

SILVER STUDIES

*The Journal of
The Silver Society*

NUMBER 22

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From the editor

The longer I edit *Silver Studies*, the more I enjoy the network of facts, the ebb and flow of subject-matter as authors respond to the sources they happen upon, and seeing how different disciplines and strands of information converge, sometimes into one issue. In Journal 9, for example, an article on a set of spoons known as the 'Tichborne celebrities' illustrated the Nine Worthies from the façade of Montacute House. These names come together again in this issue, where we have articles on a piece of silver recently acquired for Montacute, and a snuff box connected to the Tichborne family. We have, also, further important research that follows on from the *Rococo* issue, no20.

There is so much going on in the world of silver at present that it is hard to resist the urge to take *Silver Studies* in its wake, but the primary function of this journal is to publish the research of its members not items of 'news'. Nonetheless, I believe *Silver Studies* should record significant events across the full international spectrum, covering the trade and auction houses, contemporary work, museums, special exhibitions, assay offices, new publications – and the people who are making things happen in all these areas, many of whom are, of course, members of the Society. Indeed a vital role of the Society is to be the meeting point, both in person and in print, so that we work with and enjoy silver together, rather than in isolation. Nicole Cartier's words (on pp15-16) reflect this.

To achieve this in print I need your input. We are making progress and I hope you like the results. In this issue one member writes on new silver displays in Paris (p77); one small exhibit from a show last year is highlighted (p44) because it contains an unusual detail. It is good to see that auction houses are increasingly putting late nineteenth- and twentieth-century items into silver sales that hitherto would have gone into sales of 'design', and I hope more will be contributed to the Journal on this period. As editor I am seeking to make public the extraordinary diversity of our subject and the breadth of knowledge within this Society in a manner that a wide range of people can respond to and understand.

What you are all doing, what you are writing about, deserves to reach a wider readership. We need to get this Journal into the libraries of more colleges where metalworking is taught, into universities that teach history, into more museums that have holdings of even a handful of silver objects. It deserves to be read by more collectors. We need to make a new generation aware that silver is not only intrinsically beautiful and good to have around the house, but also a conduit through which we can learn about a wide spectrum of people, places, objects and creative talent. To achieve this ambition of a broader readership, we reduced the cost of subscription to *Silver Studies* some time ago: it's a bargain. We now need advice and practical help to reach this wider audience.

Please get in touch if you can help, and please be alert to the Journal's continuing need for information about what is happening worldwide, covering the full spectrum of activities pertaining to silver. As always, I look forward to your contributions – short or long – to next year's issue of *Silver Studies* and thank all those who have written for it this year.

Vanessa Brett

The Society's website has been redesigned

It is much simpler and (we hope) easier to use. We are enormously grateful to Julia Cagwin and Ed Campbell for the time they have put into this project.

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.

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. There are 20 pennyweights (dwt) to the troy ounce (oz). 1 troy oz = 31.103g; 100g = 3.2 troy oz (approx)

Monetary values

referred to in this journal usually refer to the time before the United Kingdom converted to decimal currency on 15 February 1971; we give below pound Sterling values:

£1 (pound) = 20 shillings (s); 1 shilling = 12 pennies (d)
1 guinea = £1 1s
One third of a pound = 6s 8d; two thirds = 13s 4d.

Unless stated otherwise, all items illustrated are silver.

2007 bullion prices:
June: £5.18 per ounce
Sterling

See p157 for details of the cover illustration.

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Michael Sherratt* volunteered to help the Society with proof-reading shortly after retiring from the printing trade a few years ago, and kindly continues with the task.

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* Member of the Society or regular subscriber to this Journal, either personally or through an institution.

**Past chairman of the Society.



*1 Ewer and basin, Elie Pacot, Lille 1711/12.
Height of ewer: 36cm (14 $\frac{1}{8}$ in); diameter of basin 73.8cm (29in).
(Victoria and Albert Museum M.4&5-2007)*

Ducal splendour: silver for a military hero

The Elie Pacot ewer and basin made for John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough

TESSA MURDOCH

Of all the men that ever I knew in my life (and I knew him extremely well), the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the Graces in the highest degree.

wrote Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield to his son in 1748.¹

He had, most undoubtedly, an excellent good plain understanding, with sound judgement. His figure was beautiful; but his manner was irresistible, by either man or woman. It was by this engaging, graceful manner, that he was enabled, during all his war, to connect the various and jarring Powers of the Grand Alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies, and wrongheadednesses. He was always cool; and nobody ever observed the least variation in his countenance; he could refuse more gracefully than other people could grant; and those who went away from him the most dissatisfied as to the substance of their business, were yet personally charmed with him, and, in some degree, comforted by his manner. With all his gentleness and gracefulness, no man living was more conscious of his situation, nor maintained his dignity better.

Born in 1650 at Ashe House, Axminster, the son of Sir Winston Churchill, who had been rewarded for his royalist support with a knighthood, John Churchill was educated at St Paul's School London. His career as a soldier began in 1667 when, serving as a page to James, Duke of York, he was appointed an ensign in the King's Regiment of Foot Guards – now known as the Grenadier Guards. He was inspired to enter military service by watching the Guards exercise in Hyde Park. In 1668 Churchill joined the garrison at Tangiers, where he remained for three years. In 1672 he took part in the wars against the Dutch. He served his master, by then Lord High Admiral, in the battle of Solebay off the Suffolk Coast near Southwold in *Royal Prince*, his master's flagship. In 1673 he experienced warfare on the continent when France was still England's ally and served in the French army's Royal English Regiment under the command of the Duke of Monmouth. He witnessed the discipline of the French army at first hand under the leadership of Le Tellier and his son Louvois and he also served under one of the greatest French military leaders, Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne who referred to him in dispatches as 'my handsome Englishman'.²

In 1674, during the siege of the great Dutch fortress at Maastricht, Churchill was wounded and later thanked by Louis XIV in person. His meeting with Louis XIV in the field would have been a ceremony similar to the king's visit to the French fortresses in Flanders in 1680. In 1675 Marlborough was received by the French king at Versailles,³ when it is thought he was given the seventeenth-century French silver now at Althorp. This includes a pair of silver ewers with the Paris date letter of 1674 [fig 2] and the maker's mark of Charles Petit and a pair of silver pilgrim bottles also with Paris marks and a date letter tentatively identified as 1657, but no maker's mark.⁴

1 Lord Mahon (ed), *Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, Letters to His Son*, 1845–53, I, p221.

2 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* under Churchill, John first Duke of Marlborough; Correlli Barnett, *Marlborough*, 1974, p41.

3 Barnett (as note 2) pp41–2.

4 A.G. Grimwade, 'Silver at Althorp. 1, The Marlborough Plate', *The Connoisseur*, October 1962, pp1–7, fig.8.



2 One of a pair of ewers, Charles Petit, Paris 1674. Height 48cm (18³/₄ in). (The Collection at Althorp)

John Churchill, back in England, was appointed Gentleman of the Bedchamber to James, Duke of York, and in 1675 was sent to Paris on a diplomatic mission. While there he arranged for his campaign silver to be sent home free of duty in the diplomatic bag. The list demonstrates the equipment which even a colonel of moderate means found necessary on campaign:⁵

one basin, 2 great dishes, 12 small, 2 massarines, 3 doz of plates, 2 flagons, 4 candlesticks, 2 ewers, 2 stands, 2 chafing dishes, 1 vinegar pot, 1 sugar pot, 1 mustard pot, 1 pair of snuffers and its case, 4 salts, 6 cups, 12 spoons, 12 forks, 12 hafts, one great spoon, one chamber pot, one tea pot, one chocolate pot, one great cup, one skillet and 2 Turkey cups.

The ewers and flagons may be those given to him by Louis XIV. This is an early reference to silver tea and chocolate pots and demonstrates, that although these drinks were newly introduced in the mid-seventeenth century, they were already regarded as requisites for a military officer on campaign.

In 1675 John Churchill met Sarah Jennings, one of the Duchess of York's maids-of-honour. They were married in the winter of 1677/8 and initially lived in John Churchill's lodgings in Jermyn Street. Here their eldest daughter Harriet was born in 1679, but did not survive infancy. Four further daughters, Henrietta, Anne, Elizabeth and Mary followed, and the longed-for son, also named John, was born in 1686.⁶ [fig 3]



3 1st Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and their children, by John Closterman, 1696-97. (Duke of Marlborough, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire)

Churchill had risen through the ranks of the nobility. From a Scottish barony awarded in 1682 and an English Barony awarded in 1685, he was created Earl of Marlborough by William and Mary on their accession in 1689. But by 1693 he had been dismissed both from his position at court of Master of the Wardrobe and as Commander of the English Forces in the Netherlands on suspicion of intrigues with the exiled King James II. The 1690s gave Marlborough time at home with his family and time to develop his interest in the arts.

By the late 1690s Marlborough had regained favour at court and in addition to taking up the role of Commander-in-Chief of the

5 Barnett (as note 2), p42 citing Calendar of State Papers (Treasury Books) 1672-5, p830.

6 Jeri Papasola, *Faces of fame and fortune: The*

Marlborough Family Portraits at Blenheim Palace, 2006, provides a useful introduction to the Duke of Marlborough's children and their subsequent lives.



4 Basin, one of a pair, Pierre Harache, London 1701/02, supplied to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough by the Jewel Office. Diameter: 66cm (26in), (The Collection at Althorp)

English forces in Holland was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the States General. He was awarded official ambassadorial silver by the Royal Jewel House. The list included⁷

One large ffountaine fineley Enchaced wt 420oz At 10/- £210-10-00

One small Cesterne finely wrought wt 467oz at 10/- £233-10-00

These can be identified with the wine fountain marked by the Rouen immigrant goldsmith Pierre Harache in London 1700/01 with its matching cistern of 1701/02. They were accompanied by

Two large scollop basons knurled round & two Ewers helmet fashion wt 531oz 15dwt at 10s p.o. £265-17-6 [fig 4]

All these pieces are engraved with the arms of Churchill surmounted by a ducal coronet. The arms are encircled by the motto of the Order of the Garter and the double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire. They were engraved during or after 1705 as Marlborough was only made a duke by Queen Anne on her accession in 1702; a prince of the Holy Roman Empire by Emperor Leopold after the Battle of Blenheim in 1704 and Prince of Mindelheim in Swabia by Emperor Joseph in 1705. This latter honour carried with it the right to display the Imperial Eagle on his coat of arms – the honour was bestowed in order to obtain Marlborough's future support. All these pieces were intended for display on the buffet and were indicative of ambassadorial status. The fountain and cistern were for use in the serving and cooling of wine. In contrast, Marlborough's unique pair of gold wine coolers,[fig 5] acquired by the British Museum in 1982 from the Spencer collection at Althorp, were used for single bottles of wine and were placed on the table so that the gentlemen present could serve themselves without the interruption of servants.⁸ This habit was first introduced at the French court in about 1680. Their heavy form, lion masks and handles indicate the influence of Huguenot craftsmanship. The Althorp manuscripts in the British Library demonstrate that they were in fact given to Marlborough as



5 Pair of wine coolers, 22-carat gold, unmarked, London circa 1700. Height: 26.9cm (10½ in); weight: 11.4 kg (365oz). (The Trustees of the British Museum)

7 Grimwade (as note 4), pp3-4, fig 3.

8 Grimwade (as note 4), p7, fig 9; S. Gough (ed), *Treasures for the Nation: Conserving our Heritage*,

British Museum Publications for the National Heritage Memorial Fund 1981, no52, pp77-78; British Museum *Compass Collections on Line*.

part of his official plate by the Jewel Office on 3 September 1701 for his role as Ambassador to the States General. They are listed in 1712 as part of 'the King's Plate for the Side Board' in Marlborough's household. The list cites⁹

2 large Side board Dishes, 2 bottles 2 Ewers large, 2 Ice pails the Kings, 1 fontaine, 1 large Cisterne, 1 lesser Cistern.

They may be identified with the 'two large gold flagons' bequeathed in 1744 by Duchess Sarah to her grandson John Spencer. By that time they were recorded at Marlborough House, London. This London-made silver and gold reflects the Marlboroughs' status then as the most powerful political family in England.

The glamorous silver which the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough evidently took pride in displaying and using both at home and on campaign contrasts with the challenges of daily life in the field. Transport was often by water as this was easier. Life on campaign is recorded by the artist Marcellus Laroon, who served in the King's regiment of Foot Guards. Laroon's sketch of a market tent in camp in 1707¹⁰ demonstrates the refreshment and entertainment savoured by the soldiers and the camp followers. Marlborough's own tent as military commander would have been sumptuously furnished, as befitted his status.

Marlborough wished to leave an artistic legacy of his military achievements and copied Louis XIV's example of commissioning tapestries of contemporary military subjects. He commissioned several sets of tapestries from Flemish workshops between 1705 and 1717. The most expensive set, *The Victories*, was woven by Judocus de Vos in Brussels from designs by Lambert de Hondt who had worked with Teniers. Lambert was assisted by his son Philippe, who continued the work after his father's death in 1711; the trophy borders were designed by Jan Van Orley.¹¹ The tapestries were intended for display at Blenheim Palace which was built on the site of the Manor of Woodstock, Oxfordshire – a royal gift received from Queen Anne after the spectacular victory at Blenheim in 1704. Marlborough's interest in commissioning works for his palatial new home is borne out in his correspondence with his wife Sarah, which demonstrates his importance as a patron. On 8 November 1706 he wrote to her 'I am so fond of some pictures I shall bring with mee, that I could wish you had a place for them til the galerie at Woodstock be finished'. On 30 June 1708 he wrote¹²

My Glasses [mirrors] are come to Bruxelles and I have bespoke the Hangings, for one of my greatest pleasures is in doing all that in me lyes that we may as soon as is possible enjoye that happy time of being quietly together, which I think of with pleasure as often as I have my thoughts free to myself.

In commissioning *The Victories* tapestries John Churchill used as intermediary Count Sinzendorf. The

Austrian Emperor's former ambassador to Versailles 1699–1701 was protector of the Viennese Imperial Academy of Arts and well placed to serve as artistic advisor to Marlborough. The contract for the order was signed in November 1708, soon after that year's victories at Oudenarde, Wynendael and Lille, when Louis XIV's armies had been defeated and John Churchill was at the summit of his military achievements.

The political impact of Marlborough's victories is captured in a series of caricatures published in France and the Netherlands. Marlborough's heroism was legendary and his portrait and that of his companion-at-arms Prince Eugene, appeared on contemporary playing cards and damask tablecloths and napkins.¹² A Dutch cartoon dated 1700 illustrates *A prophetic dream of the sun's eclipse* and shows Louis XIV with Madame de Maintenon (who is wittily labelled *Nous Maintenons Par Conseil bons* ('we maintain through good advice')) and Philip of Anjou, Louis XIV's grandson. Louis XIV is shown caught between England and Holland with William III looking on in another satirical print dated 1706. Above the fleeing figure of Louis XIV, the French cock is destroyed by the Imperial Eagle.¹³ Marlborough's status as hero is reflected in the sumptuousness of his horse trappings, pistols and military equipment still at Blenheim Palace. The sword worn 'in all his victories from 1701 to 1712' with its silver-gilt hilt inscribed in eighteenth-century lettering, passed to his youngest daughter Mary and her husband John, 2nd Duke of Montagu. Montagu served with his father-in-law during the wars of the Spanish succession and, as Master of the Ordnance, in his maturity took great pride in this heirloom. It remains today in the private armoury at Boughton House, Northamptonshire.¹⁴

The city of Lille ceded to France from the Netherlands in 1667, as celebrated in the medal engraved by M. Molart.¹⁵ Lille, as suppliant, gives her keys to Victory who proffers a cornucopia – a symbol of the favour that Louis XIV showed the town. The obverse shows the bust of the French King. In that year the French military engineer Vauban constructed the citadel and ramparts that provided the main challenge to the allied armies during the siege of 1708. Lille was the most elaborate of Vauban's fortress cities – a masterpiece of geometry in stone. The ramparts were enclosed within a wide moat fed from the river Deule. The star-shaped citadel lay to the north-west of the city. In the tapestry woven for Marlborough illustrating the siege of Lille the town is shown in the distance with Marlborough standing in discussion in the foreground.¹⁶ The surrender of the citadel was the achievement of Prince Eugene of Savoy, although he was wounded in the process. Marlborough's role was to cover the siege with a field army to prevent the French from relieving the city. On 24 October Marshal Bouffleurs, with whom Marlborough had served 34 years earlier, on the French

side, surrendered the town in order to save the population and withdrew into the citadel. On 9 December the citadel finally capitulated.¹⁷ The cartouche in the top border of the tapestry contains the word *Insulae* – (the Latin word for Island, the French equivalent is *L'isle*) – a pun on the name of the town. The cartouche is flanked by medallions of the virtues *Justice*, *Fortitude*, *Prudence* and *Temperance* with an appropriate trophy of arms at the base. Medals celebrating the lifting of the siege of Lille were struck – that issued in 1709 shows the city represented by a suppliant female figure clutching a fleur-de-lis kneeling before Marlborough and Eugene.¹⁸ But the allies had suffered 15,000 casualties during the siege. During the subsequent allied occupation of Lille, Marlborough and Eugene lodged at the Abbey of Loos at the gates of the city.¹⁹ The winter of 1708/9 was one of the coldest; after a wet spring it was June before Marlborough managed to concentrate the allied forces near Lille. They then turned their attention to Tournai, besieging the town on 27 June. Tournai surrendered on 30 July 1709, although its citadel did not capitulate until 3 September. The hard-won victory against the French at Malplaquet followed, but Marlborough's ill timed request to be appointed Captain General for life ensured that he lost the support of Queen Anne and, despite a further victory at Mons in October, by November 1709 his return to the Suffolk coast was filled with foreboding.

The following three years saw campaigns during which the duke's authority was further undermined. Bouchain capitulated in September 1711, but by December Marlborough had been dismissed from all his offices. The following year the French regained the ascendant and recaptured Bouchain. During this time, Marlborough and Eugene continued to use the Abbey of Loos at Lille as their base. Fifty years later the English artist William Marlow recorded the centre of the city of Lille, which had not changed since the allied occupation of 1709 to 1713. Marlow's painting of the Grande Place, Lille, now at Longleat, shows the market place and the Bourse. Although the construction of Blenheim Palace to the designs of architect John Vanbrugh was well underway, it was only in 1709 that, under the guidance of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, the elderly Christopher Wren started to build their London home Marlborough House in its prestigious location adjacent to St James's Palace.

The splendid ewer and basin, made by Elie Pacot in 1711/12, [fig 1 and details] were believed to have been made for Marlborough at the request of the city of Lille as a tribute to his role in preventing the French from raising the siege. In her recent comprehensive



6 Detail of fig 1, showing the handle of the ewer.

9 They are listed in 'An account of the plate given by King William as it stands in the Indenture the third day of September 1701 upon the account of being Ambassador to the States General' as 'Two Ice Pails' with the weight 266oz 15dwt and are probably the '2 Ice Pails' listed in the 'Account of plate delivered by Jabez at London the 19th April 1717, British Library, Althorp papers 75402.

10 Robert Raines, *Marcellus*

Laroon, 1967, no37, p124.

11 Jeri Bapasola, *Threads of History: The Tapestries at Blenheim Palace*, 2005, pp91ff, 118–19 for The Surrender of Lille; Alan Wace, *The Marlborough Tapestries at Blenheim Palace*, reissued in 1972 for the Victoria and Albert Museum on the occasion of the presentation of seven military tapestries of this series by Mrs Oswald Finney in memory of her late husband.

12 The V&A Museum has three contemporary German or Flemish linen damask table cloths and a napkin illustrating Prince Eugene at the Siege of Lille, T.21–1924; T.3–1927; T.458–197; T.401–1985.

13 Barnett (as note 2), ill p85, 186. Impressions are preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris and the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, London, respectively. The British Museum also has a

set of playing cards published in 1707 illustrating Marlborough's victories.

14 T. Murdoch (ed), *Boughton House, The English Versailles*, 1992, pp160, 225, pl 93.

15 British Museum, Department of Medals, M.2341.

16 The tapestry hangs at Blenheim Palace, a later version in V&A Museum (T.100–1949) was woven at the Gobelins factory in 1727–28.

17 Barnett (as note 2), p223; Bapasola (as note 11), p15.

18 The medal was struck by Martin Brunner of Nuremberg. An unusual example struck in silver is in a British private collection.

