedented and stylish. On 15 March 1750 he placed an advertisement in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*:

Robert Gordon, goldsmith and jeweler, At his shop south-side of the Cross, Edinburgh, acquaints the Publick, that he has just now ready for sale, a large collection of second-hand Silver Plate, gold watches, chased and plain, with enamelled dial-plates, diamond rings and ear-rings, great choice of useful and ornamental plate exceeding cheap; also, all sorts of large and small new plate, in the most fashionable way. Where may be had great choice of Scots pebbles set or unset, for ear-rings, buttons, seals, cut or uncut, snuff-boxes, picture-backs, &c., N.B. He takes in all kinds of pebbles to cut; he also takes all kinds of old plate in exchange, and gives large prices for old and second-hand plate.

Not only was it unusual for an established goldsmith to take to the press in such a way but Gordon had a block engraved with his name sandwiched between Rococo flourishes, across a column occupying half the quarto page.[1] Other tradesmen such as Young & Trotter, the upholsterers, used small symbolic vignettes to attract attention in the same newspaper but to splash his name across half the page was entirely new. Gordon's enterprise paid off and from the list of those pursued, above, he received commissions for more sophisticated work, from a range of clients including Hanoverian families. But things were probably never easy and, perhaps as a sign of his difficulties, in 1757 Gordon allowed his name to be put forward to the Edinburgh Town Council by the Lords of Session for the post of Keeper of the Parliament House. He was not successful but he was appointed to another sinecure, as Assay Master to the Edinburgh Mint, in June 1764.<sup>27</sup>

The Apprenticeship Book of the Edinburgh Incorporation of Goldsmiths is an incomplete document. In 1758 the clerk reported

that at the commencement of his office the Records of Indentures belonging to the Incorporation was extremely incomplete and that none of the indentures bearing date subsequent to the twenty third of June 1751 were recorded.

He was asked to enter abstracts of the missing indentures from information supplied by the masters and among the names added to the record, Robert Gordon provided four: John Roxburgh (9 July 1752), Adam Young (28 June 1753), James Haliburton (15 September 1753) and Charles Ochiltree (15 April 1756). In fact, as the two unrecorded names in the Kennedy document confirm, there had been a problem with the records for some time. This cannot be entirely the result of the Jacobite rising as Gordon's earliest recorded apprentice was John Henderson, who is entered in the book on 2 July 1745. Perhaps as an additional means of protecting himself, Gordon's next apprentice, John, son of Bernard Crookbone, vintner in Edinburgh (30 July 1748) was also recorded in a deed registered in the Court of Session.<sup>28</sup> It was just as well, as John absconded in 1752 and Gordon had to take recourse to his cautioner for the bond. Four further Gordon apprentices are recorded in the Book, John Wilson (8 August 1759), David Thomson (16 August 1762), Ben Buchanan (21 December 1764) and Archibald Williamson (19 February 1765). Thomson continued his indentures with Daniel Ker after Gordon's death and Buchanan was the only one of Gordon's apprentices to attain his freedom, but not until February 1802.<sup>29</sup>

Of Gordon's two assistants mentioned in the Kennedy document in 1743, the indentures of Charles Simpson and Alexander Coutts are not recorded with the Incorporation and neither became masters. Coutts, who may have been related to Gordon, was however described as a 'goldsmith's servant of Edinburgh' – when recorded in the *List of Persons concerned in the Rebellion, 1745–46*, when he 'carried arms in the Rebel Army'. His name appears again in a further *List of Persons of Edinburgh ... concerned in the Rebellion* where Robert Gordon and Robert Low, goldsmiths in Edinburgh are cited as having given evidence 'to prove the same'.<sup>30</sup> The nature of this evidence has not been recorded but the entry provides an insight into the conflicting loyalties that arise during a civil war. Alexander Coutts' final appearance anywhere is in the Minutes of the Incorporation where he was described as 'now lying a corpse' – by Robert Gordon when he applied to the masters to contribute towards his journeyman's funeral in 1749.<sup>31</sup> They contributed £1 from the funds. Coutts presumably died from wounds received at the hands of



the Duke of Cumberland's men at Culloden. The Duke had been made a freeman of the Incorporation in March 1746.<sup>32</sup>

### Robert Gordon's work

There are around thirty known pieces by Gordon, the most austere being the Auldearn communion cups, or perhaps more correctly, beakers, published in a line drawing by Thomas Burns in his *Old Scottish Communion Plate*.<sup>33</sup> According to an inscription, Alexander Brodie of Lethen presented them to the Kirk Session of Auldearn in Nairnshire on 1 January 1744. Burns adds a typically insightful comment regarding Gilbert Ramsay, minister of the parish from 1682 to 1716, who had been 'deposed on 21 June 1716 for praying for the Pretender during the Rebellion'. Gordon's name also appears in Scottish family papers, particularly among Jacobite families. He made a silver child's spoon for Marion Innes, presenting an account for 8s 2d on 3 July 1746, 'for the spoon delivered this day' and the Earl of Leven eventually paid 18s 5½d in January 1768 for a set of silver teaspoons supplied in November 1749!<sup>34</sup> In December 1752 John Innes purchased a pair of pebble-stone buttons set in silver, a teaspoon and sugar tongs, partially paid for with an old pair of tongs and a thimble, confirming the success of the advertising campaign in 1750.<sup>35</sup> Ten years later James Grant paid Gordon £17 9s 2d in 1762 for 'setting a picture in gold' and sixteen silver tablespoons, each engraved with an inscription.<sup>36</sup>

The National Museums of Scotland hold a small but important collection of items by Gordon, including an inkstand and tray with six, four-claw feet and containers for ink, sand and lead shot, of 1742/43.<sup>37</sup> It is engraved with the arms of Udny of Udny in Aberdeenshire and may have been made for Alexander Udny of that ilk (circa 1702–89) who became an advocate in 1728 and Commissioner of Excise for Scotland in 1742. The Museum also has a marrow scoop, probably not the one mentioned in the Kennedy papers, but believed to have been made around 1750 and bearing a crest, possibly for a member of the Porterfield family.<sup>38</sup>

The most interesting item in the collection, catalogued as a sauceboat, is marked for 1746/47 and is of unusual design.<sup>39</sup> [4] It is in the typical elliptical form with three lion-paw feet and chased decoration at the rim, but the handle is in the form of a fish (perhaps a dol-

24 NAS, RD4/177 pt 2, f79.

25 A portrait of Archibald McDonald of Barisdale is listed in Richard Sharp, *The Engraved Record of the Jacobite Movement*, Aldershot 1996, no516 p178.

26 NAS, RD3/233, 20 July 1764 and 17 April 1764. The latter sum may relate to a suite of four candlesticks made by Gordon in 1762/63, Sotheby's Scone Palace, 19 April 1977, 10½ in, 104oz. Much of the McLeod family silver was dispersed in nineteenth-century sales. Gordon was one of the few Scottish silversmiths who made candlesticks, William Dempster being another. My thanks to John McLeod of McLeod and Henry Steuart Fotheringham for this information.

27 Edinburgh City Archive. Minutes of the Edinburgh Town Council, vol 74 pp301–02, 23 November 1757. NASC3/19 no327, 26 July 1764.

28 NAS, RD4/177 pt 1, f407. Taken on with the 'special advice and consent' of his father and Dr John Wallace of Wallacetown.

29 NAS, GD1/482/5 Minutes vol 5 p253, 11 Aug 1767.

30 Archibald, 5th Earl of Rosebery (ed), 'A list of persons concerned in the Rebellion' in *Scottish*

*History Society*, vol 8 1890. Jane Steuart, niece of Archibald Steuart was married to John Coutts, Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

31 Minutes vol 4 p216, 19 Jan 1749.

32 Minutes vol 4 p183, 25 Mar 1746.

33 Thomas Burns, *Old Scottish Communion Plate*, Edinburgh 1892, p306.

34 NAS, GD113/3/1013, Innes of Stowe papers and GD 26/6/Bundle 29, Melville and Leven papers. The Earl of Leven also patronised Henry Bethune, purchasing a set of twelve dessert spoons and forks, knives and blades. He charged £14 16s 4d including 15s to engrave 30 crests in May 1731.

35 NAS, GD113/3/1090. The account is accompanied by an indistinct note detailing the transactions which includes a reference to a spoon made by Ker, left in his hands 2 or 3 years ago ' & has no mark or makers name'.

36 NAS, GD248/530/1.

37 National Museums of Scotland, 1962.1029A, assay master Edward Lothian.

38 National Museums of Scotland, A.1922.393.

39 National Museums of Scotland, A.1981.306, assay master Hugh Gordon.



4 Sauceboat, silver, Robert Gordon, Edinburgh 1746/47. (National Museums of Scotland)



40 There is another intriguing possibility that does not conflict with the suggestion here. The Kennedy family crest is 'a dolphin naissant' that is, facing or leaping to the left and this item may have been made for another member of the family.

41 Mellerstain Account book (paper copies in National Museum of Scotland), pp317–18. The items may have been purchased in London and the only name mentioned is in relation to 'a teapot from Ann Craze, £5 16s'. This may be Ann Craig, see Grimwade, 1990 p477.