19 In the Althorp papers, British Library, Add.Mss. 61208, there is a letter from Ignace de La Fosse, Abbot of Loos to the Duke of Marlborough, 1711.

study of the goldsmiths of Lille, Nicole Cartier confirms that there is no documentary evidence for this supposition. The presence of the coalition armies, principally the Dutch, the English and the Danes, guaranteed a steady supply of confiscated precious war booty for the goldsmiths of Lille to refashion. Elie Pacot was the leading goldsmith in the city. His status is reflected in his book-plate [fig 10] which displays his coat of arms and shows *Elijah in the Fiery Chariot* and *Elisha* dressed appropriately in a goldsmith's smock. Pacot's workshop benefited from the assistance of his son-in-law Pierre Tiron, who had been trained at the Paris mint under his father Jean Tiron, a master founder, so Pierre was an expert in casting techniques. Pacot was born in Bordeaux and had registered as a master in Lille in 1688 with a workshop in the Place de Lion d'or.²⁰

The ewer and basin are decorated with cast, chased and engraved decoration. The cast medallion heads of Minerva as goddess of war, Minerva as patroness of the arts [fig 7] and heads of Roman Emperors and Empresses were almost certainly the work of Tiron. The elaborate engraved cartouche on the basin, [fig 8] traditionally attributed to Blaise Gentot (a French engraver recorded as working in England in the late seventeenth century, who engraved the silver table made for William, 4th Earl and 1st Duke of Devonshire²¹) was probably done in London by the Huguenot Simon Gribelin (1662–1733) who worked closely with the London-based Huguenot goldsmiths. The attribution is based on a comparison with the pulls from the heraldic cartouches on silver made for the Earl of Orkney and John Cataret mounted in Gribelin's album in the British Museum.²² Marlborough would have insisted on the accuracy of the engraving of his coat of arms,²³ although ironically on the ewer and basin they were replaced with those of Bridgewater impaling Russell when the pieces were inherited by his son-in-law Scroop

20 Nicole Cartier, *Les Orfèvres de Lille*, 2006, vol I, pp179, 182, 183, 185; vol II, p406 The coat of arms surmounted by a helmet indicates Pacot's social aspirations, although he never became a member of the Lille nobility.

21 Arthur Grimwade, 'The Master of George Vertue: His Identity and Oeuvre', *Apollo*, February 1988, pp83–89. Nicholas Barker (ed), *The Devonshire Inheritance, Five Centuries of Collecting at Chatsworth*, no29, pp104–06.

22 Thanks to Peter Le Rossignol and Sheila O'Connell. British Museum, Prints and Drawings 180* b 26 ff126–7. The cartouche is almost identical to that on the rosewater dish with the re-engraved arms of Sir William Codrington, made by Hermanus Coppens of

Brussels, circa 1695, now in the City of Westminster collection and illustrated by Grimwade (as note 21) fig 16; communication from Nicole Cartier to the author. The Codrington cartouche also bears the cypher of Queen Anne, which dates the engraving to her reign (1702–14), after Blaise Gentot had apparently returned to France.

23 A final set of tapestries commissioned by Marlborough of the Virtues incorporated his coat of arms as prince of the Holy Roman Empire – indeed the weaver sent Marlborough a sketch of his arms for approval before carrying out the work to ensure that they were accurately represented.

24 Althorp papers Add.Mss. 75402 D/15.



7 (Left and on pp 12 and 13) Details of the basin and (right) detail of the ewer, in fig 1. Medallions attributed to Pierre Tiron. (Victoria and Albert Museum)

Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater and his second wife, Rachel, daughter of the 2nd Duke of Bedford.

The quality of the ornament, particularly the female term handle and the laurel-crowned male mask on the ewer, demonstrate Tiron's contribution to Pacot's workshop. The basin is marked with Elie Pacot's maker's mark; the earlier town mark for Lille (L with a trefoil) used in the seventeenth century and after Lille had ceded to the Netherlands; the fleur-de-lis town mark for Lille used 1709–14 and the date letter D for the period November 1711 to November 1712. The ewer bears superimposed year marks for D or E suggesting that it was marked either in 1711–12 or 1712–13.[fig 9] Marlborough sent his silver to Antwerp then on to Aix-la-Chapelle, where the Pacot basin is first recorded in the inventory of Marlborough's silver dated 23 September 1713.²⁴



8 Detail of the basin in fig 1, the engraving attributed to Simon Gribelin. The armorials, replacing the original, are for the 1st Duke of Bridgewater and his second wife. (Victoria and Albert Museum)

Marlborough knew Pacot personally. After his dismissal from office in 1711, from September 1712 Marlborough remained in exile on the continent. In 1712, when Pacot's son-in-law Pierre Tiron experienced difficulty in being accepted as a master as he had not served his apprenticeship in Lille, according to a contemporary it was thanks to the patronage of 'Prince Eugène et autre Puissances' that this was resolved.²⁵ It seems most likely that the ewer and basin were commissioned by Marlborough and possibly made at a favourable price in return for Marlborough's role in interceding with the city authorities on Tiron's behalf. Such a commission would have served as a diversion for Marlborough from his political troubles. Alternatively the silver might have been presented by the allies in recognition of his role as military leader, after Marlborough had been deprived of office by Queen Anne. It is ironic

25 Cartier (as note 20), vol I, p376



9 Left: mark of Elie Pacot on the ewer; centre: town mark for Lille used in the seventeenth century and after Lille ceded to the Netherlands. Right: marks on the basin (left to right) Elie Pacot's maker's mark; the earlier town mark for Lille (L with a trefoil) used in the seventeenth century and after Lille had ceded to the Netherlands; the fleur-de-lis town mark for Lille used 1709-14 and the date letter D for the period November 1711 to November 1712.

that the engraved cartouche on the basin incorporates the royal cypher AR on the banners that form part of the military trophy. It is also surprising that the silver does not bear armorials or an inscription recording that it was a donation from the allies if this was the case. In the notebooks kept by Marlborough's French secretary Adam Cardonnel, the only gifts recorded are the tulip bulbs presented by the Netherlands and the horse presented by the King of Prussia.²⁶

After 1713 the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough supervised the completion of the building and furnishing of Blenheim Palace. The duchess dismissed the architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, and replaced him in 1716 with the cabinet-maker James Moore. The Second State Room today is dominated by a portrait of Louis XIV by Mignard, flanked by tapestries from Marlborough's *Victories* series which celebrate the last of his great battles at Bouchain in 1711. On the exterior of the palace is a 30-ton marble bust of Louis XIV, on the pediment of the south front, captured from Tournai after the siege in 1709. Further sculptures by Grinling Gibbons bear witness to Marlborough's triumphant achievements. On the roofline the British lion is shown savaging the French cock. In 1733 the *Free Briton* noted that English sculptors were not able to do Marlborough's reputation justice, and complained that ²⁷



the Statuaries of his own Days could do him no more Honour, than by a vile Conceit over his Gates, of a dreadful Lyon tearing to Pieces a miserable Cock and when no artist of an English extraction could do him Justice, his superior Genius in Arms raised a Trophy worthy of himself, by taking the Busto of the late French King down from the Gates of LISLE, and placing it on a Front of his House of Blenheim.

The bust of Louis XIV was from the gates of Tournai, not from Lille as wrongly reported in the eighteenth-century press. By 1740 it was listed in the inventory compiled at the dictation of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough as by the great Bernini.²⁸

The ewer and basin may be the last in a series of commissions ordered from Pacot's workshop by Marlborough. Silver was cheaper in Lille than in London, partly because the silver content in the alloy was lower: 833 parts to the 1000 rather than 924 in London.²⁹ Other silver possibly commissioned by Marlborough from Pacot and dating from 1708/09

includes six pairs of candlesticks, of which five pairs are known today.³⁰ In the same year Pacot made a sophisticated centrepiece or surtout for the dinner table with 19 different components, weighing 65kg (209oz).³¹ Both the surtout and the candlesticks were inspired by contemporary Parisian silver. Their design and execution probably benefited from the presence of Pierre Tiron in Pacot's workshop. The candlesticks are adorned with medallions, skins and trophies and the surviving examples carry Pacot's maker's mark four times. On the centrepiece the marks include the date letter 1709/10, the maker's mark with an anchor and initials EP, the fleur-de-lis town mark for Lille, 1709–14, and the earlier town mark for Lille in use in the seventeenth century, L with a trefoil.³² Of the 19 pieces acquired, some were modified by Garrard's, only one has found its way to a museum collection,³³ other pieces are in a private collection in Paris. The Pacot basin and ewer, however,

were made to complement the great basins and matching ewers made for Marlborough in London in 1700/01 by the Huguenot refugee goldsmith Pierre Harache, originally from Rouen but who had worked in Paris in his youth. In acquiring the ewer and basin from Pacot, Marlborough was evidently anticipating the buffet displays in his newly built ducal homes of Marlborough House, London and Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire.

Others took advantage of the favourable price and excellent workmanship available from the Lille goldsmiths. Joseph Clement, Elector of Cologne (an ally of Louis XIV during the war of the Spanish Succession who fled Liege before the allied armies and took refuge in Lille, where he was crowned Bishop in 1707) owned an inkstand made by Pacot in 1708, which is now in the Treasury of the Munich Residence.³⁴

Such pieces form a contrast to the domestic silver acquired by Marlborough for daily household use, such as a silver-gilt chamber candlestick dating from about 1710, with the Marlborough crest beneath a ducal coronet and garter motto.³⁵

It is not known for certain when Scroop Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater, acquired the ewer and basin and at least one pair of candlesticks from Marlborough's estate. In the will compiled just before his death, the Duke of Marlborough left all his plate to his widow with the exception of some gold plates which were given to him by the Electress of Hanover.³⁶ In a codicil to her

26 Communication from Nicole Cartier to the author, 13 February 2007.

27 Malcolm Baker, *Figured in Marble: The making and viewing of eighteenth-century sculpture*, 2000, pp139–40.

28 Tessa Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*,

Eighteenth-Century Inventories of Great English Houses, A Tribute to John Cornforth, 2006, p276.

29 Cartier (as note 20), vol I, p182.

30 One pair was passed down in the Marlborough family to the Duke of

Bridgewater; another pair, now at Highclere, was recorded in the Royal Jewel House in 1727 and copied by Paul Crespín for Lord Chesterfield's use in his embassy at The Hague. Two further pairs are in a French private collection and another pair has

recently changed hands in Australia. Communication from Nicole Cartier 13 February 2007; see also Christie's London, 14 June 2005 lot 261.

31 Nicole and Isabelle Cartier, 'The Elie Pacot surtout', *The Silver Society*

Journal, no6 1994, pp296–301.

32 The centrepiece was recorded in an English collection in 1829. Cartier (as note 20), vol II, pp441, cat no111 pl XXI.

33 Philadelphia Museum of Art.

own will, dated 1733–35, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough mentions 'un plat pour le dresseoir avec leas armes du duc, en argent francais'.³⁷ Curiously the ewer is not mentioned in the 1713 inventory or in the duchess's codicil. It is likely that Bridgewater did not gain possession of the silver until the mid-1730s, when the coats of arms were re-engraved with those of Bridgewater impaling Russell, for Scroop Egerton, 1st Duke of Bridgewater and his second wife, Rachel Russell, daughter of the 2nd Duke of Bedford.³⁸

Bridgewater was on good terms with the Duke of Marlborough as he had married first Marlborough's daughter Elizabeth, who died of smallpox in 1714. After Marlborough's death Bridgewater's dealings with Duchess Sarah became very unpleasant. The 1st Duke and Duchess of Marlborough brought up their granddaughter Lady Ann Egerton, the only surviving child of Bridgewater's first marriage, as their own. After Bridgewater remarried in 1722, he insisted that his only surviving child by his first marriage should return to live with him. He wanted to secure for her marriage to his young brother-in-law, the 3rd Duke of Bedford. In June 1723 Bridgewater sent for his daughter and all her belongings. Sarah made her granddaughter write that she was not well and could not travel. Bridgewater stormed into Marlborough House late one evening, with a footman's greatcoat flung over his shoulders and the air 'of being quite mad'. His first attempt thwarted, he turned up again the next morning, demanding his daughter. He prowled about in the hall 'with the most ill natur'd countenance that ever was seen in any humane Creature'. As soon as Ann Egerton was dressed she was carried off in hysterics in his coach.³⁹

Although under George I Marlborough resumed his position of Captain General of the Allied Armies, he was never again seriously consulted or trusted. He suffered a series of strokes and a third paralytic stroke ended his life while he was staying at the Great Lodge in Windsor Great Park. The Great Lodge was Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough's official residence as Ranger of the Great Park and the home in which she spent most of her time both before and after her husband's death.

The portrait of Marlborough painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller after his dismissal in 1712 demonstrates that he has 'suffered so much that he no longer looks himself'.⁴⁰ He became dependent on Sarah, although he took great

pleasure in witnessing the completion of Blenheim Palace and its furnishing and decoration. They were able to live there together in 1719, but only for three years. The portrait of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough painted by Michael Dahl in 1722 shows her dressed as a widow, after 44 years of married life. She was devoted to her husband and one of the few surviving letters from her to him, dating from after 1690 while he was away on campaign, reads touchingly⁴¹

Wherever you are, whilst I have life, my soul shall follow you, my ever dear Ld Marlborough and wherever I am I should only kill the time, wish for night that I may sleep and hope the next day to hear from you.

The Pacot ewer and basin were made by one of France's leading regional goldsmiths. They are the last and most spectacular pieces bearing Pacot's mark and the only set made for Marlborough to survive intact.

By 1714 Pacot's workshop in the Place du Lion d'or was taken over by his son-in-law Pierre Tiron. Having worked for the allies, Pacot's reputation in Lille was damaged and he was forced to return to Bordeaux, where he died in 1721. Tiron continued at that address until his death in 1731. The business was continued by his widow, Elie Pacot's daughter Pétronille Thérèse. The ewer of 1733

bearing her mark echoes that made by her father for Marlborough in 1712, but is simpler and substantially smaller. Like her father she also marked sets of candlesticks made in the Regence style.⁴²

The Pacot ewer and basin demonstrate the quality of early eighteenth-century French cast silver and provide an important comparison with the best English-made Huguenot silver. The V&A has no French silver of equivalent date or prestige, but only fine small domestic pieces including a rococo-style Lille-made chocolate pot of 1778/79,⁴³ a pair of Paris-made candlesticks 1714/15 with the maker's mark of Nolin,⁴⁴ a covered bowl by Le Bastier also made in Paris, 1711/12.⁴⁵ Both the candlesticks and the covered bowl demonstrate the early eighteenth-century Parisian vogue for decoration with medallion portraits, a feature which distinguishes the Pacot ewer and basin from the prototypes made by Pierre Harache in London 10 years earlier.

Marlborough acquired spectacular silver in order to demonstrate his political power and as an insurance against political misfortune. Displayed on the buffet in the dining room at Marlborough House, the Pacot ewer



34 Cartier (as note 20), vol II, p442; cat no104.

35 Robin Butler, *The Albert Collection*, 2004, p194.

36 A gold plate with the arms of the Elector of Hanover, Pierre Harache, London 1703/04 is recorded in a private collection.

37 Nicole Cartier gives the reference as Althorp Ms D/18, ff1 0–11 and dates the codicil to 1733–35.

38 It is possible however that they were given to Lady Ann Egerton on her marriage to the 3rd Duke of Bedford in 1725, as the

impaled arms of Bridgewater and Russell would have made this an appropriate gift. Ann remarried after her first husband's death in 1733, the 3rd Earl of Jersey, and the silver may have reverted to her grandmother and

then to her father, who lived until 1744.

39 Frances Harris, *A Passion for Government: The Life of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, 1991, pp248, 251.

40 Barnett (as note 2), p270.

41 Barnett (as note 2), p81.

42 Cartier (as note 20), vol I, pp349–51, 376; II, p587.

43 V&A M.16–1963.

44 V&A M.296 &A, 1912.

45 V&A M.67–1914.

10 Copper plate engraved for Elie Pacot, 1688–1713.
(Private collection, Lille)



and basin inspired another commission from one of Marlborough's close friends and colleagues in arms, Brig-Gen Pocock. The silver-gilt ewer and dish, beautifully engraved with Pocock's own coat of arms, were marked by the London Huguenot goldsmith Lewis Mettayer in 1720/21.⁴⁶ The basin has a similarly scalloped rim and the ewer a female mask handle, but instead of medallion portraits the rim of the basin and underside of the spout are embellished with cast scallop shells. Ten years later the dish and ewer were given by Pocock's widow to the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields. These are the ones that got away! Sold at auction they were acquired by the American private collector Paul Cahn and lent to the V&A for the opening year of the new Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries. Inspired by the connection between Pocock and Marlborough, Paul Cahn generously made the first private donation to the V&A's appeal for the Pacot ewer and basin.

The Pacot ewer and basin epitomise the patronage of a remarkable couple, distinguished not only by their political and artistic achievements and their founding of a family dynasty, but by their devotion to each other.

⁴⁶ Ellenor Alcorn, *Beyond the Maker's Mark, Paul de Lamerie Silver in the Cahn Collection*, 2006, pp46–47, cat no2.

This article is based on a fund-raising lecture delivered at Christie's London, 14 February 2007.

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For further information see Highlights of the Silver Collection on the

V&A website WWW.vam.ac.uk under

Collections/Metalwork/Silver/Object Highlights/The Marlborough Ewer and Basin.

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People

Profile of a distinguished French silver collector and scholar, in her own words

Nicole Cartier has been a friend of ours for more than fifteen years. She is a tall, striking woman, with an impressive record of research and publishing on the silver of northern France. With her daughter Isabelle, she investigated the career and English links of Elie Pacot of Lille, reconstructing his long-dispersed surtout (imitated by Garrards in the 1820s) and the Marlborough ewer and basin. Some Silver Society members will recall her warm hospitality when we visited the Douai silver exhibition.

Nicole's comments on French and Anglo-Saxon attitudes to funding research reflects two differing political and social systems; the Silver Society made a grant towards her monumental two-volume study of Lille goldsmiths last year. Several significant English connections have emerged from her research. The V&A's recent successful campaign to secure the Marlborough ewer and basin is a reminder of how interlinked our craft histories are, in terms of patrons and design transfer as well as the more familiar story of Huguenot immigrants.

Philippa Glanville

I was born in 1936 at Hucqueliers in the Pas de Calais in what they call 'la France profonde', about 30 kilometres from Boulogne-sur-Mer. On my father's side for at least four generations my family were woodworkers, cabinet makers and chairmakers; my mother's family had been smallholders since the eighteenth century. I still like and admire handwork. I was the first girl from my village to go to college. For seven years I was a boarder at Collège Angellier in Boulogne where I studied classics and then philosophy. I could not decide between a career teaching design or history. I took up the latter after my university years at Lille. The syllabus included a year for my secondary studies. I then taught history and geography at Arras girls' school (now the Lycée Gambetta) for six years before having my three children.

My history course ended with a research project in the archives of Lille, a necessary step for the DES (diploma of superior studies). This was the essential qualification for the *Agregation* (teaching qualification), although I left without finishing it. This research was to determine my future life. The subject was 'Artists and artisans of Lille 1714–90'. In French art history artists are architects, painters, sculptors and engravers. Artisans are those in the mechanical arts, goldsmiths, tapestry weavers, cabinet-makers, carpenters, blacksmiths... I assembled an enormous dossier on these different crafts. At that time I became intrigued by the Lille goldsmith François-Joseph Baudoux, a well-known chaser.

As a student, I went to the Lille sale room and had the chance to buy very cheaply an eighteenth-century Valenciennes soup spoon. I then haunted Drouot, the



Paris auction house, and the small salerooms of my region where they sold silver which I alone could identify. I then wanted to take my Lille research further, but having small children I decided to study the completely unknown goldsmiths of Arras. I then wrote a thesis at Lille University on *The goldsmiths of Arras*. This was published and sold out.

As soon as I started studying goldsmiths, I made cards with photos of all the silver I could find from all the northern French towns which had been part of the Low Countries until they were annexed by Louis XIV. So when the Douai mark plates were rediscovered, I started working in the Douai archives. *The goldsmiths of Douai* was published and an exhibition at the Museum brought out the story of the treasures of Douai College, formerly at Douai, then at Ware, and set up for the sons of the English Roman Catholic aristocracy. Then Valenciennes University asked me to join a project on late medieval Valenciennes, where I was able to sort out the town marks of Valenciennes and Brussels, so often confused. After all these interruptions, I was finally able to return to and complete my work *The goldsmiths of Lille*, published in 2006.