42 Minutes vol 4 p263, 16 May 1753.

43 Ian Finlay (revised by Henry Fotheringham), *Scottish Gold and Silver Work*, Edinburgh 1991 p158. Gordon supplied a 'tea kettle & stand & flate, wt 68oz2dr' with 'chessing and piercing' to Edinburgh Town Council in 1749, for £30. City Archives, Common Good and Proper

Revenue Accounts 1742–52, p304.

44 James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange*, London 1855, vol 1 p23.

45 Alicia C. Percival, *Aunt Margaret – Reminiscences of Margaret Eyre 1874–1963*, (privately printed for family circulation), Oxford 1974, p60. Family papers and pictures in the collection of Cooper's great granddaughter, Margaret Baines.

46 Mellerstain Account book, 1725, p153. Cooper charged 1g for the copper plate and 8s for 400 prints. He also supplied a hall book for visitors, account books, a case for papers and 'a book to teach distilling', probably George Smith's *A Compleat Body of Distilling*, London 1725.

47 Ilaria Bignamini, 'The First St. Martin's Lane Academy, 1720–1724', *Walpole Society*, vol 54, 1991 pp83–95.

phin) that leaps forward, over the bowl. This is very unusual and the motif of a fish leaping 'over the water' may be an allusion to the Jacobite sympathies of both the maker and the (unknown) first owner.<sup>40</sup> Jacobite sympathisers would toast the exiled Court by passing their glasses over the water on the way to raising them or later, simply toast 'the King over the water'. But an argument can be made for suggesting that the piece is not in fact a sauceboat. The accounts for Lady Grisell Baillie note the purchase around 1739 of various items of silver, without any clear indication of the supplier.<sup>41</sup> Of special interest is an item described as 'a silver boat milk pot, £2 5s 6d' which suggests that the Museum 'sauceboat' may be a milk jug or creamer and that Gordon's essay piece in 1741 was the same. Indeed, he may have had a reputation for such work as Alexander Edmonstone made his essay – 'a silver milk pot and a gold ring' – in Gordon's shop in 1753.<sup>42</sup>

The present author has not seen the kettle and stand by Robert Gordon (1753/54) in a private collection, 'well proportioned but decked with scrollwork and surmounted by a bird', mentioned with some disapproval by Ian Finlay.<sup>43</sup> The exuberance of the Museum's 'sauceboat' in terms of design clearly has little to do with Finlay's suggestion that the plates published by Thomas Chippendale inspired Rococo decoration on Scottish silver. Gordon's ideas were more home grown and it may be that the arrival of the engraver Richard Cooper senior from London, shortly after 1725, had an unrecognised impact on design north of the border.

### Richard Cooper (1696–1764)

Until recently, Richard Cooper's biography was based almost entirely on the *Memoirs* of his most famous pupil, Sir Robert Strange, published in 1855.<sup>44</sup> Written long after the events he described, Strange had a patchy memory of his master's early years. According to him, Cooper was born in London and was 'bred under Pine, an engraver', presumed to be John Pine (1690–1756), although no record of any apprenticeship has been found. Strange also said that Cooper inherited a substantial sum on the death of his father and as a result, spent some time in Italy, passing 'several years in Rome'. The destruction of Cooper's family effects in a warehouse fire in the nineteenth century makes it difficult to verify any of this.<sup>45</sup> It seems certain that he was indeed born in London as his earliest known work is a bookplate for George Baillie of Jerviswood dated 1724, the account settled in London in 1725.<sup>46</sup> Cooper may have attended Merchant Taylors' School, leaving in 1711–12 aged 15 and his association with John Pine presumably began soon afterwards. There is some new evidence to suggest that Cooper may have been associated with the first St Martin's Lane Academy, in London, the cradle of the Rococo style in Britain. The name 'Cooper' appears in George Vertue's retrospective (1742–43) list of members of the Rose and Crown Club and Ilaria Bignamini has pointed out that this is probably the 'Wm. Cooper' who appears in Vertue's list of subscribers to the first St Martin's Lane Academy in 1720.<sup>47</sup> This may be Richard's uncle, William about whom nothing is yet known. The first St Martin's Lane Academy was formed in October 1720, under the direction of Louis Cheron (1660–1725) and John Vanderbank (1694–1739). Cheron was an important figure who had studied at the Académie Royale in Paris under Charles Le Brun



5 Richard Cooper, mezzotint, attributed to Richard Cooper snr after George Englehart Schröder. (British Museum)



(1619–90) and won the Prix de Rome in 1676 and 1678. He has only recently been recognised for introducing design for manufactures, the tradition of the French Académie, into British art. The academy and the London art clubs attracted a number of Scottish supporters and one of the most significant projects to emerge from the Rose and Crown Club was a suite of ten engravings illustrating *The Life of Charles I*, published between 1722 and 1728.