My interest in the goldsmiths of the Southern Low Countries continues. All their silverware, as well as their craft organisation, have a unity which I now feel I really understand. I want to be able to include the towns of Hainault (Valenciennes, Mauberge, Cambrai).

Research brings personal pleasure, but its goal is to advance Knowledge and above all to pass on one's discoveries. Identifying workshops and dating objects are the best ways to protect them against time; I recall with

emotion discovering a little reliquary of St Blaise, made in Arras in 1563. It had been thrown into the bottom of a sacristy cupboard and mended with iron wire. To photograph it, I had to fix the cross with chewing gum (*Orfèvrerie de la Jurande d'Arras*, p31).

One great excitement has been discovering the treasures of the College of Douai. Arthur Grimwade, whom I always enjoyed seeing on my London visits, put me on this track. I had the intense delight of discovering the goldsmiths' registers of Douai in the Lille archives and, in the Douai archives, the 1610 craft regulations missing from Lille. I was overjoyed to be able to reattribute to Lille a large sixteenth-century standing cup, attributed since 1911 to Tournai, and a windmill cup, so similar to an Antwerp-made piece, reconnecting our region with our Belgian cousins (*Les Orfèvres de Lille*, vol 2, nos11 & 13). A recent excitement has been the appearance on the art market of an unrecorded basin and helmet ewer, marked by the Arras goldsmith Gaspard Danorisse. [figs 1&2] Engraved with the arms of the States of Artois, (empowered to collect taxes by the King), its exceptional workmanship and the engraving indicate that this was a prestigious present to a significant personage, whom I am currently identifying. We know that exceptional commissions, funded by wealthy patrons, gave opportunities for leading makers to express their art. All these objects form part of my 'virtual collection', because when you discover and identify something, it becomes yours.

The physical properties of silver are not merely a secondary element in my research; it is important to touch, examine and study silver objects to understand them better. When they are part of your daily life, you can keep going back to them, brooding over the secrets of their manufacture, marks and inscriptions. Independently of its beauty or style, an object which is studied alongside the life of its maker, or even its owner, acquires a denser texture. This close relationship can be very rich even when the objects are quite modest.

The products of my region, Northern France, remain my preferred focus; although I am interested in all silver whatever its origin, my interest is admittedly more superficial. I am very attached to the unity of a collection, diversity disconcerts me, to build a collection is to follow a well-defined line which is not necessarily limited to its historical origin. I also like domestic silver of around 1900, particularly for its floral inventiveness. Contemporary silver strikes me as too cold, too refined to give aesthetic pleasure and I have no wish to own it.

Although our Belgian cousins have a longstanding interest in their silver, in France and particularly in the North, silver is considered a preserve of the wealthy. The political authorities regard this as an élitist subject, of little concern to their electorate, hence the difficulty of holding an exhibition on the subject. I have great difficulty persuading my peers that this is not only a noble

craft which demanded great skill as well as creativity, but that its role in urban life was important. In eighteenth-century Lille almost a hundred goldsmiths practised their craft and another two thousand people made a living through the trade.

The office for cultural affairs in Northern France pays for street festivals, popular theatre and dance, which are taken as representing 'Popular Culture' or instant culture, whereas publications or exhibitions of goldsmiths' work are the true future of our cultural patrimony.

With the status of an independent scholar, I have been part of a mixed research group within the CNRS-*Inventaire général*, with the object of publishing in the *Cahiers du Patrimoine* studies of regional goldsmiths in different regions. But this group has no access to funds to publish; it is up to the authors to find sponsors.

On French university courses goldsmiths are studied within socio-economic history. The dictionaries of marks have been the work of dealers such as Jacques Helft. Museums hold exhibitions with catalogues of objects. A retired curator of decorative arts from Lille Museum told me that, during his training at the Louvre, this speciality was dismissed contemptuously as studying 'soup tureens' (*casseroles*). With my background in history and history of art (I have also a DES in history of art), I wanted to marry the study of the goldsmiths with their work.

Recently the academic world has begun to take an interest in goldsmiths' work. In Belgium, a professorial chair has been set up at Louvain University. In Paris, Michèle Bimbenet-Privat, archivist, curator at Ecoen Museum and specialist in the goldsmiths' work of Paris, teaches at the University of Paris IV-Sorbonne, in a course on *objets d'art*. Certainly she is guiding young researchers towards goldsmiths' work. Research takes time, and both a driving passion and a willingness to commit long term are essential qualities for a subject in which answers may take years to emerge.

I strive to open the eyes of my contemporaries to the silver of our region. The great difficulty is still how to finance publications. We lack the English tradition of patronage, and the North has been for many years a Left-facing region where studying goldsmiths is not a priority. I have always appreciated the warm relations in England between researchers, museum curators and the art market, three worlds which in France have trouble working together. If silver studies are to flourish, we need collaboration from everyone, both those who toil away in the archives and those who see and handle objects.

Nicole Cartier, June 2007

(Opposite) Ewer and basin, Gaspard Danorisse, Arras, 1715/16.
Diameter of dish 50.5cm (19⁷/₈in); height of ewer 26cm (10¹/₄in).
Engraved with the arms of the States of Artois.
(Photos: courtesy Nicole Cartier)



Ewer and basin, Gaspard Danorisse, Arras, 1715/16. (See page 16)



*Tureen, cover, liner and stand, from the 'Penthièvre-Orléans' service, Thomas Germain, Paris 1733/34.
(Founders Society Purchase, Elizabeth Parke Firestone Collection of Early French Silver Fund, photo: © 2007 The Detroit Institute of Arts)
(See page 129)*



*Tea service, partly chased and gilded, ivory, agate, Germain Bapst and Lucien Falize. Height of teapot: 14.5cm (5³/₄in). Exhibited at the
Exposition universelle, Paris, 1889. (Les Arts Décoratifs, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; photo: Jean Tholance) (See page 78)*



*Fountain and cistern, silver-gilt, from the Berlin silver buffet, Albrecht, Lorenz II and Johann Ludwig I Biller, Augsburg 1695–98. (Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin, Schloss Köpenick, Inv no S.512/513 (photo: Pierre Abboud))
(See page 122)*



Epergne, Thomas Pitts I, London 1781/82. (See page 21)

An armorial epergne

The return of silver to Montacute House, Somerset

JAMES ROTHWELL

The display of a family's coat of arms, or elements of it, was commonplace on eighteenth-century silver, the two acting in powerful combination to indicate an owner's rank, wealth and even descent to his admiring guests. Few pieces of silver of any quality and size were without heraldic engraving and some particularly wealthy or imaginative patrons went a step further by commissioning plate with specific sculptural references to their armorial bearings. Famous amongst these was George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington, whose fountain (Peter Archambo, circa 1728) and associated cistern (Philip Rollos I, 1701/02, probably adapted by Archambo circa 1728) both incorporate cast handles in the form of boars whilst the fountain also sports a lion tap, the beasts respectively representing the supporters and crest of the Booth arms.¹ The Duke of Kingston's wine cooler (Philip Rollos I, 1699/1700) also has cast heraldic handles, in this case demi-lions, and when later in the century the 5th Duke of Bolton commissioned a rococo epergne from Parker & Wakelin the two delicately modelled hinds supporting the central dish were derived from his supporters.² In none of these or many other comparable cases did the heraldic sculpture make up more than an element of the decoration of a piece and all the more remarkable, therefore, is what Thomas Pitts I, that pre-eminent manufacturer of epergnes in the late eighteenth century, produced in 1781/82 for a country squire of only middling wealth, Edward Phelips (1725–97) of Montacute in Somerset.[fig 5]

The Phelips epergne is a full and perfect representation of the family crest, its conventional baskets and supporting arms rising not from the sinuous legs typical for the period but from a carefully detailed rectangular beacon and within that there is a sculpted silver flame, raised from sheet, the upper part of which can be replaced with an additional, larger basket.[figs 2&9] Ball feet represent the fact that the beacon of the crest is supposed to be wheeled and the only substantive variance from the heraldic description is that the wrought version is silver, rather than gold with naturalistic flames.³[fig 1] This exceptionally rare and important object was returned to Montacute last year and forms part of an interesting and well-recorded collection of plate that had entirely departed by the time of the National Trust's acquisition of the house in 1931.⁴

Montacute,[fig 3] that most gentle of the great Elizabethan show-houses with its warm, honey-coloured stone, was built in the last decade of the sixteenth century for Sir Edward Phelips (died 1614), a successful lawyer who served as Speaker of the House of Commons and Master of the Rolls under James I. The house was lavishly furnished, as is illustrated by an inventory drawn up on the death of his son, Sir Robert, in 1638.⁵ Plate to the value of £470 was then in existence including such show items as gilt basins with



1 The Phelips crest, as depicted on a Montacute bookplate. (National Trust, Montacute House; photo: NTPL)

2 (opposite) The Montacute epergne, Thomas Pitts I, London 1781/82. Height: 38cm (15in); weight: 3,463g (111oz). (National Trust, Montacute House; photo: Christopher Hartop/GGS Graphics)

1 For a detailed discussion and illustrations of these pieces see James Lomax and James Rothwell, *Country House Silver from Dunham Massey*, 2006, cat nos 12 & 13, pp58–62.

2 The Kingston wine cooler is in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. For the Bolton epergne (1760/61) see Ellenor Alcorn, *English Silver in the Museum of Fine Arts, vol II: Silver from 1697*, 2000, cat no 115, pp188–90.

3 The heraldic description of the crest, as given in

Burke's *Landed Gentry*, 1952 is as follows: 'A square beacon (or chest) on wheels or, filled with fire proper'. In pictorial form it is always shown in perspective and the foreshortening of the visible side gives the impression of a rectangle rather than a square.

4 Acquired by private treaty through Christopher Hartop for £14,000 with a grant of £7,000 from the V&A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund and the remainder from National Trust donations.

5 Somerset County Record Office (hereafter SCRO), Phelps MS, DD/PH/226/98, Inventory of Montacute House, 1638.

6 SCRO, Phelps MS, DD/PH/226/3, List of goods to be left to his son by Sir Robert Phelps, circa 1638. The list of plate was signed by Lady Phelps and others on 18 August 1638.

7 Malcolm Rogers, *Montacute House* (NT guidebook), 2000, pp19 & 34; SCRO, Phelps MS, DD/PH/226/8, Inventory of goods sold 2/10/1652 following an order of sequestration.

8 SCRO, Phelps MS, DD/PH/226/17, *Inventory of Montacute House, 1699*, '60 pounds of plate according to merchants weights [not itemised]'; DD/PH/226/17, 'Inventory of Goods in Montacute House', 2 January 1728/9; DD/PH/226/25, 'Inventory of the goods of [the late?] Sir Edward Phelipps'.

9 Rogers (as note 7), p20, Elizabeth Phelps had to pay her step-daughters £10,000 each; SCRO, DD/PH/226/114, 'A Short Sketch of Anecdotes in My Life', Edward Phelps (1725-1797), circa 1790. He notes that in 1736 his mother 'purchased' Montacute House and estate from his half-sisters.

10 SCRO, Phelps MS, DD/PH/251, Christie's London, 30 July 1895 lots 1-32. The coffee pot (lot 13) weighed 46oz 6dwt, the small waiter (lot 19) was 6in diam and weighed 6oz 7dwt, and the tankard, described as 'plain ... with dome cover, scroll handle and billet', weighed 28oz 12dwt.

11 Edward Phelps' account of his life (as note 9) gives the date of Elizabeth Phelps' move to London and her address in 1745; Sotheby's New York, 18 October 2001 lot 117, 'A pair of George I silver square salvers, Isaac Liger, London, 1724', 34.6cm (13½in) square, 2,923g (94oz). The central, contemporary arms are of Phelps with Phelps in pretence for Edward Phelps (1678-1734) whilst the smaller coats are later, each showing Phelps impaling another (one for Ellen Helyar, wife of William Phelps of Montacute (1823-89)). I am obliged to James Lomax for bringing these to my attention. Could they have been purchased to celebrate the birth of Edward and Elizabeth Philip's son and heir? Another Phelps piece to have been on the market in recent years, a beer jug by Robert Cooper, 1705/06 (Christie's London 29/30 November 2006 lot 707) bears the arms of Edward's uncle, William Phelps (died 1714).



3 Montacute House from the south-east.
(National Trust Photographic Library/Rupert Truman)

ewers, flagons and 'great silver salts' as well as plates, dishes, spoons, candlesticks, snuffers and a chamber pot. A slightly earlier but undated document, listing Sir Robert's 'Goodes I intend to leave my sonne' (his wife being bequeathed the main contents under a previous settlement), mentions in addition:⁶

Gilt and Plane Plate.
One Great Basson and ewer with armes
One Large Basson and ewer
three great Boules with covers
One douzen of silver dishes
2-pare of greatt silver candlesticks
One silver standidge [standish] with armes
The Plate weighs 800- and odd ounces ...

All is likely to have gone in the cause of the king during the Civil War, as was reputed to have been the case with the Montacute tapestries, and no silver was amongst the contents of the house sold in October 1652 to settle outstanding legacies from Sir Robert's will.⁷

Silver must have been re-acquired after the Restoration and was certainly in existence at Montacute on the death of Sir Robert's grandson, the second Sir Edward Phelps (1638-99), but probably departed with the family immediately thereafter and none is mentioned in two inventories of the house drawn up in 1728/9, after the death of his widow.⁸ The house appears to have become neglected and largely uninhabited during three decades of confusion about the division of the estate amongst Sir Edward's three daughters. His nephew, another Edward (1678-1734), tried to resolve matters by marrying the eldest of his cousins, Ann, but her untimely death and bequest of her share, whatever it might prove to be, to her own two daughters only complicated matters further. Edward, not to be defeated, married his uncle's second daughter, Elizabeth, and it was she, as a widow, who finally united all the interests in the estate, albeit at a considerable cost.⁹[fig 6] Edward and Elizabeth Phelps can never have had overly plentiful resources at their disposal but they do appear to have equipped themselves with a reasonable store of silver, if the items that survived to be sold in the following

two centuries is anything to go by. Amongst 'heirloom plate' sold in 1895 were a coffee pot by Peter Archambo, 1736/37, a small waiter by Robert Abercromby, also 1736/37, and a tankard by Edmund Pearce of 1714/15.¹⁰ Fashion had not been spared on the coffee pot and waiter, the former being described as having 'a band of strap ornament, shields, masks, and scroll foliage' and the latter 'with scalloped border and a band of strap ornament with masks, flowers & c'. In the absence of illustrations or knowledge of the whereabouts of these pieces it is impossible to say for certain that they had been in the family since manufacture but 1736 was the year that Elizabeth Phelips set up house in London (in 1745 she resided in Lincoln's Inn Fields) and a pair of salvers of 1724/25 by Isaac Liger, which were on the market in 2001, are also of high quality and bear her husband's arms.¹¹ [fig 4] In spite of the ongoing financial burden on the estate Elizabeth does not seem to have stinted where display was requisite and in 1746 her son and heir Edward's coming of age was celebrated at Montacute with 'unusual splendour and festivity':¹²



4 One of a pair of salvers, Isaac Liger, London 1724/25, bearing the arms of Edward Phelips (1678–1734) of Montacute. (Sotheby's New York)

The house was entirely full from top to bottom. The gallery had a Table laid its whole length which was nobly and completely filled both with viands and Guests. Two more tables were likely laid the length of the Hall which were likewise filled. The Parlour and Servants Hall were likewise full. A large ox of forty score was roasted before the House. Eight hogshead of cider and four of Strong Beer were given the populace: one Hogshead of wine and two of punch were Drank in the House; very little fuss or Disorder prevailed; & what was most surprising! Altho' the whole house was open and full in Every Part, nothing was afterwards missed or supposed to have been Lossed.

On the death of his mother in 1750 Edward Phelips [fig 5] inherited an estate severely encumbered by debt and it was probably not until after a bequest from his brother-in-law, Sir Gerrard Napier, in 1765 that he felt able to augment his plate.¹³ A further boost to his finances was received in 1772 when his aunt, Edith Mildmay, left him £20,000 and the reversion of her London house, and there were



5 Edward Phelips (1725–97) attributed to Thomas Beach, 1765. (The National Trust, Montacute House; photo: NTPL/Derrick E Witty)



6 Elizabeth Phelips (1689–1750) with her son Edward (1725–97), attributed to Bartholomew Dandridge, 1731. (The National Trust, Montacute House; photo: NTPL/John Hammond)

¹² Edward Phelips (as note 9).

¹³ According to Edward Phelips (as note 9) the debt stood at £22,000 and he immediately sold some land; Rogers (as note 7), p22.



7 The Clifton Maybank frontispiece added to the west front of Montacute in the 1780s. (NTPL/Rupert Truman)



8 The Common Parlour (now Dining Room) at Montacute, as refitted by Edward Phelips in the 1780s. The Phelips epergne now holds pride of place in this room. (NTPL/Rupert Truman)

numerous pieces amongst the heirloom plate sold in 1895 dating from the late 1760s and the 1770s. Works also began to be undertaken on Montacute House with a view to Edward taking up permanent residence there, which he did in 1783.¹⁴ Amongst his later purchases of plate was, of course, the Thomas Pitts epergne of 1781/82, and it seems very likely that he acquired this with residence at Montacute in mind. His unusual request of his goldsmiths, in terms of something so patently armorial in form, very much reflects his sensitive antiquarian approach to his ancestral seat. He was the first of his family for several generations to be able to afford significant alterations and in order to overcome the inconveniences of the sixteenth-century plan he added ground- and first-floor corridors to the rear of the house, which thenceforth became the entrance front. Rather than construct an entirely new façade to encase these additions, as might have been expected at this date, he acquired 'The Porch, Arms, Pillars and all the Ornamental Stone' from the front of another sixteenth-century house, Clifton Maybank in Dorset, and re-used them at Montacute.¹⁵ [fig 7] Inside, in addition to creating the corridors, he fitted out a new common parlour (altered circa 1915 and now known as the Dining Room) to the south of the Hall with a mock Elizabethan chimney-piece, probably in part made up from other items purchased from Clifton Maybank.¹⁶ [fig 8] The Phelips shield features prominently in this room and in the room that in the late eighteenth century served as a dining room (now known as the Parlour), and would have been complemented on the dining table by the epergne in the form of the fiery beacon crest.

Edward Phelips left Montacute in better shape than it had probably been since the early seventeenth century and the family finances were sufficiently stable for him to be able to designate 'the plate, household goods, furniture and books which shall be in Montacute House at the time of my death ... as Heirlooms' to pass with the entailed estate.¹⁷ The heirloom plate, as it was thereafter termed, was recorded in a list drawn up for William Phelips (1823–89) on reaching his majority in 1844 and was distinguished from the silver acquired that year as his personal property, from Lambert & Mawley.¹⁸ Those purchases were necessitated because William's uncle, John (1784–1834), had ordered by his will that his personal estate, including what silver he had bought, be sold for the benefit of his widow and daughter. After 1844 the collection, although respectable, was thin for a house on the scale of Montacute and most pieces were practical, for the dining table, with the epergne almost certainly being the most ornate.

Silver has always been a keen barometer of the vicissitudes of the landed classes and a further plunge in the family fortunes, occasioned by neglect during William Phelips' mental incapacity and compounded by agricultural depression, led to the first of what was to prove a series of contents sales, of 'Old English Silver forming part of the Phelips Heirlooms', by Christie's in 1895.¹⁹ A pick of the books and manuscripts followed in 1915 and after a temporary reprieve occasioned by the tenancy of Marquess Curzon of Kedleston the pictures, furniture and the rest of the books followed in 1929–30.²⁰ By no means was all of the heirloom plate listed in 1844 sold in 1895 and what remained, which must have included the epergne and the Liger salvers, was presumably held by the family into the twentieth century, with some pieces being disposed of privately over the years.

14 Edward Phelips (as note 9).

15 Edward Phelips (as note 9).

16 Rogers (as note 7), pp41 & 46, the profile portrait was removed in the twentieth century. Edward Phelips, in his account (as note 9) recorded acquiring 'the Chimney piece in the

Withdrawing Room, some windows, some wainscot, Lead, Marble & c' from Clifton Maybank, in addition to the stone for the façade.

17 SCRO, Phelips MS, DD/WHh No 48, Attested copy of the Will of Edward Phelips, dated 26 February 1794, attested 14 March 1797.