An album of drawings in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery contains works by Cooper and drawings from his teaching collection, some by the 'great masters' as Strange put it, which he collected while abroad. There is one grey/blue sheet in the album, drawn in black chalk and sepia wash, heightened with white, that is very similar to the large studies by Cheron in red chalk, also on grey or blue paper, washed in sepia, in the print room of the British Museum and this drawing could be his work.<sup>48</sup> As further evidence for Cooper's contact with the London academies, he sat for his portrait to George Englehart Schröder (1684–1750), a leading member of the first St Martin's Lane Academy. This was later published in mezzotint, possibly by Cooper himself, to announce his arrival in the Scottish capital.<sup>[5]</sup> The timing of the portrait is significant. Louis Cheron died in 1725, at which point Schröder returned permanently to his native Sweden and shortly afterwards Cooper arrived in Scotland. Robert Strange noted:

The arrival of such a stranger was no small acquisition to Edinburgh, where the arts had languished, or where, more properly speaking, they had never been introduced ... in a short time, he enlarged the circle of his acquaintances amongst many of the nobility and principal gentry of that country. All, as if by one consent, solicited his remaining, and many had already tendered to him their friendships and good offices.

While not agreeing entirely with the sentiment, there is no doubt that Cooper did bring a measure of metropolitan style and flair to Scottish culture. One of his earliest patrons was the 2nd Earl of Stair, who was at the time encouraging the architect William Adam (1689–1748) to produce a volume of designs. Stair and Adam visited London together in 1726 and Cooper was engaged to engrave the plates. The small subscription ticket of 1727 for the planned publication, is the earliest example of Rococo taste to appear in Scotland.<sup>49</sup>[6]

In 1728 Cooper teamed up with Alexander Monro (1697–1767) the most celebrated anatomist of his generation, and within a year he had joined with a group of artists to found the Academy of St Luke, the first academy of artists in Scotland.<sup>50</sup> He was the treasurer and drawing master. From 1731 they met in the University of Edinburgh and this was probably the first flowering of Cheron's vision in promoting the ideals of the French Académie in Britain. The membership included William Adam, Gilbert Elliot of Minto (1693–1766) the poet Allan Ramsay snr (1684–1758), the painter John Alexander (1686–circa 1766), the art dealer Andrew Hay (1690–1754) and Lord Linton, later 5th Earl of Traquair (circa 1694–1764). It has not previously been noted that the last four (and possibly others) were known Jacobite supporters and it is now clear from a study of Cooper's friends, patrons and associates that he too was a Jacobite. His arrival in Scotland may have had as much to do with politics as any effort to improve manufactures and perhaps because of its affiliations, the academy did not survive the turmoil of the '45 Rebellion.

48 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Inv no42'55.

49 Eileen Harris, *British Architectural Books and Writers 1556–1785*. Cambridge, 1991, p95(a).

50 Joe Rock, 'An Important Scottish Anatomical Publication Rediscovered', *The Book Collector*, vol 49, 1, Spring 2000, pp27–60.



6 Subscription ticket for a volume of designs by William Adam, engraving, Richard Cooper snr, 1727. (Private collection)



51 Rev H. Paton (ed), *The Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh 1701–1750*, Edinburgh 1908, p117. Sir Robert Douglas, *The Genealogy of the Family of Lind and the Montgomeries of Smithton*, Windsor 1795, privately published by J.L. (James Lind MD).

52 If Robert Gordon was indeed related to Archibald Steuart then he and Cooper may have been cousins. Archibald's nephew and namesake was married to Jean Moubray, whose father Robert, of Castlelaw (His Majesty's master carpenter in Scotland) was Cooper's brother-in-law.

53 Robert Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh 1868, p218.

54 Alexander Lind, 'Of the Analysis and Uses of Peat', *Essays and Observations Physical and Literary*, Edinburgh 1756, vol II pp226–42. Joe Rock, 'The "A" Marked Porcelain: Further Evidence for the Scottish Option', *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle*, vol 17 pt 1, 1999, pp69–78.