When the National Trust took possession of Montacute House in 1931 it was devoid of contents but the decision was taken that the rooms would not be shown empty. Over the years appropriate furniture, pictures, ceramics and tapestries were introduced, many of them from the bequest of the industrialist, Sir Malcolm Stewart (died 1951). An emphasis on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and a general sparseness reflect the likely appearance of the house for much of its later history and also blend well with the Phelps portraits, some of which were able to be repatriated together with a set of early eighteenth-century walnut cane-back chairs.²¹ Of the heirloom collections from Montacute, pictures and furniture were thus already represented in the modern displays but plate, which Edward Phelps had specifically referred to in his will, was not. There could hardly have been a more significant or appropriate piece than the armorial epergne to return silver to its rightful place amidst the rich but sparing collections at Montacute.

18 SCRO, Phelps MS, DD/PH/226/27, 'A List of Old Plate belonging to Montacute House'. This list includes the epergne. DD/PH/249, *Catalogue of the sale of the personal estate of John Phelps*, 25–29 August, 1834, and DD/PH/226/26, *Catalogue of the Goods belonging to the Entailed property in Montacute House taken July 25th 1834*. The epergne does not appear in either list.

19 SCRO, Phelps MS, DD/PH/251 (as note 10).

20 Copies of the catalogues are in the SCRO, amongst the Phelps MS. There had

been one sale before that of the silver, of the contents of the armoury (which had been in place outside the Library since the seventeenth century) in 1870.

21 Rogers (as note 7), pp32–33 & 54. In addition to the furnished rooms Montacute's Long Gallery and other second-floor rooms have, since 1975, served as an outpost of the National Portrait Gallery, containing sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraits.



9 The Montacute epergne (as fig 2) with the upper part of the flame removed and the central basket in its place.
(Christopher Hartop/GGS Graphics)

Portraits of silversmiths



1 Nicholas Sprimont.



2 Unidentified silversmith, and detail.



Known from a black and white photograph in the Witt Library, taken in the 1930s, the painting on the left was lost and existing under a false attribution in America until its rediscovery in 1991.

The painting [fig 1] depicts Nicholas Sprimont seated at a table holding scales in his left hand, behind him stands his wife Ann and before him his sister-in-law Susanna Protin. Six vases are depicted, all identifiable as Chelsea porcelain of the early 'Gold-Anchor' period dating from around 1759–60. The two vases on the table and the three beneath it are unfinished, having been fired but left in the white or with the 'Mazarine blue' or 'pea-green' ground colours only. The vase held by Susanna has emerged from the kiln finished with its enamel decoration added.

That Sprimont is seated may perhaps be explained by his swollen legs, he is known to have been in poor health and complained of lameness which eventually forced his retirement. Susanna is recorded as playing an active role in the business of the Chelsea manufactory.

The white pot pourri vase on the table is the only shape derived from a Vincennes original of the early 1750s and few of these expensive

items would have been imported into England at this period due to the outbreak of The Seven Years War in 1756. However it corresponds closely to one of the first purchases of Vincennes porcelain by an Englishman in Paris. The *Livre Journal or Day book* of the marchand mercier, Lazarre Duvaux, in October 1755, records Frederick St John, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, buying 'deux pots pourris assortis, à quatre pieds don't les cartouches peints à oiseaux'. Examples of finished Chelsea vases of this type with bird painting are known.

The most thorough investigation of the painting is that published by J. V. G. Mallet, 'A painting of Nicholas Sprimont, his family and his Chelsea vases', in *Les Cahiers de Mariemont, Hommage à Mireille Jottrand*, vol 24/25, 1993/1994, pp97–95. It is also illustrated in colour by Christopher Hartop, *The Huguenot Legacy*, London 1996, p51.

The painting is currently in a private collection in America.

The unknown silversmith in the other painting,[fig 2] remains to be identified. The painting is possibly French, dating from circa 1745–50.

Errol Manners

In past issues of the *Journal*, we have illustrated a number of portraits of silversmiths. You can find these listed in the cumulative index on the Society's website (under 'portraits').

It would be a fascinating project, for future *Journals*, to try and bring together all known images of silversmiths and designers, including paintings, drawings, engravings and photographs. Please contact me if you know of any portraits, including details of present location or where they have been published.

Vanessa Brett

Chains of office and a 'Jews Cup'

Richard Hoare's purchases from John Curghey and John Kemp in his mayoral year

VANESSA BRETT

The 1740s were uncertain times at home and abroad, despite increasing prosperity. Europe was at war over the Austrian succession and in 1744 Maria Theresa expelled the Jews from Prague, at which 'the Jews of Britain ... took vigorous action to relieve their suffering and remove its causes'. When London, England and the stock market were threatened by the Stuart uprising the following year, the Jewish community supported the House of Hanover and 'took a vigorous and honourable part' in upholding the nation's finances.¹ Political and financial challenges were coupled with problems arising from the climate, which affected agriculture: 'The dreadful winter of 1740 left paupers dying in the streets of London; half the nation's sheep died in the prolonged cold and the price of food shot up to record levels' which was followed by a 'roasting summer' in 1741.² There was famine in Paris in 1740. These experiences must in some measure explain why the Sephardi community in London continued to maintain its annual New Year gift to the Lord Mayor, which had begun in 1678/9, and justify what must even then have seemed a strange anomaly: that a section of society that included men such as Samson Gideon, who 'employed his great wealth and credit in support of the nation's finances'³ should nonetheless feel obliged to continue paying what appears to have been, in essence, protection money. The Jews were not alone in this: 'The Elders of the French and Dutch Churches used to wait on the Mayor yearly to desire his favour and protection and presented him with 2 silver flaggons'.⁴

In the early years the gift from the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation of Creechurch Lane synagogue (afterwards Bevis Marks) took the form of a large silver dish, accompanied by several pounds of sweetmeats, at a total cost of about £30. By the New Year of 1730/1 the tribute cost 50 guineas. The records do not always say whether cash or plate was presented. From 1717 the sweetmeats were replaced by chocolate: in 1718 this weighed half a quintal.⁵

Richard Hoare (1709–54), a banker in Fleet Street, was an alderman of the City of London in the early 1740s and Lord Mayor 1745–46. It seems that he was the first to choose a two-handled cup and cover as his mayoral gift.⁶ It may not be an object of great beauty, but it is of considerable historical interest. No explanation has yet been found for the oversized branch handles, but the chased panels on either side of the cup have been loosely linked to the figures on the recently completed pediment of the Mansion House, by Robert Taylor 1744.⁷ No doubt Hoare wished to commemorate the construction of the building, which began in 1739 and was completed in 1753. By 1757 the annual presentation obviously took place there:⁷

Wednesday, 19 Jan 1757. At Mansion House till 6 in the Evening.



1 Cup and cover, George Boothby, London, 1745/46. Height 39.2cm (15½in). In accordance with tradition, Sir Richard Hoare used the annual gift from the congregation of Bevis Marks to fund the cup, which he ordered through the retail silversmith John Curghey. It features in Hoare's accounts as 'Jews' Cup'.

(© The Jewish Museum, London)

1 Lionel D. Barnett (ed), *Bevis Marks Records, part 1*, Oxford 1940, p37–38.

2 Pat Rogers, *Henry Fielding*, London 1979, p129.

3 As note 1.

4 The Jewish Historical Society of England, *Miscellanies, part III*, London 1937, quoting a diary kept apparently by the Lord Mayor's secretary 1756–57 (Guildhall Library MS 100). The presentation ceased in the mayoralty of Alderman Perry, 1738–39.

5 I am most grateful to Miriam Rodrigues-Pereira for checking the records of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews' Congregation on my behalf (correspondence 2007). These are 'meticulous' in recording the annual cost to the congreg-

gation, and written in Portuguese. The Portuguese word *pratto* is used (dish or plate) which might also be *pratta* (silver). See also Barnett (as note 1). 1 quintal = 1 hundredweight = 100 kilograms.

6 The cup is now in the Jewish Museum, London. See Anthony Phillips, 'A Treasury of European Goldsmiths' Work' in R. Burman, J. Marin and L. Steadman (eds), *Treasures of Jewish Heritage, The Jewish Museum*, London 2006. The cup was owned by John Sebag-Montefiore in 1949, when it was described by Edgar Samuel in *Nosotros*, journal of the Congregation, no10, 1949; see p29 of this Journal.

7 Diary, as note 4.

8 The tipping of servants was reciprocal: the Congregation accounts record tips 'to the Lord Mayor's servants' as £1 5s from 1720/21 onwards; (Rodrigues-Pereira, as note 5).

9 Hoare archives, HFM/7/9. The paper in the Hoare archives tallies with the Congregation's accounts, which record £50 for the gift in the year 5506 (October 1745/46). 'The gift was presented annually until 1780. It was usually a silver salver, sometimes a silver basket, or £50 in cash. The Congregation's Accounts refer to a cup only in 1771/2 and 1777/8.' (Rodrigues-Pereira, as note 5).

10 HFM/7/9 (Jan-May 1746).

11 I am most grateful to Jennifer Marin for allowing me to weigh the cup and photograph the engraving; also for kindly allowing me the use of books at the Jewish Museum on my visit.

12 Thomas Smith and his partner, Richard Rand, of Fetter Lane (seal engraver) were among Dru Drury's creditors, see John Culme, 'The embarrassed goldsmith 1729-1831', *The Silver Society Journal*, no10 1998, p75. 'I went to enquire for Mr. Smith an engraver' appears in *Proceedings of the Old Bailey on line* (hereafter POB) t17780715-42. Interestingly the clerk to 'Mr Seddon, a cabinet-maker' gave evi-

dence in the same trial.

13 For example he paid for clocks at Hoare's house at Barn Elms to be wound and repaired, and then included the cost in his own invoices.

14 Gardner's other receipts are dated 21 April 1729 (£1 17s 6d), 4 September 1731 (a Christall Tryangle Seal Sett in Gold, £6 6s), and 20 March 1731 (£2 2s); HFM/7/9 (1729-31) (Jan-May 1746).

15 A2A website; Surrey History Centre, 371/5/30, sale of tenements in Reigate, 16 March 1731/32. Curghey had two buckles stolen in April 1732, POB t17320419-48.

16 Hoare archives HB/10/A/8/20. The shop on the south side was previously known as the Blue Boar and the Peacock. In 1749 Robert Gosling, book-seller, was between John Curghey (on the west) and James Seymour, goldsmiths, on the east. By 1795 it was no41 Fleet Street. See also Ambrose Heal, *The London Goldsmiths*, Cambridge 1935; Judy Jowett, 'The Warning Carriers', *Silver Studies, The Journal of the Silver Society*, no18 2005.

17 Old Bailey Sessions Papers, 13-16 July 1757, no.VI, pt.II for 1757, I am grateful to David Beasley for passing on this information, originally found by John Culme.

18 National Archives, PROB 11/826.

Received Deputation from Jews who brought present of £50 to desire favour and protection. Entertained them with Chocolate and their Servants with Wine, & gave their Servants £1.3.6.

It appears that the gift this time was in cash, presumably in a purse, which the Lord Mayor by tradition spent on a piece of plate, but of his own choosing.⁸ This is certainly what appears to have happened in Richard Hoare's mayoralty, for in the archives of Hoare's Bank 'Jews Cup £50' is recorded on a sheet of paper headed *1745 Cash Paid into Fleet S.*⁹

Of greater interest, however, is another sheet of paper that records how he spent the money and the actual purchase of the cup.¹⁰

The Right Honble Sr Richd Hoare Knt 1745		Dr To John Curghey			
		oz	dwt		
Mar 25	To a Chasd Cup and Cover	124	15	at 9s 0d	56 02 6
	To a Red Leather Case to Do				0 14 0
	To paid Mr Smith for Engraving Do				0 07 6
					57 04 0

May ye 1: 1746 Recd the Contents
of this Bill in full pr John Curghey

While there is no positive proof that the cup mentioned in this receipt is the cup now in the Jewish Museum, the evidence of weight is compelling. The cup that bears the mark of George Boothby [fig 1] was recently weighed at 3,875g, the equivalent of 124oz 12dwt.¹¹ But who were John Curghey and Mr Smith?



2 Detail of the cup in fig 1. The invoice from John Curghey lists the engraving as by a Mr Smith.

Only rarely has it been possible to put a name to engraving on silver, usually due to the engraving being signed or through related evidence such as pulls or books of designs. A Thomas Smith was among Dru Drury's creditors in the 1770s, and he possibly also appeared in a trial around that time, but an interval of some 30 years is probably too great a career span to be the same individual.¹² Be

that as it may, his rendition of the emblem of the London Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue is charmingly executed.[fig 2] On 15 September 1740 there is listed in another account from Curghey:

To paid Mr Smith for Engraving a Large Table £2 - 2 - 0

This is very likely referring to the

Large chasd Tea Table, wt 155oz 15d at 8s6d £66 - 4 - 0

that Curghey had billed for on 3 July 1740. It had a leather case costing 16s. There is an earlier payment to Smith of £1 3s 6d in May 1738 for unspecified engraving. It was not unusual for John Curghey to name someone whose bill he had paid in advance of submitting his own invoice, such as these payments to Smith.¹³ Richard Hoare also went directly to Charles Gardner for engraving, however: there are four bills from him, the latest one being for two guineas for 'tickets' dated 29 April 1746, when Richard Hoare was Lord Mayor.¹⁴

John Curghey was a retail silversmith and jeweller in Fleet Street. His dealings with Richard Hoare will, I hope, be the subject of a future article. He was apparently in the parish of St Dunstan-in-the-West by 1732,¹⁵ Heal records him at the sign of the Ship 1734-49, corner of Crane Court (which is on the north side) and opposite St Dunstan's church (ie on the south side of Fleet Street) in 1752, but deeds held in the Hoare archive show that he must have moved over the road by 1749.¹⁶ The premises were probably quite small, even today there are shop fronts in this particular stretch that are



only three paces wide, and very likely part of the group of buildings lost in the redevelopment of the bank in the early nineteenth century.

The evidence of numerous bills surviving at Hoare's reveals that Curghey sold a wide range of plate and jewellery and regularly undertook repair work. He is mentioned as having a lodger:¹⁷

this Mr. Bridge lodg'd for 14 years with Mr. Curgee, a goldsmith, in Fleet-street, and continued there when in town to his death...

and his will suggests that he lived comfortably;¹⁸ he left to his wife:

all the China Ware and household Linnen which I shall be possessed of at the time of my death together with the two Turkey Carpets the Gilt Leather Skreen the fire screen and Mahogany Card Table in my dwelling house in Fleet Street and do confirm to her the presents I have heretofore made her of a pair of Diamond Ear Rings a Diamond Stay hook a diamond hoop Ring and Gold repeating Watch and golden chain ...

Faced with this modest wealth of new material about John Curghey, a man who until now was virtually unheard of, it is easy to overlook George Boothby, whose mark is on the cup. His shop

'On one side of the cup a woman, wearing a mural crown (representing *The City of London*, based on a Greek statue of the City of Antioch) rests one hand upon Sir Richard Hoare's coat of arms and plunges a spear into a writhing, female nude (*The Rebellion*) at her feet. At her right hand, a child (*Prosperity*) pours fruit from a cornucopia, while a square-rigged ship (*Commerce*) anchors in the background. *The City of London* is supported on her left by *The River Thames* (based on a Roman statue of the River Tiber), a naked gentleman with a beard, who holds a musical instrument in one hand, and a gushing barrel in the other.

On the other side of the cup the scene is more peaceful, and Britannia, accompanied by her faithful lion, sits beside the arms of the Congregation, spear in hand, in a friendly and protective attitude.'

Edgar Samuel (1949), see note 6.



3 Detail of the other side of the cup in fig 1.
(© The Jewish Museum, London)

4 (left) Pediment of the Mansion House, London,
Robert Taylor, 1744.

was a bit further west, near Temple Bar, at the sign of The Parrott. He gained his freedom in 1719, having been apprenticed to Matthew Cooper. Grimwade quotes Boothby's bankruptcy, announced in the *London Gazette* on 24 October 1741.¹⁹ On the evidence of this cup he was clearly in business in 1746.

While Richard Hoare's brother Henry put his energies to creating and enlarging Stourhead, his estate in Wiltshire, Richard stayed closer to London and his interests as an alderman. This involved considerable expense, not least for entertaining. Richard Robinson, confectioner in New Bond Street, submitted the following bill in 1741 when Hoare was an alderman:

May 31	For a bill delivered	140	4	0
	For a Desert Served at Goldsmiths Hall pr agreement	10	10	0
June 19	For a desert consisting of Dry'd Sweetmeats and wet ice Creams, Jellys, Syllabub Ice Cream & Sorts Biskets fruit &c	4	15	0
		156	1	0

Rec'd August 16th

In Richard Hoare's private accounts the £140 4s is listed on 17 August that year 'for a desert at my Easter Entert'. As the Mansion House was still under construction it seems that, as a goldsmith, he used the Hall in Foster Lane for functions. In October 1745 the 'food for swearing in dinner' cost £48 0s 6d. Other expenses included in November a 'Bill of fees due to HM's Servants from those who receive the honour of Knighthood' amounting to £95 1s 6d.

It has not yet been discovered where he bought his alderman's chain, but Christopher Pinchbeck (also close by in Fleet Street) billed him, amongst other items for the following:

1740	Novr 7	for 2 double gilt swivels ²⁰ for a Aldermans Chain	0	10	6
	Decr 10	for 2 swivells for Aldermans Chain		10	6
1741	Novr 4	for 2 Doz of Sabled Brest Buttons		5	0

In June 1745 Hoare sold 'my Pearle Necklace' to John Curghey for £73 10s, buying instead in December 'for Lady Mayoress' diamond jewellery listed at £100, although this sum was possibly only an instalment towards a larger amount. But it is interesting that Hoare singled out the chains for his mayoral year in his accounts, making notes with differing calculations on several sheets of paper.

For example a sheet headed *Genl Acct of Mayr Exsps 1745*, includes:

To Sundry Disbt: as pr acct	£6226	12	7
To two Gold Chains wt 43.6.15 at 4s pr oz	170	13	0
	£6397	5	7

and another sheet of calculations includes, under 'By Particular Receipts', 'Gold for my Chains £149.8'.²¹ Overleaf, on the same page that lists 'Jews Cup £50', headed *1745 Cash Paid into Fleet S Hoare* calculates the gold chain at £170 alongside sums relating to linen £100, clothes £100, upholsterers £50, coach and harness £80, and Jourdain, tailor £100.

It seems that the gold for the chains came from different sources. 38oz (valued at £149 8s) came from Hoare's private or bank holdings but just over 5oz more was supplied by the maker of the chains, John Kemp,²² variously costed at £21 5s and £21 6s 6d – a total for the gold of some £170 13s. A further undated sheet seems made out for the bank's internal book-keeping requirements:²³

19 Arthur Grimwade, *London Goldsmiths 1697-1837*, London 1982.

20 According to Johnson's *Dictionary* (1758), a swivel is 'something fixed in another body so as to turn round in it': in this case a rotating seal.

21 Hoare's London. HFM/7/9 (1754).

22 He entered a mark as a smallworker in August 1724. Heal (as note 16) lists a Francis Ruffin 'from Mr Kemp' as a gold chain maker circa 1760, so it is assumed Kemp was a specialist chain maker. Grimwade (as note 19)

gives his address as Carey Lane, Cheapside.

23 Boxes of receipts HFM/7/9. Jan-July 1745 and 1749. 'Messrs & Arnold' refers to Hoare & Arnold. John Arnold began work at the bank in 1685 and was head clerk 1698-1722. His son Christopher was made a partner following the premature death of Henry and Richard's father, Henry, in 1725. It was a unique partnership within the firm. Victoria Hutchings, *Messrs Hoare Bankers, A History of the Hoare Banking Dynasty*, London 2005, pp34 & 56.

To Messrs & Arnold for					
38oz Gold at		149	8	-	
To Jno Kemp	for 5oz 6-15 at 4 pr oz	21	5	6	
To Fashion of my Chain	wt 29. 11.6 at 5 pr oz	7	10	-	
To a Swivell & Hook	wt 10dw 3gr		15	-	
To fashion Lady Mayoress Chain	at wt 13.5.6	5	10	0	
		184	8	6	

The sum of £184 8s is listed in Richard Hoare's personal ledger²⁴ as paid to 'Mrs Kemp' on 29 January 1745/6. Further detail is supplied in John Kemp's own invoice, submitted on the 19 October previous:²⁵

Bought of John Kemp
Octr 19th 1745

A Gold Chaine for My Lord Mayor	wt 29.11.6				
Fashion at 5 pr oz		7	10	6	
A Gold Chaine for yr Lady	13-5-6				
Fashion		5	10	-	
A Gold Swivel & Swivel hook	0.10				
Fashion			15	0	
		43	6	15	
Recevd Gold		38	0	00	
Gold Due oz		5	6	15	
		21	06	6	
Due in all		35	01	6	

Recvd Due ye 12 of the Rgt Honbl Sr Rich
Hoare Knt & Lord Mayor the Contents
of the Bill & all Demd
John Kemp

It is interesting to see how carefully the quantity and cost of the gold were recorded. The eventual fate of the chains is not known, but Richard Hoare's other invoices, including many from John Curghey and the toyman William Deards, show that he regularly handed them old things in part payment. The worth of the chains as bullion would surely have overridden any sentimental value and they were probably melted, if not by Richard, then by a future generation.

It seems that Hoare was not entirely satisfied with the chains, for a week after their delivery he returned to Kemp to have them coloured,²⁶ as he had apparently done the previous May for another chain. This bill, submitted in February 1745/6 was not paid for nearly four years.

Sr Richd Hoare Knt Dr to John Kemp
Feby 10th 1745

To mending a toothpick Case	0	01	6
May 6 To Colouring yr Chaine	0	10	6
Oct 28 To Colouring yrs & yr Ladys Chane	0	15	0
	£1	6	0

Recvd Decr 8 1749 the contents in full pr John Kemp

Banker that he was, Richard Hoare sometimes paid his bills promptly but at other times kept tradesmen waiting for an inordinate time. The larger bills were paid quicker than small ones. Many of the receipts are initialled 'RH' presumably as authorisation for payment, and it appears that many were rounded down to the nearest pound on receipt, but whether this was Hoare driving a hard bargain, or the shopkeeper offering a discount, is unclear.

It was and still is the practice at Hoare's that a partner should be resident at the bank, and from the time he became a partner in 1731 until his death in 1754, Richard lived in what was outwardly a fairly

24 The information in the archives at Hoare's comes from two different sources, firstly box files containing invoices and a variety of miscellaneous papers (HFM/7/9), and secondly Richard Hoare's private account book 1731-55 (HFM/7/13) which lists, under DR and CR, his dealings with numerous tradesmen.

25 The mayoral year runs November to November.

Readers are reminded that the Julian calendar was still in use, January and February 1745 came *after* October 1745. See page 2 of this journal.

26 Colour of chains also features in accounts from Curghey, Sept/Oct 1740, who charged for colouring 'a Gold Neck Chaine 5s' and 'a Large Gold Chaine' 10s 6d. (Hoare archives, family bills 45-46.)



5 Hoare's bank 1829, before it was rebuilt, by T.H. Shepherd.

27 Hutchings (as note 23) p74.

28 *ibid* for a summary of the running costs of the Fleet Street household and information on the family's other properties.

29 They were apparently not blood relations.

30 See Vanessa Brett, 'The great (and lesser) toyshops', *Silver Studies, The Journal of the Silver Society*, no16 2004. Research into toyshops, including Deards and Bertrand, is ongoing.



6 Sir Richard Hoare, Lord Mayor 1745–46, by John Wootton. He is seen riding through Temple Bar in Fleet Street, with St Paul's Cathedral positioned inaccurately for visual effect. (The National Trust)



7 Arms of Hoare, from the cup in fig 1.

typical town house opposite St Dunstan-in-the-West, that was the bank's headquarters from 1690.[fig 5] He worked alongside his brother Henry (1705–85), nicknamed 'Magnificent', who outlived Richard (who was four years younger) by 31 years. Under their care the bank prospered and expanded. The shop, where the business was transacted, was an integral part of an essentially domestic setting. Richard paid rent for the house and shop but was given an allowance of £230 a year for all household expenses.²⁷ The daily life of the family lies in the household accounts that survive in the archives: the food they ate, the clothes they wore, how they travelled, the cost of their rubbers (dusters) and saucepans, and the wear and tear of daily use on instrument cases, buckles, bottles, pens and nail scissors. Some of this would have been personal expenditure of the partners but many of the more mundane costs must have been to do with running the shop and the miscellaneous necessities required by staff. A plan of the building, before it was rebuilt in the early nineteenth century, shows the Fleet Street frontage to have been 56ft 6in. The building not only housed the Hoare family but also their chief clerk, Mr Wray, and a 'Mr Pudner' (the latter's rooms occupied one bay, ie nearly a quarter of the street frontage). There was more than one internal yard and substantial strong rooms – so space must have been tight. Shepherd's drawing [fig 5] does not quite accord with the plan just quoted but nonetheless shows the group of buildings that housed Hoare's as well as Curghey, William Deards and the goldsmiths James Seamer and George Houston (bills from whom also survive), the latter just to the east, next to Mitre Tavern passage.

Richard was no doubt proud to have attained the position of Lord Mayor in 1745–46 which, due to the activities of Charles Stuart, was to prove a particularly arduous year. It is fitting that his portrait by John Wootton [fig 6] should show him in full mayoral dress 'preparing to defend London against the Jacobite rebels'. In 1750 Richard bought Barn Elms, in Surrey, which was inherited by his elder son, also Richard (born 1735), a partner in the bank.²⁸

His younger son Henry (born 1744) married in 1765 Mary, daughter of the painter William Hoare,²⁹ a close friend of Paul Bertrand (also of Bath) whose father-in-law was William Deards.³⁰ The family banked with Hoare's. Before Deards moved from Fleet Street in 1742, Richard Hoare was a very regular customer of his toyshop. It was while I was in pursuit of their activities, that I discovered the scraps of paper relating to the 'Jews cup' and John Curghey. A temporary digression proved irresistible but will I hope lead to a greater understanding of the subtle distinctions between the stock of 'toy-men' like Bertrand and Deards and a 'silversmith and jeweller' such as John Curghey.

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Oliver St George's passion for plate

ALISON FITZGERALD

In 1721 an Irish pamphlet parodied *The Short Life, Sudden Death, and Pompous Funeral of Michy Windybank, Only Child to Sir Oliver Windybank*.¹ Its title referred to a recently failed attempt to secure royal approval for an Irish national bank. The satirist's target, Oliver St George, had been one of the scheme's foremost advocates.² Banks in their infancy were viewed with circumspection, as were the motives of speculative backers like Oliver St George (1661–1731). In a parting blow the author proposed that the hearse should be draped with 'the insolvent bonds of Sir Oliver, blotted and dyed black', a barbed acknowledgement of very real concerns surrounding the security of deposit banking.³ During the same period St George's brother criticised him for unscrupulous rack-renting, and Thomas Prior numbered him with Ireland's infamous absentees.⁴ Though his tenants may have suffered, he did not deny himself. Detailed accounts and correspondence chronicle regular plate purchases by Oliver St George and his wife in Dublin and in London, and are exceptional in their detail for records surviving from Stuart and Hanoverian Ireland. They reveal the network of goldsmiths that they patronised (including correspondence and accounts with the celebrated David Willaume I), the types of objects acquired and, in some cases, the negotiations involved.

Careful calculations made by Oliver St George, or on his behalf, supplement standard receipts from the goldsmiths who supplied him in the period 1695–1729.⁵ Together they provide the names of craftsmen and retailers, often the dates on which objects were bought, their individual weights, and, in many cases, the breakdown between metal costs and the charges for fashioning. Unfortunately, the objects themselves have proved more elusive. The fact that the St Georges had no children complicates the descent of their assets and, more crucially, the fact that Oliver St George's affairs ended up in Chancery suggests a probable bankruptcy. By the time of his death in 1731 much of his plate had been impounded.⁶ However, it is hoped that with the benefit of the material gathered here, some of his plate may be identified.⁷ [fig 1]

Oliver St George was the younger son of Sir Oliver St George and Olivia, daughter of Marcus Beresford of Coleraine.⁸ Educated at Trinity College Dublin, he served intermittently in the Irish Parliament as MP for Carrick and Dungannon respectively between

1 Arms of the St George family: Arg. a chief az over all a lion rampant gu. ducally crowned or, armed and langued of the second. (Burke's Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies, 1841)

Crest: a demi-lion rampant gu. ducally crowned or
Motto: Firmitas in coelo (Fairbairn)

NB. Bear in mind that at this date the field might show colours but the charge (ie the lion) is unlikely to be engraved with colours, unless added at a later date. The arms may also be differenced with a crescent.



Abbreviations:

CGD	Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin
NA	National Archives, Kew
NLI	National Library of Ireland
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
VAM	Victoria & Albert Museum
OSTG a/c	Accounts of Oliver St George

1 Anon, *An Account of the Short Life, Sudden Death, and Pompous Funeral of Michy Windybank, Only Child to Sir Oliver Windybank*, Dublin, 1721.

2 On this bank proposal, see M. Ryder, 'The Bank of Ireland, 1721: land, credit and dependency', *Historical Journal* 25 (1982), pp557–82. Petition of Lord Abercorn, Lord Boyne, Sir Ralph Gore, Oliver St George and Michael Ward in relation to the specie shortage in Ireland, mid 1720s (NLI, Ms. 2256, p7). These moneyed speculators were proposing to 'charge their estates & engage their fortunes to raise a fund of credit for circulating bills'. I am grateful to Ivar McGrath for this reference.

3 Anon, 1721, p7.

4 Toby Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure: Lives and Possessions in Ireland, 1641–1770*, New Haven and London 2004, p144. The papers under review are in the National Archives, London: Material relating to Oliver St George (1661–1731) (NA, C110/46).

5 This provides certain problems with interpretation since individual goods can be described in a variety of different ways in the records. Similarly the weight given for individual objects, and even the cost, can vary slightly in multiple records of the same objects. Therefore the goldsmiths' accounts, where they survive, have been taken as the most reliable record and have been used where possible for the purposes of the table in the Appendix.

6 Barnard (as note 4).

7 It is also possible that these objects, if they do survive, no longer retain their original heraldry.

8 Edith Mary Johnston-Lijk, *History of the Irish Parliament 1692–1800*, vol 6, Belfast 2002, pp216–17; J. Burke, *The Landed Gentry of Ireland*, rev. edn, London 1912, p618; and Burke, *Dictionary of the Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage*, rev. edn, London 1964, p461.

* The date span in Table 1 refers to the dated receipts and accounts in St George's papers. The weight of objects was not always recorded in St George's accounts.

9 Barnard (as note 4) pp143–44. Mary St George's influence must be a matter of supposition. Almost inevitably the accounts from suppliers are directed to her husband, suggesting that he was the initiator of the commissions. This was not necessarily the case. As will be shown, her will illustrates her continuing concern with specific items, including several of plate, and Barnard's evidence suggests that she was a forceful and independent character. It is highly likely that she directed him into the fashionable display and high living documented in these accounts.

10 Johnston-Lijk (as note 8) vol 6, p216.

11 Thomas Prior, *A List of the Absentees of Ireland*, Dublin 1729, p7.

12 *Journals of the Irish House of Commons*, vol 3 (1716), pt. ii, pp113–14. The overall loan amounted to £50,000. I am grateful to Ivar McGrath for this reference.

13 Barnard (as note 4), p143.

14 Irish gentry repaired to England not just for leisure and diversion, but also sometimes to escape the burden of commitments that came with a certain social position.

15 OStG a/c, 30 July 1703, and undated, (NA, Ms. C110/46/155, and C110/46/180).

16 Arthur Grimwade, *London goldsmiths: Their marks & lives*, 3rd edn, London 1990, p534.

According to Grimwade, Harache's greatest rival was David Willaume.

17 Philippa Glanville, *Silver in England*, London 1987, p95. Glanville clarifies that their preservation was due to their continuing usefulness.

18 The Earl of Warrington, had one supplied by David Willaume, whom St George also supported. Beth Carver Wees, *English, Irish & Scottish Silver at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute*, New York 1997, p270. See also J.F. Hayward, 'The Earl of Warrington's Plate', *Apollo*, July 1978, pp32–39, and Glanville (as note 17), p93. Warrington spent lavishly spent on plate from the 1690s onwards.

19 J.F. Hayward, *Huguenot Silver in England 1688–1727*, London 1959, p41, describes salvers as 'dishes, sometimes of considerable size and weight', which by this period had 'become simply large and decorative pieces of side-board plate'.

20 The Irish squire Sir Thomas Taylor also recorded his purchase of a 'large salver' around this time, which was comparable in weight to St George's piece. *Accounts of Sir Thomas Taylor*, 14 December, 1706, (NLI Ms. 25, 386) p159. For more on Taylor see, Johnston-Lijk (as note 8), vol 6, pp379–80; and H.A. Doubleday, D. Warrand, and H. De Walden, *The Complete Peerage*, vol 6, London 1929, p426.

1703 and 1731. As such this made him one of the 300-strong parliamentary squires who enjoyed average incomes in excess of £1,500. A favourable marriage to the Irish heiress Mary Knox in 1701 bolstered his finances.⁹ The couple's lack of heirs may have encouraged, or at least facilitated their enthusiastic spending. In 1713 St George's income was estimated at £1,200 per annum;¹⁰ 16 years later Thomas Prior categorised him as among those who live 'generally abroad', reckoning his annual income at around £2,500.¹¹ He was clearly wealthy, since he lent the Irish government £3,000 in the first national debt loan of 1716, and the St Georges appear to have spent money freely.¹² Toby Barnard has speculated that Mary St George's dissatisfaction with life in Ireland may have prompted the couple's move to London, where they had settled more or less permanently by the mid 1720s.¹³ However, financial difficulties may have been an alternative reason. They had lost an unspecified sum of money in the South Sea Bubble and it is not impossible that they were avoiding creditors.¹⁴

Object Category	Weight (Troy Ounces)	Cost (£ s d)
Beer, Wine & Punch	182:13:0	£117:0:0
Dining	2619:5:8½	£928:1:1
Coffee, Chocolate & Tea	544:19:0	£193:4:9¾
Lighting	378:8:0	£135:11:2½
Toilet & Desk	57:19:0	£20:13:0
Jewellery & Diamonds	-----	£148:4:0
Miscellaneous	150:10½:0	£112:17:4½
Engraving & Maintenance	-----	£9:10:9¾
Total	3933:14½:2:8½	£1665:2:3½

Table 1. Plate purchased by Oliver St George 1695–1729.*

When acquiring plate Oliver St George bought new and second-hand, bespoke and at auction. He bought in Dublin and from London, even before moving there, suggesting that he either visited London regularly or used an English agent. Like many of his British and Irish counterparts he formed his collection gradually, though he was atypical in making annual or biannual purchases over a period of more than 30 years. Table 1 summarises the types of goods that he bought in broad object categories. Not surprisingly, it reveals a good range of domestic plate, for washing, dining and fashionable display.

In 1703, two years after his marriage, he purchased a silver tea kettle and stand in London, no doubt to please his wife.¹⁵ It came from the goldsmith Pierre Harache, a craftsman noted for his high standards of design and execution, and indicates the couple's alertness to fashion.¹⁶ As Philippa Glanville has observed, 'kettles with lamps were essential to elegant tea-making and a relatively large number have survived from 1700 onwards'.¹⁷ Harache's kettle was soon supplemented with other appropriate tea-wares. In 1704 the Dublin goldsmith George Lyng supplied St George with two silver tea canisters, but as there is no specific mention made in the accounts of a silver tea tray he may not have acquired one.¹⁸ A 'large cast salver', bought in Dublin in 1702, may have served as display plate,¹⁹ but while the description sounds impressive, at 49oz it could not have been exceptionally large and its use as a general salver in the tea equipage cannot be discounted.²⁰

St George 'dined in plate', an unequivocal sign of status and the preserve of a narrow élite. A satirical poem published in Dublin in 1727 alluded to the direct correlation between plate

and status in the public imagination;²¹

Lucia thinks happiness consists in state
She weds an idiot; but she eats in plate.

As Table 1 reveals, the overwhelming majority of the St George's plate was intended for use in dining. Apart from small practical objects like flatware and snuffers, he also acquired more substantial pieces. While still living in Ireland he purchased his dinner plates in London, unlike his Irish counterpart Sir Thomas Taylor.²² Pierre Platel, the goldsmith who supplied them, included the Prince of Wales among his clients.²³ Having settled his bill for those in October 1714 he paid Platel for dishes and plates in separate transactions the following year.²⁴ Soon afterwards he augmented his service with second-hand plates, formerly Lord Galway's.²⁵

In 1717 St George asked the Dublin goldsmith Peter Gervais to supply a small equipage including scissors and thimble cases.²⁶ He was 'forced to send the things to London to be frosted'²⁷ when



2 Pair of snuffers, Peter Gervais, Dublin 1717/18.
(National Museum of Ireland, Dublin)

Gervais was unable to match the frosted finish of a toothpick case supplied by St George. Ironically, toothpick cases were among Gervais' regular stock in trade.²⁸ Surviving assay records link Gervais to modest outputs of plate and few objects survive bearing his mark.[fig 2] Nevertheless, he was able to supply St George with some large items of plate in 1719 and 1720.²⁹ He employed at least six apprentices, which testifies to a healthy commercial concern.³⁰

Over more than three decades Oliver St George patronised an extensive network of goldsmiths. Accounts with more than 20 goldsmiths and jewellers in Dublin and London survive. Those to whom

21 Anon, 'Satire VI, On Women, Inscib'd to the Right Honourable the Lady Elizabeth Germain', in *Love of Fame: The Universal Passion in Seven Characteristical Satires*, Dublin 1727.

22 OStG a/c, 1714, (NA, C110/46/165); and *Accounts of Sir Thomas Taylor*, 4 March, 1727 (NLI, Ms. 25, 386, pp7 and 160).

23 Hayward (as note 19) p11, notes that 'a large order for a complete service of plate for the use of George Prince of Wales, later George II, went to Pierre Platel early in George I's reign'.

24 OStG a/c, 30 April 1715, (NA, C110/46/171); and 30 September 1715, (NA, C110/46/174).

25 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/130, NA, C110/46/139); 4 March 1716 (NA, C110/46/130).

26 OStG a/c, 10 February, 1717, (NA, C110/46/198-9).

27 Thomas Cosnett, *The Footman's Directory and Butler's Remembrancer*, London 1825, p27, recommends 'silver dishes, salvers, waiters, bottle-stands, ice-pails, and things of that kind, are difficult to clean, as there is generally a great deal of rough ornamental work in some parts

of them ... The parts which are rough, or what is called frosted, must be cleaned with the hardest brushes'.

28 A notice in *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 2-6 November 1731, advertises the sale of Gervais' stock and specifies toothpick cases along with jewellery and other items. Gervais became free of the Guild in 1715.

29 OStG a/c, 22 April 1720, and 18 April 1718 (NA, C110/46/216), and (C110/46/226). These included, among other items two cups, a basin and 'a large gadrooned dish'. The records for the dish reveal the usefulness of documentary evidence in reconstructing networks of allied traders such as engravers or chasers, who worked so closely with the goldsmiths who actually supplied the objects. While Gervais delivered the piece, Dubliner Nathaniel McMurray engraved it on St George's behalf. See OStG a/c, 30 April 1720, (NA, C110/46/217).

30 According to Guild records, Gervais took six apprentices between 1714-28; *Enrolments of Apprentices September 1704-1 March 1752, Freeman and Quarter Brothers 1703-60*, CGD, Ms.51.