55 Allan Mackenzie, *History of the Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2*, Edinburgh, 1888.

56 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 18 January 1759. D.F. Fraser-Harris, 'William De la Cour, painter, engraver and teacher of drawing', *The Scottish Bookman*, vol 1 no5, 1936, pp12–19. John Fleming, 'Enigma of a Rococo Artist' in *Country Life*, vol 131, 24

May 1962, pp1224–26. T. Murdoch (ed), *The Quiet Conquest*, exhib cat. Museum of London, 1985, p166. T. Clifford, *Designs of Desire*, exhib cat. National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh 1999, cat 95,102. Hilary Young, 'High Rococo Design Sources at Bow', *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle*, vol 17 pt 2, 2000, pp178–86.

57 Iain MacIvor, 'The King's Chapel at Restalrig and St Triduana's Aisle: A hexagonal two-storied Chapel of the fifteenth century', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 96, 1962–63, pp247–63. Francis J. Grant, *Index to the Register of Burials in the Churchyard of Restalrig, 1728–1854*, Edinburgh 1905, p15.

58 NAS, SC39/76/78, registered 3 May 1744.

59 Robert Strange fought for the Prince at Culloden and engraved the plates for a new currency that was apparently never issued.

60 He was married to Mary Allardice (born 1693) Cooper's sister-in-law.

61 Dennistoun 1855 (as note 43), vol 1 pp32–39.

62 George Herbert Bushnell, *Scottish Engravers*, London 1949. John C. Guy, 'Edinburgh Engravers', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, Edinburgh 1916, vol 9 pp78–113.

63 James Maidment (ed), *Kay's Edinburgh Portraits*, London & Glasgow 1885 vol 1, pp22–23.

Whatever his intentions in Scotland, Cooper was affluent and was not only accepted by the Scottish aristocracy but soon joined their ranks. In 1735 he purchased a house and a substantial area of land in the Canongate of Edinburgh where he proceeded to build an even larger house, probably to the designs of William Adam. His servant Andrew Hay, whose deposition forms part of the Kennedy document, witnessed the purchase agreement and this is the house where the engraving of Sir John Kennedy's silver was carried out. It is also where in 1738, Cooper brought his new wife Ann Lind (1708–75), daughter of George Lind of Gorgie (died 1722), a wealthy Edinburgh merchant and landowner.<sup>51</sup> The marriage brought kinship with several of the most influential aristocratic families in Scotland, and members of this extended family, including the Earls of Morton and the Kennedys of Culzean, appear among Cooper's patrons.<sup>52</sup> Ann's mother, Jean Montgomery, was related to the Earls of Eglinton. The beautiful Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, daughter of Sir Archibald Kennedy, 1st Bt and widow of Alexander 9th Earl (died 1729), was the doyenne of Scottish artistic society. According to Chambers she had a portrait of Prince Charles Edward in her bedroom, 'so situated as to be the first object which met her sight on awaking in the morning'.<sup>53</sup> She was a patron of the poets Allan Ramsay and Samuel Boyse, and Cooper stylishly engraved her arms as part of the dedication page to Boyse's *Translations and Poems* in 1731.

Ann Lind's brother, the advocate Alexander (1695–1756) was married to Helen Allardice, a granddaughter of James, 3rd Earl of Findlater (circa 1689–1764) and as an indication of Cooper's new connections, the baptism of Alexander's son Charles was witnessed by Charles, 6th Earl of Lauderdale, in 1738. Alexander was a man of his time, experimenting with peat-fired furnaces and with the production of porcelain on his estate at Gorgie. He was Chamberlain to Alexander, 12th Baron Saltoun (1684–1748), and was briefly Sheriff Deputy of Edinburgh but lost the post in 1746 for his over-zealous support of Viscountess Strathallan, whose husband fell at Culloden leading the Prince's army.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to being an engraver, Richard Cooper was a prominent freemason and a radical entrepreneur. He was a leading figure in the rebirth of the Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No2 and was instrumental in both the building of the Lodge beside his house in the Canongate in 1736 and in the appointment of William St Clair of Roslin as the first Grand Master for Scotland.<sup>55</sup> Immediately to the west of the Lodge and in his garden, he built a theatre, and Lacy Ryan came from London in August 1747 to lay the foundation stone. Strictly speaking, Cooper's theatre operated outside the law until 1767, when the Theatre Royal opened its doors and his support and promotion of the theatre is one of his most significant contributions to Scottish culture. It was to this theatre that the Huguenot designer and drawing master, William Delacour (1710–68) came as a scene painter in 1756. He had published a group of eight highly influential suites of Rococo designs in London between 1741 and 1745.<sup>56</sup>

Richard Cooper died in January 1764 and was buried at Restalrig village where he owned the Dean's House, standing beside the rambling ruins of the collegiate Chapel built for James II. His family tomb abutted the aisle devoted to St Triduana, until it was swept away in the restoration of that remarkable building in 1908.<sup>57</sup>