3 Toilet service, silver-gilt, David Willaume, London circa 1722, known as 'The Kildare Toilet Service'.
(Ulster Museum, Belfast)

4 Table knife, David Rommieu, Dublin 1706/07. (Church of Ireland Representative Body, Dublin)



he returned on more than one occasion included George Lyng and Peter Gervais in Dublin and David Willaume and Augustin Courtauld in London.³¹ Willaume would later supply the Irish peers Lord Meath and Lord Kildare as well as establishing a reputation as one of London's finest practitioners.³² In 1722 he provided a silver-gilt toilet service, which marked the birth of the 20th Earl of Kildare and future Duke of Leinster.³³ [fig 3]

Although St George (a Protestant) appears to have spread his custom very widely, he consistently favoured Huguenot goldsmiths, both in Dublin and in London,³⁴ which seems to have been a conscious policy, and he did not solely favour prominent or well-established craftsmen. The fact that minor individuals, like the Dublin goldsmith David Rommieu, feature in his accounts, suggests that a deliberate focus guided his choice of supplier. Between 1708 and 1710 Rommieu supplied St George with a teapot and stand, a basin, some cutlery and a pair of silver candlesticks. An exceptionally small number of objects survive from Rommieu's workshop.³⁵ [figs 4 & 6] An engraved brass inkstand in the possession of the Dublin Goldsmiths' Company marks a presentation by him to the Guild in the early eighteenth century. [fig 5] According to assay records his output for 1708-9 was less than 1,000 oz.³⁶ By 1710-11, this figure had fallen to 104 oz, an unviable level.³⁷ The few objects bought by St George equated to almost a fifth of Rommieu's output in the more productive year.³⁸ Either he had additional business interests, was supplying other goldsmiths with unmarked wares, or was in some financial difficulty. It is also possible that he was primarily a retailer.³⁹

J.F. Hayward suggested that in the first half of the eighteenth century many of the British nobility seem to have preferred the work of Huguenot goldsmiths and that 'high quality and reasonable prices were doubtless among the reasons'.⁴⁰ Hayward cites as an example the Earl of Warrington who, like St George, favoured Huguenot craftsmen almost exclusively. During this period Dublin and London had the largest concentration of Huguenot goldsmiths in the British Isles, although relative to indigenous craftsmen they were still in the minority. Between 1675 and 1710, 35 Huguenot goldsmiths were recorded in Dublin and 120 in London. From 1710-80 these figures increased to totals of 78 and 223 respectively.⁴¹ In 1700 the Dublin Goldsmiths' Guild complained to the Lord Mayor about the encroachment of 'foreigners' on their privileges.⁴² A petition submitted to the London Goldsmiths' Company by 'several

31 This accords with comments made by the London goldsmith Joseph Brasbridge, who believed that from the retailer's perspective, courtesy, good customer relations and the personal touch were decisive in encouraging customer loyalty. In his autobiography Brasbridge cited the example of Lord Stanhope, who repaid a small kindness on the former's part by becoming a loyal patron of his shop. See Joseph Brasbridge, *The Fruits of Experience; or Memoir of Joseph Brasbridge Written in his 80th and 81st*

years, 2nd edn, London 1824, pp22-24.

32 Barnard (as note 4) p143; and Ellenor M. Alcorn, *English silver in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Vol II: Silver from 1697 including Irish and Scottish silver*, Boston 2000, pp72-75.

33 Elise Taylor, 'Silver for a Countess's Levee: The Kildare Toilet Set', *Irish Arts Review* 14, 1998, pp115-24. The toilet service was a gift from the 19th Earl to his wife. Taylor clarifies that it was ordered in 1720 but took two years to complete.

34 A number of publications have examined the Huguenot contribution to the mercantile life of both cities. See for example David Dickson, 'Large-scale developers and the growth of eighteenth-century Irish cities', in P. Butel & L.M. Cullen (eds), *Cities and merchants: French and Irish perspectives on urban development, 1500-1900*, Dublin 1986, pp109-25; Joan Evans, 'Huguenot Goldsmiths in England and Ireland', *Huguenot Society's Proceedings* 14, 1933, no4; Christopher Hartop, *The Huguenot Legacy: English sil-*

ver. 1680-1760 from the Alan and Simone Hartman Collection, London 1996; Hayward (as note 19); Grace Lawless Lee, *The Huguenot Settlements in Ireland*, London 1936; and Tessa Murdoch et al, *The Quiet Conquest: The Huguenots, 1685-1985*, London 1985.

35 Tony Sweeney, *Irish Stuart Silver*, Dublin 1995, p209-10 lists 17 pieces, 12 of which are forks.

36 Thomas Sinsteden, 'Surviving Dublin assay records. Part 2 (1708-48)', *The Silver Society Journal*

no16 2004, pp87-101, p90.

37 *ibid.* For information on proposed networks of association between the Dublin Huguenot goldsmiths David Rommieu, Francis Girard and Peter Gervais, see Kurt Ticher, 'Three Huguenot goldsmiths in Dublin in the early 1700s', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, July-December 1972, pp73-80.

38 At least according to the assay records. The above calculation refers to goods which St George purchased between 1708-09.



5 Inkstand, brass, David Rommieu, Dublin circa 1700.
(Goldsmiths' Company, Dublin)



6 Cup, David Rommieu, Dublin, 1708/09.

working goldsmiths' highlights the latter's concerns relative to the aggressive pricing of some immigrant craftsmen:⁴³

That by the admittance of necessitous strangers, whose desperate fortunes obliged them to work at miserable rates, the representing members have been forced to bestow much more time and labour in working up their plate than hath been the practice of former times, when prices of workmanship were greater.

St George's accounts indicate that he was assiduous in recording the intrinsic value of the objects he acquired.⁴⁴ After buying his second-hand dinner plates in 1716, the marginal disparity between their original scratch weights and current weights was carefully recorded.⁴⁵ Although little more than an ounce was lost in having old heraldry removed and replaced, the loss was still registered.⁴⁶ Another document distinguishes objects made from 'Old English Sterling', 'Irish Sterling' and 'New English Sterling', revealing a shrewd alertness to intrinsic metal values.⁴⁷ While Britannia or 'New English Sterling' was compulsory in England between 1697 and 1720, it was not introduced in Ireland.

In 1717 David Willaume wrote to St George in Ireland about an order he had placed for a set of silver sconces.⁴⁸ Willaume's letter confirmed that part of the work was 'almost finished'. It also clarified his prices, and explained why the full order was not yet ready:⁴⁹

39 The latest dated work recorded by Sweeney (as note 35) p209 is for 1710/11. Sinsteden (as note 36) p90 notes a modest amount of plate assayed for him in the following year.

40 Hayward (as note 19) p37.

41 Evans (as note 34).

42 Minutes, 4 May 1760, CGD, Ms. 40, p8.

43 Hayward (as note 19) p15.

44 One document among his accounts is specifically titled 'an account of ye weight and cost of my plate'. OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/179).

45 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/139). It is not entirely clear when scratch weights were marked on objects. It may have been at the time that a first inventory was made.

46 OStG a/c, n.d., NA, C110/46/139. In keeping with the patron's Huguenot bias, the task of engraving the plates had been entrusted to Mary Girard, widow of the Dublin Huguenot Francis Girard, who continued her husband's business after his death in 1710. On women in the goldsmiths'

trade, see Philippa Glanville and Jennifer Faulds Goldsborough, *Women Silversmiths 1685-1845: Works from the Collection of the National Museum of Women in the Arts*, exhib cat, London and Washington 1990.

47 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/179). For more on the Britannia standard see J.S. Forbes, *Hallmark, A History of the London Assay Office*, London 1999, pp159-84. A silver shaving pot purchased in London in 1695 was Sterling, yet when he returned to the same

firm five years later the new, higher standard was in place. OStG a/c, 1695-1700, and n.d. (NA, C110/46/143-147, and C110/46/179). These items were supplied by Fowles and Wotten. For more on this partnership, see David Mitchell, 'Dressing plate by the "unknown" London silversmith "WF"', *The Burlington Magazine*, 1993, pp386-400.

48 David Willaume to Oliver St George, 9 July 1717 (NA, C110/46/204-05). These have not been included in the table in the

Appendix since there does not appear to be any record of payment for them. Either the goods were not accepted or St George did take delivery of them, but the receipt has not survived. St George's will (NA, PROB 6/644/132) shows that he had land in Counties Limerick, Galway and Roscommon left to him by his father.

49 David Willaume to Oliver St George, 19 July, 1717 (NA, C110/46/204-05).

Sir

In answer to your two letters wich [sic] I receivd I give an Exact account of those things that were bespoke when you were in London, wich are 2 large Sconces 2 large ones Dito to be made long 6 Small Sconces these things as I take it were orderd to be made as Soon as posible & if Silver had not been Scarce with me they wold [sic] have been all done, so that there is but one pair that's almost finish'd wich may Come to about £27 or Les, the fashon is worth 4s p oz but I shall ask but 2s 6d p oz the other things that were bespoke are dogs for a fire wich I was not to make till further orders, wich as soon as I have Shall make all the haste posible, I beg pardon for not answering Sooner but my not being used to write is the occasion of it

I am Sir

Ye 9 july 1717

Your Most humble and Obedient Servant

David Willaume

The correspondence between the pair details the sorts of complications that could arise with specially commissioned pieces: estimates could prove unreliable and prices could inflate. In a second letter Willaume explained how a rough 'computation' offered to St George had been wholly a guess, since it was 'impossible to be certain' of the 'weight of a thing' before it was completed.⁵⁰ Frequently the expense of metal exceeded the cost of labour and goldsmiths' livelihoods depended upon sharply honed accounting skills as prices could fluctuate between order and delivery.⁵¹ In this particular case problems obtaining silver had impeded Willaume's progress and his faltering English compounded the delay.⁵² Obligated to communicate by letter or through an intermediary, misunderstandings arose between goldsmith and client. Part of the confusion centred on terminology, and the fact that some earlier sconces which Willaume had supplied to Lord Cadogan had been used as a reference point. Cadogan had settled his account in ready money and the order had been crossed out in Willaume's ledger. As a result he had not been able to locate it when he provided St George with his original estimate.⁵³ Difficulties like these were easier to avoid by ordering from craftsmen closer to home.

It was not only clients and craftsmen who struggled with language: domestic staff faced comparable chal-

lenges when inventorying household goods. Cruets, which St George acquired in 1700, were described in a number of different ways in his papers. In one document they appear as 'two oyle things', while Willaume described them in French.⁵⁴ Their modest weight indicates that they were openwork frames for holding glass cruets.⁵⁵ According to J.F. Hayward, cruet frames of this type were only introduced towards the end of the seventeenth century. This not only confirms that the St Georges were keeping abreast of fashion, it also accounts for the inconsistent manner in which the objects were described.⁵⁶

Naturally, an element of trust between client and goldsmith was essential. St George's accounts show that he declined to weigh some goods supplied in 1717 by Mary Girard whose honesty was accepted in good faith.⁵⁷ During the course of his career St George also paid for a few objects which had not been officially assayed. They were referred to in his accounts as 'not touched' or not 'warranted' and included a basin and strainer purchased from Willaume in 1716.⁵⁸

St George was not averse to buying second-hand. One account headed 'A little note of some plate and pictures bought at some sale' suggests an auction attendance.⁵⁹ Successful bids netted two small lots of plate, but they did not sound as interesting as the paintings purchased. Chief among these was a mythological work of dubious authorship credited to Rubens. At only £9 its attribution could not have been more than tenuous. As Iain Pears has commented 'it seems to have been generally accepted, and acceptable, that very few [eighteenth-century] auctions contained genuine, original paintings'.⁶⁰ While offering the lure of a bargain they did not promise the same guarantees as those expected from the fixed trade.

Apart from buying used plate, St George also inherited some. A number of items listed as 'old plate that was Sr. Oliver's' suggest a legacy from St George's father. These included two 'Japan salvers', a 'Japan' basin and ewer⁶¹ which were probably from a chinoiserie toilet service, of the late seventeenth century.⁶² A silver cup and cover that Mary St George willed to her female servant was identified as being 'with a viscount coronet'.⁶³

50 David Willaume to Oliver St George, 14 September 1717 (NA, C110/46/210-211).

51 The fashioning cost of a set of plates purchased by St George in 1714 was less than a tenth of that charged for the silver. OStG a/c, 1714 (NA, C110/46/166). The 23 plates were supplied by Pierre Platel. The calculation is exclusive of engraving.

52 The final accounts supplied by him to St George are in French. It may not

simply have been a question of language. It could also have reflected minimal literacy on Willaume's part.

53 David Willaume to Oliver St George, 14 September, 1717 (NA, C110/46/210-11).

54 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/136).

55 The weight was less than 30oz. Michael Clayton, *The Collector's Dictionary of the Silver and Gold of Great Britain and North America*, New York and Cleveland 1985, p195,

fig 386, reproduces an oil and vinegar frame marked by David Willaume with a hallmark for 1723.

56 A mid-century account for the Earl of Kildare with the London goldsmith George Wickes includes a clumsily worded entry recording 'a Masheen for a wax Candle'; Garrard Ledgers, 1745 (VAM, Gentleman's Ledger of George Wickes, 1740-48, p146).

57 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/203).

58 OStG a/c, 10 February 1717, and 14 July, 1716 (NA, C110/46/193, and C110/46/198-9).

59 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/141-42).

60 Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680-1768*, New Haven and London 1988, p60. Pears also comments of one celebrated auctioneer that he 'freely admitted that many of his paintings were "slight or defaced", even though the surviving

catalogues of his sales suggest that this did not stop him labelling them as being by Rubens or Titian'. See also Barnard (as note 4) p169.

61 OStG a/c, n.d., (NA, C110/46/123).

62 OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/123). These may well have been the dressing table basin and ewer, which Mary St George bequeathed to her sister, along with a silver framed mirror and 'Japan Boxes'. See note below.

While goldsmiths' clients expected to enjoy favourable terms of credit, St George's accounts detail one instance where he seems to have paid in advance. In July 1708 the goldsmith David Rommieu acknowledged receipt from him of £11 10s. Rommieu agreed to allow him this sum on the cost of a new set of flatware.⁶⁴ An account from the following month totals the cost of the transaction at £21 1s 8d, exclusive of the advance payment.⁶⁵ A final receipt details the items made and the total costs involved.⁶⁶ Three months separated the initial order and the final payment. It would have benefited Rommieu to receive an advance payment, however modest, particularly as he does not seem to have been operating a thriving workshop, and metal costs were high.⁶⁷

St George settled his accounts in a variety of ways. In the absence of goldsmiths' ledgers it can be difficult to judge just how promptly bills were paid. In December 1716 the Dublin goldsmith Mary Girard invoiced him for an order, which he settled one month later.⁶⁸ A number of goldsmiths used the courteous convention 'from ye beginning of ye world to the day hereof', to indicate his payment of all outstanding bills.⁶⁹ St George seems to have paid for a large number of items in cash without recourse to trade-ins, indicating the ready availability of funds.⁷⁰ Interestingly, repair work rarely features in his accounts, however, like many eighteenth-century patrons he did reduce some bills by trading in old, broken, or unwanted wares.⁷¹ Just a few receipts mention sums credited to him for old plate received.⁷² A note in Willaume's hand from 1700 acknowledges the receipt of £7 15s worth of 'old silver' and credits it against the cost of newly purchased items.⁷³

What exactly were the costs involved in St George's acquisition of plate? The *Appendix* shows prices for individual orders. From this it is possible to see that his most expensive purchase was the set of dining plate bought from Platel between 1714–15. However the variable fashioning costs, which could be involved, are also worth considering. They represent complex calculations from the goldsmiths' side, relative to the time involved in making an object, the degree of specialisation required, and the overall weight of a piece. In 1708

David Rommieu charged St George three separate rates for the manufacture of such closely related items as knives, forks and spoons.[*Table 2*]

Date	Item	Price per oz. for silver	Fashioning Costs
1708	Silver Knife	5s. 6d.	4s. 2d. per item
1708	Silver Fork (small)	5s. 6d.	2s. 6d. per item
1708	Silver Spoon (small)	5s. 6d.	2s. per item

Table 2. Rates for flatware charged to St George by David Rommieu in 1708.

This disparity was not exceptional. In 1736 Benjamin Mildmay, Earl Fitzwalter, was charged similar rates by Paul de Lamerie. Spoons and forks were charged at a unit cost of 2s 6d for fashioning, while the production cost of the accompanying knives was reckoned at 6s each,⁷⁴ reflecting the extra work required to attach the steel blade to the knife haft.

Over the period in question St George amassed over 4,000oz of plate, exclusive of inheritances. This was a significant amount and cost him more than £1,500. It can be compared with the largest allocation made by the Royal Jewel House for an ambassadorial allowance of close to 7,000oz.⁷⁵ The Duke of Ormond's inventory in 1705 itemises more than 9,000oz, but this reflects his position as Ireland's grandest patron.⁷⁶ English plate tax records from later in the century show that St George's accumulation of plate held up well.⁷⁷ In 1757, the earls of Blessington, Chesterfield, Dysart and Fitzwilliam were all taxed on the basis of owning 4,000oz or more.⁷⁸ Oliver St George clearly enjoyed a privileged position bolstered by parliamentary seats, and his wife's inheritance. He was amassing his plate during a critical period when banking was evolving and, while he publicly railed against the shortage of coin, and lent financial support to early banking endeavours, he bought wrought silver often and in quantity. Evidently, he perceived it as a solid asset, though a proclivity to high living is also apparent. His bias in favour of Huguenots suggests alertness to high standards of craftsmanship and good value for money, and he does not appear to have had difficulty articulating his requirements. For

63 Will of Mary St George, 18 August, 1746 (PRONI, Ms. D/235/23).

64 OStG a/c, 10 July, 1708 (NA, C110/46/157).

65 OStG a/c, 3 August, 1708 (NA, C110/46/158).

66 OStG a/c, 1708 (NA, C110/46/159). This also reveals that the original order was extended slightly.

67 The cost per ounce of the metal is indicated in *Table 2*.

68 OStG a/c, 3 January, 1716 (NA, C110/46/192).

69 See, for instance, OStG a/c, 28 April, 1715 (NA, C110/46/169, and C110/46/216).

70 See, for instance, OStG a/c, 20 April, 1715 (NA, C110/46/165–66; C110/46/171; C110/46/169).

71 See, for example, OStG a/c, n.d. (NA, C110/46/137).

72 See, for example, OStG a/c, 1700, and 21 April, 1718 (NA, C110/46/144–45, and C110/46/212).

73 OStG a/c, 1700 (NA, C110/46/150).

74 A.C. Edwards (ed), *The Accounts of Benjamin Mildmay, Earl Fitzwalter*, London 1977, p81.

75 James Lomax, 'Royalty and silver: The role of the Jewel House in the eighteenth century', *The Silver Society Journal*, no11 1999, pp133–39.

76 *Inventory of the Duke of Ormond's Plate*, 1 May, 1705 (NLI, Ms. 2521). This comprises an inventory of the Duke of Ormond's plate at Dublin Castle, Kilkenny, St James's, Whitehall and Richmond.

77 This was a tax levied on the ownership of plate, rather than a duty payable at the time of manufacture. It was introduced in 1756 with a lower level of tax beginning at 100 troy oz of silver, with a charge of 5s, rising to a maximum tax of £10 for ownership of 4,000 troy oz or more. Helen Clifford estimates this as having been 'equivalent to two, very generous, full silver dinner services'. Helen Clifford, *Silver in London: The Parker and Wakelin partnership 1760–1776*, New

Haven and London 2004, pp129–30. Ireland does not appear to have had an equivalent to England's plate tax.

78 List of persons who have paid duty for silver plate in Great Britain 5 July 1756–5 July 1752 (NA, T47/5). In striking contrast George Booth, Earl of Warrington noted the total weight of his plate as 26,509 oz in 1754. See Hayward (as note 18) p32.

79 OStG a/c, 14 February 1708/09 (NA, MS. C110/46/162).

80 There is some correspondence in the National Archives deposit but it is limited in scope.

81 NA, C110/46/225 (28 March 1729).

82 Barnard (as note 4) pp xviii-xxii. As Barnard states 'a preoccupation with making the right impression ... united Protestants (and Catholics) in Ireland with many contemporaries throughout Europe and America'.

example David Rommieu was entrusted to make a basin 'in imitation of Lady Mountjoy's'.⁷⁹ In the absence of correspondence between the St Georges and their contemporaries, little can be deduced about their social milieu, and the lack of information regarding their purchasing of other luxury goods is also limiting.⁸⁰

Most surviving eighteenth-century accounts are in the names of men. However the bill for one of the more significant purchases is in Mary St George's name, for a pair of silver ice pails, acquired from David Willaume in 1729:⁸¹

2 Ice Pails 22 oz: 5 at 5:9 1/2 p. oz 64:12:11

Mar. ye. 28 1729

Receivd. of the Honble. Mrs. St George the Contents by one David Willaume

As previously indicated the couple's financial losses in the South Sea Bubble are not known, but other than these pails, the St Georges' spending was radically reduced after 1720. While the likes of the St Georges were of tremendous importance to Dublin goldsmiths, they were small in number. The impression derived from sources like Dublin assay books, inventories and trade ephemera suggests that the backbone of the goldsmiths' trade in Dublin was sustained by a much larger body of merchants, professionals and lesser gentry, intent on 'making the grand figure' as much as their means and consciences allowed.⁸²

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Appendix

Recorded acquisitions of plate and jewellery by Oliver St George circa 1695–1729

Date	Source	Items Specified	Weight			Cost		
			oz	dwt	gr	£	s	d
1695	Fowles and Wotten London	1 Shaving Pot	24	5		9	1	10
		2 Spoons & 2 Forks	8	15		3	1	6
		1 Standing Snuff-pan & Snuffers	9	10		3	14	1
		Engraving a pair of candlesticks				0	1	0
		<i>Total</i>	42	10		15	18	5
1697	Phillips, Skinner Row Dublin	12 Silver hafts blades	22	10		8	1	4 ½
		10 Spoons & 10 forks	49	10		17	1	1 ½
		1 Wash ball box	4	15		1	13	0
		<i>Total</i>	76	15		26	15	6
1700 circa	Unknown London	1 Shaving basin	28	19		9	18	2
		1 Pair of candlesticks	22	5		7	12	8
		3 Tumblers	15	4		5	0	6
		1 Soup spoon	6	0	10	1	19	0
		1 Toaster	2	14	10	0	2	6
		<i>Total</i>	75	2	20	24	12	10
1700	Fowles & Wotten London	12 Spoons & 12 forks <i>Total</i>	53	12		17	16	6

Date	Source	Items Specified	Weight			Cost		
			oz	dwt	gr	£	s	d
1700	David Willaume <i>London</i>	1 Large salver	49	17		18	1	4
		2 Small salvers	59	5		20	17	5
		4 Castors	62	13		23	3	4 1/2
		4 Salt cellars	16	1		6	10	11
		1 Pair snuffers	3	17		1	11	10
		1 Snuff pan	8	13		3	7	10
		2 [Chafing?] dishes with a lamp	60	3		22	12	10
		2 Cruet pots?	28	5		10	15	0
		2 Pepper castors	4	7		2	5	7
		4 Cruet tops	4	16		1	17	8
		1 Carving knife handle & blade	5	7		2	4	0
		Engraving				0	5	0
		4 Candlestick	39	10		13	16	9 1/2
		1 Soup spoon & 1 fork	18	17		6	12	1
		2 Ragout spoons	14	12	12	5	5	3
		<i>Total</i>	376	3	12	139	6	11
1702	'Dutch goldsmith' <i>Skinner Row, Dublin</i>	Salver						
		<i>Total</i>	49	0		16	8	6
1703	Pierre Harache <i>London</i>	Tea kettle & ring						
		<i>Total</i>	66	3		23	18	0
1704	Jorres Lijes [George Lyng?] <i>Dublin</i>	Sundry repairs/maintenance <i>Total</i>	12	3	approx	4	7	6 3/4
1704	George Lyng <i>Dublin</i>	Tea cannister	7	13		2	12	0
		Tea cannister	6	1		1	15	3 1/4
		<i>Total</i>	13	14		4	7	3 1/4
1706	George Lyng	Conversion of 2 tumblers into 2 saucepans <i>Total</i>	2	9	added to existing silver	1	0	0
1707/8	George Lyng <i>Dublin</i>	1 Pair candlesticks		n.s.		6	15	11
		1 Snuffers & snuff pan		n.s.		5	4	3 3/4
		<i>Total</i>				12	0	2 3/4
1708	David Rommieu <i>Dublin</i>	9 Forks						
		9 Knives						
		9 Spoons						
		6 Tea spoons						
		<i>Total</i>	69	5		23	18	4 1/2
1708	David Rommieu <i>Dublin</i>	1 Teapot	24	1				
		1 Stand for the teapot lamp	15	0				
		<i>Total</i>	39	1		14	0	3
1708/9	David Rommieu <i>Dublin</i>	Silver Basin for teapot	28	16 1/2		10	4	9
		Engraving a pair of candlesticks and a snuffer pan				0	3	0
		<i>Total</i>	28	16 1/2		10	7	9
1710	David Rommieu <i>Dublin</i>	Pair of candlesticks <i>Total</i>	23	15		7	13	4 3/4
1710	Mr Massey <i>Dublin</i>	Diamond Buckle <i>Total</i>				25	0	0
1712	James Chardon	Diamonds <i>Total</i>				23	13	0
1712/13	James Chardon	Diamond Jewellery and gem setting <i>Total</i>				35	11	0
1714	Lewis Mettayer <i>London</i>	3 Dessert knives, forks & spoons <i>Total</i>	19	15		7	4	4 1/2

Date	Source	Items Specified	Weight			Cost		
			oz	dwt	gr	£	s	d
1714	Pierre Platel <i>London</i>	12 Plates	220	15		67	8	1
		36 Plates	421	5		202	17	0
		<i>Total</i>	642	0		270	5	1
1715	Pierre Platel <i>London</i>	Sugar box <i>Total</i>	19	0		7	14	0
1715	Pierre Platel <i>London</i>	8 Dishes	355	15		106	13	0
		5 Dishes	157	12		47	9	11
		12 Knives	29	15		13	1	4
		<i>Total</i>	543	2		167	4	3
1715	Pierre Platel <i>London</i>	1 Dish	38	0		11	8	4
		1 Large Dish	93	3		27	14	6
		<i>Total</i>	131	3		39	2	10
1715	David Willaume <i>London</i>	Milk pot <i>Total</i>	13	9		4	10	5
1715	David Willaume <i>London</i>	Porringer & cover <i>Total</i>	29	11		9	6	0
1715	David Willaume <i>London</i>	Chamber pot	30	5		10	1	4
		Salt with 2 covers	15	10		7	5	3
		2 Branches	83	4		31	3	7
		2 Cases for cutlery				2	10	0
		<i>Total</i>	128	19		51	0	2
1715	Samuel Aveline	1 Coffee pot	31	10		11	10	6½
		4 Candlesticks	64	18		12	16	4
		6 Spoons	14	14		4	15	10½
		6 Forks	13	0		4	6	6
		12 Knives	24	8	{bundles}	9	16	3
		4 Salt spoons	n.s			0	8	0
		6 Spoons & 6 forks	27	11		9	7	6
		Tea pot pipe	n.s			0	2	6
		<i>Total</i>	176	1		63	13	6
1715	Samuel Aveline <i>London</i>	2 Decanters <i>Total</i>	107	11		36	13	0
1715	Thomas Bolton <i>Dublin</i>	Silver Dish	25	3		8	1	8
		2 Salt cellars	7	10		3	9	9
		<i>Total</i>	32	13		11	11	5
1715	David Tanqueray <i>London</i>	2 Saucers <i>Total</i>	44	14		20	6	1
1715	Augustin Courtauld <i>London</i>	2 Cups & covers <i>Total</i>	115	13		38	0	7
1716	Mary Gerritt <i>Dublin</i>	Dish <i>Total</i>	21	16		7	3	1½
1716/17	Mary Girard <i>Dublin</i>	Silver 'pye patty'	9	7½		4	2	4
		4 Dishes	88	2		28	2	8
		<i>Total</i>	97	9½		32	5	0
1716	James Chardon	Diamonds <i>Total</i>				49	0	0
1716	Lord Galway	12 Plates <i>Total</i>	232	0	0	69	15	0
1716	Henry Colier <i>England</i>	Silver Hilted Sword <i>Total</i>				4	0	0
1716	England	5 Silver Buttons <i>Total</i>				0	1	3

Date	Source	Items Specified	Weight			Cost		
			oz	dwt	gr	£	s	d
1716	England	12 Dozen coat buttons <i>Total</i>				0	12	0
n.d.	Auction	4 Small salvers 1 pair Candlesticks	Not available			Not available		
1717	Peter Gervais <i>Dublin</i>	Equipage [scissor case/needle case/thimble case etc] <i>Total</i>	4	7		4	12	6
1717	David Willaume <i>London</i>	2 Candlesticks	68	6		23	18	2 ½
		1 Basin	31	12		11	2	½
		1 Strainer	21	19		7	14	3
		6 Saucers with stands for chocolate cups	43	19		18	7	9
		1 Strainer Spoon	2	2		1	1	½
		6 Spits	1	14		0	15	4
		<i>Total</i>	169	12		62	1	7 ½
1717	Mary Gerrard / Girard <i>Dublin</i>	1 Spoon	2	9 ½				
		Engraving silver plates that were Lord Galways etc	1	17	9			
		<i>Total</i>				2	14	3
1717	Mary Gerrard <i>Dublin</i>	Pair of silver bosses	5	13		1	18	0
		6 Tea spoons	1	2 ½		0	9	4
		<i>Total</i>	6	15 ½		2	7	4
1718	Peter Gervais <i>Dublin</i>	Silver Saucepan	20	13		6	13	4
		2 Silver Branches	54	10		17	16	3
		<i>Total</i>	75	3		24	9	7
1719	Augustin Courtauld <i>London</i>	12 Spoons & 12 forks	59	16				
		12 knife handles	29	18				
		??	15	7				
		<i>Total</i>	105	1		35	6	4
1719	James Chardon	Gold chain & watch <i>Total</i>				55	13	6
1719	Peter Gervais <i>Dublin</i>	1 Cup	42	5				
		1 Cup	41	9				
		1 Basin	22	7				
		<i>Total</i>	106	1		33	17	5 ½
1720	Peter Gervais <i>Dublin</i>	Large dish	165	8		54	8	10 ½
		2 Dishes	75	19		24	6	0
		4 Silver pins	0	10		0	3	9
		<i>Total</i>	241	17		78	18	7 ½
1720	Nat. McMurray <i>Dublin</i>	Engraving a Large Gadrooned Dish made by Peter Gervais <i>Total</i>				2	0	0
1721	Edward Barrett <i>Dublin</i>	12 Hafts	n.s					
		1 Slop bowl <i>Total</i>	n.s			3	3	1
1721	James Chardon	6 Diamond Tags <i>Total</i>				15	0	0
1725	Francis Sawle	Silver hearth knobs <i>Total</i>	44	0		12	2	0
1729	David Willaume <i>London</i>	2 Ice pails <i>Total</i>	22	5		64	12	11

Browsing through bound auction catalogues in the National Art Library,¹ I came across the following:

Catalogue of Plate and Jewels; consisting of a Valuable Sideboard of Plate and sundry valuable jewels the property of a nobleman; comprising in the whole upwards of four thousand ounces, Among which is a superb and Matchless Epergne, weight about twelve hundred ounces, also several Diamond Pins, Rings, Watches, Gold Chains &c

Christie's, 25 May 1791, Great Rooms, Pall Mall.

Lot 1: Pair of gadrooned octagon dishes

Lots 2 & 3: ditto

Lot 12: A pair of superb Ice Pails with pierced insides

Lot 19: A chased tea kettle, lamp and salver

Lot 20: ditto

Lot 25: A MOST SUPERB NOBLE PIECE OF PLATE, comprising an EPERGNE with 4 branches, a TUREEN and COVER and OTHER APPARATUS, elegantly designed and embellished with stags, clusters of grapes, vine branches, &c, the whole RICHLY CHASED and BURNISHED.

Lot 26: A pair of elegant chased castors to correspond

Lot 27: Two pair of ditto

Anthony Phillips has very kindly checked the auctioneer's book, but tantalisingly it does not reveal the name of the 'nobleman'.

Curiously the weight of the ice pails is given as over 500oz – which seems exceptionally heavy. The weight of the epergne is catalogued as about 1,120oz (less than that given on the title page). Even so, this is about twice the weight of three surviving centrepieces which might have been candidates. One has the mark of Parker & Wakelin, London 1760,² whose rather Disney-like hinds would surely never have been described as 'stags'; the other, Paul Crespin, London 1740, in Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio has goats supporting the central bowl, as does the third, the Ashburnham centrepiece, 1747/48, in the V&A (524oz and 513oz respectively).³

It is tempting to suggest that the cataloguer had a bad day at the office and got his weights muddled, but as Anthony Phillips points out, when everything was sold by the ounce, weight mattered a great deal and to get it so wrong would surely have meant instant dismissal – 'a trip to Australia or worse'!

VB

¹ National Art Library, Picture catalogues II, 1790-94, II RC DD 17.

² 624oz 5dwt (19,468g). Ellenor M. Alcorn, *English Silver in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, vol II, no115 p188. From the Duke of Bolton, Christie's London, 14 July 1965 lot 145.

³ Arthur Grimwade, 'Crespin or

Sprimont? An unsolved problem of Rococo silver', *Apollo*, August 1969. The Toledo epergne was formerly in the collection of the Duke of Somerset. The 1888 sale catalogue has its weight as 524oz. See also: Kathryn Jones and Christopher Garibaldi, 'Crespin or Sprimont? A question revisited', *Silver Studies*, no21 2006.

This lithograph was in the exhibition *Silver City: James Dixon & Sons 1806-2006* in Sheffield last year. (see *Silver Studies* no21, pp105-12). Typical of its period, the design interest of the epergne lies in the grille centred by the Dixon crest, a feature that is seldom retained in surviving examples.

The epergne was part of a suite of gifts presented to James Dixon at Page Hall on 27

January 1846 to commemorate his retirement from business four years earlier, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. An illustration of the epergne appeared in the *Illustrated London News* alongside a description of the presentation ceremony. The epergne was described as

[a] full sized Epergne or Candelabrum, surmounted by a richly cut glass bowl for fruit, with an inverted basket as a trellis for flowers...The basement is of an irregular triangle, with appropriate ornaments, and supported at angles by three lions passant guardant, in perfect relief and exquisite workmanship.

It was 'made in the silver-plated department at Cornish-place'. The designer was given as Thomas Nicholson Jr and it was 'made by' Vincent Nicholson. The epergne was 76cm (30in) high, and valued at 200 guineas.

The epergne was presented to James Dixon by a Mr Hobson, an employee at James Dixon & Sons. The following testimonial was read:

this splendid silver Epergne was presented to James Dixon Esq., by the workmen late in his employment at Cornish-place, as a memento of his public worth and private virtues, and as a testimony to their high esteem for his integrity of character, spirit of laudable enterprise, and habits of unwearied industry in promoting the interests of trade and commerce, and patronising, with a liberal hand, institutions of religion and benevolence.

In turn, Dixon presented the deputation of workers with a purse of 50 sovereigns to distribute among them before enjoying a cold buffet and 'liberal entertainment'.

Last year's exhibition also included a silver epergne by Dixon's, Sheffield 1853/54, designed by Vincent Nicholson.

Rachel Conroy



Lithograph of an epergne, circa 1848, Vincent Nicholson, designed by Thomas Nicholson Jr. (Courtesy of Mr K.W. Hawley)

Bullion-dealing and trading in the eighteenth century

PETER LE ROSSIGNOL

The early eighteenth-century day book of Hoare's Bank has a number of entries which refer to 'Prestland', who was paid by note for supplying silver. For example:

Received of Mr Prestland by note to Mr Boddington 100ozs

Received of Mr Prestland by note to Mr Thomas Ash 60ozs

Received of Mr Prestland by note to Mr Harrache 100ozs

Further research revealed George Prestland as a bullion dealer who supplied the following London goldsmiths: Ash, Bodington, Pyne, Cooper, Harrache and Fawdery, all of whom were subcontracted by Sir Richard Hoare (1648–1719) in the manufacturing or repairing of plate for the goldsmith/banker's clientele.¹ The bullion, generally in ingot or pancake form, would be supplied in varying amounts to the goldsmiths mentioned, dependant on the orders placed by Sir Richard. The inference to be drawn from these entries would be that the smiths were given precise amounts of bullion for manufacturing commissions and that these quantities were controlled by Sir Richard. This particular aspect of the dealings of the bank would appear atypical, as a smith would conventionally obtain the required silver from his bullion dealer, produce the wares and charge on the finished work or scratch weight plus fashion. The residual scrap silver of the workshop was collected by the *lemel men*² and returned to the refiner to be smelted into useable sheet or bullion, an anomaly worth further investigation in order to understand commercial relationships of this period and to develop greater understanding of the divisions and controls exercised in the trade of the early eighteenth century.

George Prestland was free of the Carmen Company and was made free by redemption of the Goldsmiths' Company on 3 December 1729; he was elected to the livery on payment of £20 in October 1731. However, on 2 July 1734 he petitioned the Court of the Goldsmiths' Company pleading that his £20 be refunded as he was forced by his impecunious circumstances to seek business abroad. His request was granted although he lost all rights as a liveryman of the Company.³ George Prestland appears again in the Court Books, this time on the charity register, in February 1737.⁴ Before the collapse of his business Prestland would, as did all refiners, have smelted silver and gold from various trade and private sources; goldsmith/bankers and retail outlets purchased scrap items of silver and gold which they would have had refined and reused.⁵ In the early years of the century the public regarded silver items as a reserve fund in case of adversity; it was a commodity that could be redeemed easily for ready money. James Boswell is recorded as having cut the silver lace off his old hat and cashed it in for the sum of six shillings and sixpence, spent mainly on dinner and a 'doxy', which he recorded 'was a cause of great joy to me'.⁶

1 Hoare's Bank, Day Book 1700–26, pp13–17, 35, 37, 39, 49, 51, 59, 73, 77, 80–81.

2 Lemel or limail: metal filings collected in the skin below a goldsmith's bench.

3 Goldsmiths' Company Court Book no13 p320.

4 Goldsmiths' Company Court Book no14 p108.

5 Drummond's Bank Archives, Plate Ledger Section A, Folios 1–27, DR/426/1, wrought plate purchased 30 August–December 1718 £2043 2s 9d. Child's Bank Archives, CH/194/9 pp371 and 373.

6 Boswell's *London Journal* 1762–63, London 1952, p114, entry for 28 December 1762.

The source of bullion to supply the London trade, together with sustaining the commercial enterprises for export and maintaining the now vibrant eastern import business, was generated from bullion, burnt silver objects, lace, foreign currency, sweepings from the goldsmiths' workshops and illegally clipped coin.⁷

Between 1550 and 1750, many of the patterns of innovation in production, skill, and organisation that characterised the London goldsmiths were broadly reproduced in the other London luxury trades. One of the most striking features of the economic history of England in this period is an overall shift away from the import of manufactured domestic goods and towards their export.⁸

The quantity of bullion consigned to various parts of the world was vast, thus emphasising the importance of the import and export trade of England at this period. Between January 1717 and December 1718 records show that 27,990oz of silver bullion together with 1,622,907oz of foreign silver coin were exported via the Honourable East India Company to pay for trade in the East.⁹ Holland received some 1,155,507oz of foreign coin and 25,636oz of bullion. It must be assumed that in this instance the bullion was of standard or purer quality and produced in ingot form, which would have been acceptable to the recipients:

It has been observed of late that a vast quantity of silver coin comes out of England. At very considerable payments at Rotterdam and other towns the third part at least is made with English crowns and half crowns at fifty-six slivers a crown and a great quantity of that money is melted here by goldsmiths.¹⁰

Since 1663 the export of bullion and foreign coin had been permitted by statute and after 1672 the Treasury had further permitted the export of plate as bullion without export duty.¹¹

The quantity of Chinese and exotic Eastern goods imported into England, especially porcelain, gradually increased during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The services of the refiners of the City of London were called upon to supply the necessary bullion ingots to pay for these 'trinkets' together with foreign coin. The Dutch commercial enterprise, after the accession of William and Mary, was vibrant in various trades such as tobacco, Delftware, glass, and early in the eighteenth

century tea from Java.¹² Many of the new exotic wares that became fashionable in the eighteenth century were embellished with silver, silver-gilt and gold. Fine porcelain from Japan and China, tortoiseshell, ivory and many varieties of shell were, with the innovative creativity of the goldsmith, transformed into objects of desire for the fashion-conscious consumers. However, it was the taking of tea that introduced a myriad of silverware to the goldsmith's manufacturing repertoire from tea-tables, kettles and stands, teapots, strainers and teaspoons which were considered necessary accoutrements by the new 'polite' society. Such objects were purchased from the burgeoning retail outlets that accompanied the expansion of the suburbs of London during the eighteenth century. The increase in the disposable income of the nation was a catalyst for the increase in commercial activity within the capital's silver trade and led inexorably toward the industrial revolution and the mechanisation of some aspects of the craft.

Although the goldsmith was able to refine his own silver 'he has more advantage in employing those who make it their sole business'.¹³ The convenience of being able to 'shop' for ready-prepared Sterling Standard and New Standard silver bullion removed the problem of employing an individual who was proficient in this task, resulting in reduced overheads for the manufacturing goldsmith especially in a lean economic climate.

The industrialisation of the trade in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to the founding of specialist firms such as Johnson & Matthey and the Sheffield Smelting Company, who supplied the trade with all necessary requisites including castings, wire, sheet, specially cut blanks and solder.

Silver artefacts in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represented beauty, practicality and prestige; the latter could also be read as wealth. Land and silver were the traditional safe investments of the aristocracy during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹⁴ Silver was bullion, instant cash in hand, and it was only with the increase in the disposable income of the 'middling classes'¹⁵ that the aesthetic value of the wares took on a new interpretation. Silver during the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of England's history was the 'oil' of commerce and an enduring symbol of taste and wealth.

7 J.S. Forbes, *Hallmark, A History of the London Assay Office*, London 1998, p159

8 John Styles, 'The Goldsmiths and the London Luxury Trades, 1550 to 1750' in David Mitchell (ed), *Goldsmiths Silversmiths and Bankers, Innovation and the Transfer*

of Skill 1550 to 1750, London 1995, p119.

9 National Archives, T64/276B/392.

10 Calendar of Treasury Books, vol XXXII part II, prepared by W.A. Shaw, 1957, p445.

11 Jacob M. Price, *Overseas*

Trade and Traders, Ashgate Publishing Ltd 1996, vol I, p256.

12 Henry Hobhouse, *Seeds of Change*, London 2002, p128.

13 R. Campbell, *The London Tradesmen*, London 1747, repr 1969, quoted in Helen

Clifford, *Silver in London*, New Haven and London 2004, p76.

14 Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, London 1991, p66.

15 Defoe's classification for the new leisure class of the eighteenth century.

The Sherborne archives

ANTHONY SALE

The archives of the Dutton family of Sherborne Park, near Northleach, Glos, were deposited in the Gloucestershire Archives in 1962 by the 7th Baron Sherborne. Amounting to many thousands of documents mostly relating to the estates, they have been catalogued only recently, making them now readily accessible.¹ However there are a few records of silver, the earliest being in the time of John Dutton, the second baronet, who took over the Sherborne estate in 1710. They begin with his personal accounts covering 1723 until the year of his death in 1743.² From 1727 onwards he was dealing with 'Mr Willaume, Silversmith', for occasional modest purchases of silver and repairs, and traded in his wife's old dressing plate. He also noted the purchase of 'a skin of leather to clean ye plate' for 2s, and 'a picktooth a present for my niece Naper' for £1 1s 0d.

Sir John died without a male heir and the estates passed to his nephew James Lenox Naper who assumed the name of Dutton. His earliest invoice for plate to survive is dated 1760 when he bought some dishes and spoons from Thomas Wintle, Jeweller and Goldsmith, at the Ring & Pearl in the Poultry.³ In 1774/75 he bought amongst other items from Heming & Chawner 'a Festoon Ewer Coffee pot, Festoon Sugar Bowl and Cream pail and three Festoon Vases'.⁴ He also bought a teapot which was not to his liking and was returned.

At this time he and his son James Dutton carried out a serious campaign of buying dining plate from Thomas Gilpin. There is a detailed list of large dining plate bought by the father totalling some 2,766oz⁵ and a detailed invoice to the son for nearly £500 for spoons, forks, knives, etc.⁶

James Dutton succeeded his father in 1776. He had been MP for Gloucestershire for several years and it is probably when he was in London on parliamentary business that he made many small purchases from John Deards, Goldsmith & Jeweller, Piccadilly. Several bills from 1769 to 1776 survive;⁷ Deards sold him many things other than silverware – letter cases, memorandum books, buckles and garters and even Parmesan cheese; he also charged James a guinea for a bet lost on 14 April 1769.

A couple of invoices from Peter Castelfranc⁸ survive from the period after his marriage in 1774, mainly for jewellery in 1775 and 1777 totalling a little over £1,000. He had evidently approached Paul Storr about dish covers, revealed by a letter in 1806 with drawing and prices,⁹ [fig 1] but they do not appear in the inventory taken in 1813.¹⁰ That there were some other purchases of plate can be deduced from the inventory. After his death in 1820, John Riviere, Goldsmith and Appraiser of Bath and Cheltenham made another inventory with a valuation which amounted to £2,331 15s.¹¹

James Dutton was elevated to the peerage in 1784 as Baron

1 The catalogue can be accessed on the Gloucestershire Archives website:

archives.gloscc.gov.uk. To access the Sherborne archives click on line resources; →Gloucestershire Archives online catalogue; →Search; enter document reference D678; →search.

2 D678/1 F12/2/2; D678/1 F12/2/3.

3 D678/1 F13/2/22.

4 D678/1 F13/2/10; D678/1 F13/2/11.

5 D678/1 F13/2/25.

6 D678/1 F14/4/210.

7 D678/1 F14/4/179; D678/1 F14/4/180; D678/1 F14/4/181; D678/1 F14/4/182. See also Vanessa Brett 'The great (and lesser) toyshops' *Silver Studies*, no 16 pp117–23, which includes the Deards family.

8 D678/1 F14/4/165; D678/1 F14/4/166.

9 D678/1 F14/2/31.

10 D678/1 F7/2/16.

11 D678/1 F7/2/25.

Sherborne and his son John succeeded as 2nd Baron in 1820. The fabric of Sherborne House was so rotten that in the 1830s he embarked on its demolition and complete rebuilding in the same style. Thereafter the house remained substantially unchanged for the rest of the time that it was in the family's ownership. In the time of the 4th Baron the family history, the house and its furnishings and several pieces of important silver were described in some detail in a two-part article in *The Connoisseur* in 1911–12.¹² The house became a school in the late 1940s, and in the 1980s it was divided into private apartments, which is the present situation.

The 7th Baron resided in The Cottage in Sherborne village until the late 1950s when he moved to Lodge Park, which had been built in the 1630s as a Palladian grandstand from which to view deer coursing. This 'delightful' building was remodelled and refurnished in 1720 by William Kent and the surrounding parkland landscaped by Charles Bridgeman. It had seriously deteriorated by the time that Lord Sherborne died in 1982. As part of the Sherborne estate it was part of his bequest to the

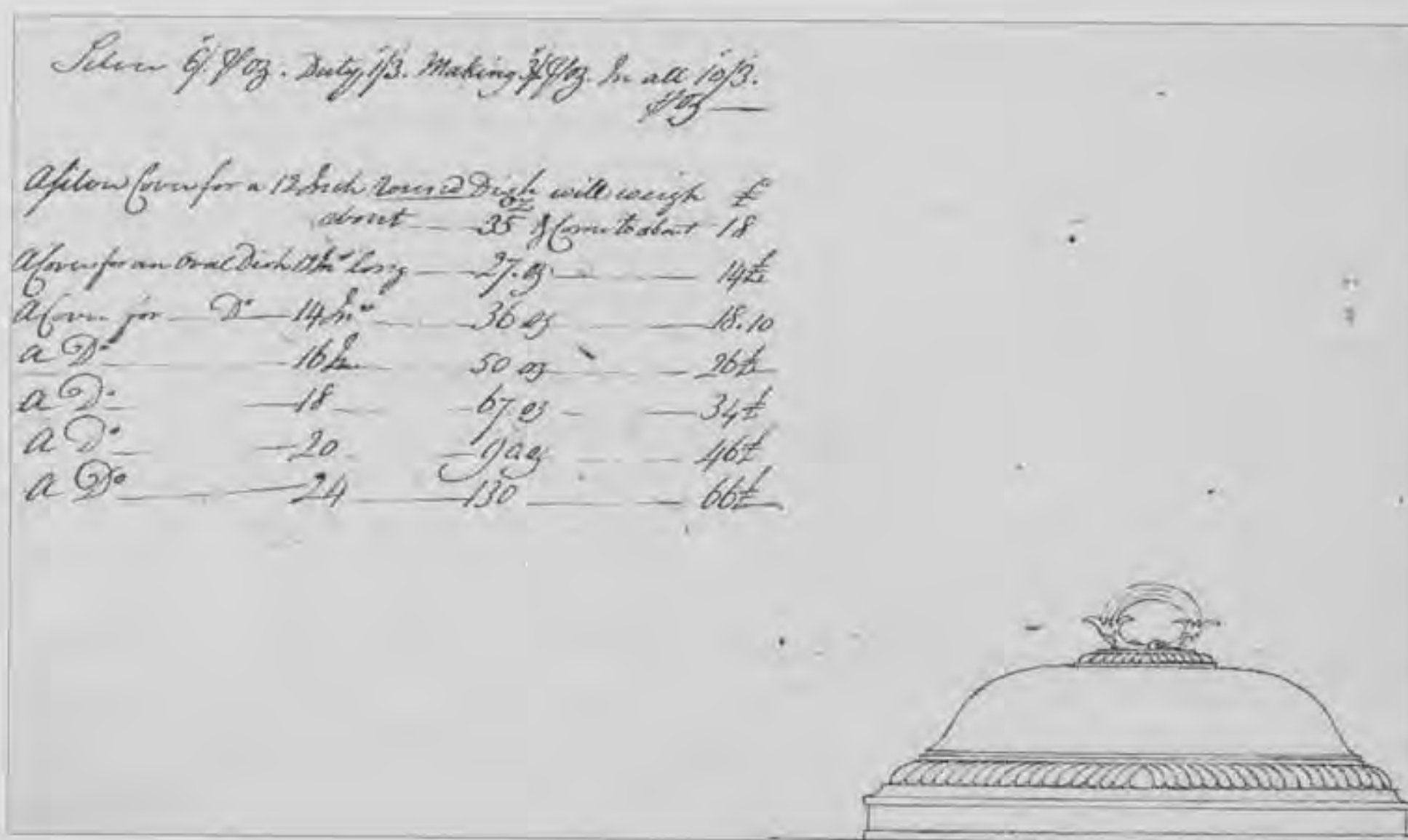
National Trust, which has since restored the building to near its original form.¹³

The bequest included the contents of the Lodge, much of which is presently in store in other National Trust properties. The Trust's detailed inventory of the silver shows that Lord Sherborne had silver for ordinary domestic use, but none of the grand dining plate or the display pieces had been retained. There was some silver of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which included a large number of spoons and forks with the date letters for 1768/69 and 1773/74 made by Thomas & William Chawner, and others with date letters for 1773/74 and 1774/75 with William Chawner's mark. These correlate with the purchases by James Dutton in 1774 from Thomas Gilpin and reveal that Gilpin had subcontracted this part of the order. Also surviving from this order is a cheese toaster of 1772/73 subcontracted from Sebastian & James Crespel. These provide examples of eighteenth-century co-operation among the London goldsmiths.

12 L. Willoughby, 'Sherborne House', *The Connoisseur*, vol 30 no 11, pp3–13 and vol 32 no 126, pp77–94.

13 The title was inherited by Ralph Dutton (dsp 1985) who bequeathed his own estate, Hinton Ampner, in Hampshire, to the National Trust. He was the grandson of the 3rd Lord Sherborne's younger brother John, who had inherited Hinton Ampner from his mother.

1 Estimate signed by Paul Storr, to Lord Sherborne, dated 13 May 1806. The covering letter (transcribed below right) is on a separate sheet.



Silver 6/. pr oz. Duty 1/3. Making 3/pr oz. In all 10/3 pr oz

A silver Cover for a 12 Inch round Dish will weigh	£
about 35oz & come to about	18
A Cover for an Oval Dish 12 Ins long	27 oz 14 £
A Cover for -Do- 14 Ins	36 oz 18.10
A Do 16 Ins	50 oz 26 £
A Do 18	67 oz 34 £
A Do 20	90 oz 46 £
A Do 24	130 66 £

My Lord. No 20 Air St 13 May 1806
 Agreeable to your lordships desire I have annexed an estimate of silver Covers which, if not particular enough I must beg the favour of your Lordship to send me the Dimensions of the Dishes they are intended to fit when I will send a more exact account.
 I have likewise annexed a sketch of a Cover such as I have lately made and which was much approved.
 I am My Lord, Your Lordships much obliged and Obedt Servt
 P Storr

Miscellany

On Rundell's

The seal on the right is from a letter dated 24 February 1809 addressed to a Col Jeafferson in Newmarket with a drawing of his coat of arms from 'our Engravers Book ... which we thought it best to enclose for your inspection, to prevent the possibility of any mistake'. The letter is signed 'Sir, Your very obliged and obedient Servants Rundell Bridge & Rundell'.

John Culme



Bridge came down with the plate, and was hid during the dinner behind the great wine-cooler, which weighs 7,000 ounces ... he told Sefton afterwards that the plate in the room was worth £200,000 ... there is another service of gold plate, which was not used at all. The King [William IV] has made it all over to the Crown. All this plate was ordered by the late King and never used; his delight was ordering what the public had to pay for.

Diary of Charles Greville, 31 August 1830.

[previously in Newsletter 31]

St Leonards Windsor July 4th 1808

Countess Harcourt begs Mess Wakelin & Parker wd. inform her whether they have ever made any silver or plated rail about an inch & 1/2 high for platteaus – Lord Harcourt a few days ago dined at Sir James Pulteneys at Bath House who has lately had a very fine service of plate from Bridge & Rundell he was particularly pleased with their rail to the platteau – & Lady Harcourt has desired Sir James to let Mr Parker see it if he can call immediately as the famely are going out of town She begs he will also see the salts as Lord Harcourt also intends to have some of the same & begs to know the value

If the Urn could be disposed of Lord Harcourt would wish not to have it

Quoted from an original letter by courtesy of David Barker

The serpentine river you hear so much of was the plateau, a paltry thing of bad taste but which amused the badauds, especially as it was full of real fish - roach, dace and gudgeons the dying and the dead.

Percy Fitzgerald, *The Life of George IV*, vol II, London 1881, p48.
See also Charles Abbot, *Diary of Lord Colchester*, vol II, London 1861. [previously in Newsletter 39]

I went into two shops. One a silversmith's, that of Rundell and Bridge, on Ludgate Hill. Outside it is plain: you might pass by without noticing it: but on entering the articles of silver were piled in heaps, even on the floor. Going further into the building, the masses increased. In a room upstairs, there was part of a dinner service in course of manufacture. The cost of an entire service varied from thirty to fifty thousand pounds sterling, according to the number of pieces, and workmanship: sometimes it was much higher. A candelabrum for the middle of a table had just been finished for a customer, at fourteen hundred pounds. A dress sword for another customer was shown: the cost was four thousand guineas. Other specimens of luxury which might be mentioned, included Ambassador's snuff boxes of gold and diamonds. The proprietors were extremely civil: for I gave trouble only from curiosity. If you purchase but a pin for a few shillings, they return thanks: if you do not incline to take it away yourself, they readily send it home, no matter how far off.

Diary of Richard Rush, American ambassador, 1817.

[previously in Newsletter 31]

Services of plate to ambassadors

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.

The Sussex Weekly Advertiser, 24 February 1823.

[previously in Newsletter 43]

Goldsmiths and legalised piracy – a connection

18 June 1756

Appeared Personally Joseph Wright of the Parish of St John Wapping in the County of Middlesex Ship Chandler & on behalf of Captain Joseph Cockburn produced a Warrant from the Right Honourable the Lord Commissioners for Executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland for granting a Commission or Letter of Marque to him the said Joseph Cockburn and in performance of his Majesties Instructions to Privateer made the following Declaration, to wit that the said Joseph Cockburn his ship is called the Hunter and is of the Burthen of about Ninety Tons That the said Joseph Cockburn goeth Commander of her That she Carries ten carriage guns Forty Men Forty Small Arms Forty Cutlasses three Barrels of Powder ten Rounds of Great Shot and about two hundred weight of small shot That the said ship is victualled for two months has two suits of sails three Anchors three Cables and about two hundred weight of spare cordage That Peter Atkins goes Lieutenant and James Thompson Gunner John Roberts Boatswain Abraham Peterson Carpenter Andrew Miller Cook and Thomas Mackensie Surgeon of the said ship and that Peter Taylor of the Strand Goldsmith & Richard Cracroft of London Gentleman and Others are the Owner and Setter of the said ship.¹

This Letter of Marque, authorised by the High Court of Admiralty, allowed *Hunter* to attack enemy shipping, in this case the French with whom Britain was in dispute. The Navy was thereby augmented with privateers, at no cost to the Exchequer. In return the privateers had the potential of seizing enemy ships and their cargoes as prizes. So the goldsmith Peter Taylor as part owner of *Hunter* was participating in an early example of a private finance initiative.

Commenting on Peter Taylor, Arthur Grimwade² notes 'Although rare, his work when found shows a high standard of craftsmanship coupled with a nice use of rococo ornament'. Perhaps the rarity reflects concentration on other more profitable activities, and his interest in the French extended beyond an appreciation of French inspired ornamentation.

Bruce Jones

¹ The National Archives, High Court of Admiralty: Prize Court: Registers of Declarations for Letters of Marque HCA26/5/63.

² A.G. Grimwade, *London Goldsmiths 1697-1837*, London 1976.

Re-engraving of armorials

To prevent the Decoys and Impositions the most Wary are liable/to in the Goldsmiths Way, from publick SALES, AUCTION-NS &c. (the shocking Forebode of the Destruction of Trade/in general) and the excessive Deceit of whited Brass, sold only/by Brasiers, and by them most ridiculously called French Plate/JOHN HOPKINS, Goldsmith, in Fleet-street,/Near Fleet-Bridge, the Corner of Bride-Lane,/(The other Corner a Turner's)/Continues making it his principal and chief Business to deal in/SECOND-HAND PLATE, WATCHES, JEWELS, &c. and observes/the Method he first began of selling at the most reasonable Prices./The Call he almost continually has for Quantities of various Sorts/of PLATE SECOND HAND, gives him an Opportunity of af-/fording most Money for the same, as does the great Care he takes/in employing the most experienced and best Workmen enable him/to serve with new Plate, &c to the greatest Satisfaction, as Numbers of Quality and Gentry have sufficiently experienced./Note, nothing engrav'd with Coats of Arms, &c. will at any/Time be expos'd to Sale before the Engraving be entirely/taken out, so that it shall not be known the same ever was/engrav'd, which is presum'd will be most pleasing to Buyer/and Seller./No Credit will be given or required in either Way.

Advertisement, circa 1736.

School life

When Henry Ellison went to Eton his 'dame', Mrs Mary Young, the widow of a former master, informed his uncle that he could only have half a bed unless special terms were arranged, that he must bring eight or nine shirts if he changed his linen twice a week, and that he should also have a silver porringer and cup and spoon, a knife and fork, half a dozen plates, a chamber pot, a bason and a candlestick. In the way of linen she required a pair of sheets, a dozen napkins and a dozen towels. His school bills for the half year came to just over £26.

Dorothy Marshall, *English People in the Eighteenth Century* (p107: Conditions at the Public Schools)
[previously in Newsletter 23]

Weights

The Public Advertiser, 12 February 1768

Stolen ... a Silver Teaspoon weighing six Drachms, but no name on it

A drachm converts to 3.888 grams, and is heavier than a scruple but less than an ounce (31.103g), in the scale of apothecaries' weights. Could the spoon have been stolen from an apothecary?

Richard Chippindall and the Boultons

KENNETH QUICKENDEN

In 1824, a year before his death, Richard Chippindall wrote an 81-page document entitled *An Apology for the Life of Richard Chippindall*.¹ Much of the *Apology* reflected upon his involvement with, first, Matthew Boulton (1728–1809), and then his son Matthew Robinson Boulton (1770–1842).^[fig 1] Their connection was largely based on the Boultons' employment of Chippindall as their London agent, especially for the selling of Sheffield Plate (made of copper covered with silver) which the Boultons called 'plated wares', and also silver. Chippindall's occupancy of the agency ran first from 1784 to 1808 and again from 1815 to 1820. Between those periods Chippindall managed the Plate Company, which made silver and Sheffield Plate, at the Boultons' Soho Manufactory, near Birmingham.

The *Apology* has not before been used in connection with Boulton studies. It provides the only substantial contemporary source about the management of the Plate Co. apart from the Matthew Boulton Papers which, despite their title, cover also the life of the Manufactory after his death.² Chippindall was intensely critical of much management at the Soho Manufactory and his criticisms are assessed here with the aid of the Matthew Boulton Papers. In doing so, this article will provide a rare example of a detailed study of an aspect of Boulton silver and Sheffield Plate in the firm's later years: hitherto most detailed study has been for the earlier period from the mid 1760s to the early 1780s.³

Background

Richard Chippindall was born in 1751 at Mason Green near Clitheroe, Yorkshire. He was educated at Clitheroe Free Grammar school until the family moved in 1765 to Gascoe, near Ulverstone, where his education was curtailed by the need for him to help on the family farm so that, by his own admission, writing and arithmetic were his 'greatest deficiency'.⁴ When Richard was eighteen his father died from an accident, leaving a widow and eight children; since Richard's elder brother inherited the family farm, Richard became in 1768 an apprentice for six years to a Mr Bordley, an ironmonger in Kendal. In 1774, Chippindall left to keep the books of a wholesale and retail ironmonger, James Bateman, in Manchester, with a five-year agreement. Over that period, his annual salary rose from £25 to £50 (with five guineas more at the end of each year) as the volume of business doubled. Nevertheless, Chippindall was aggrieved that he had to use his modest inheritance of £20 16s 0d to carry himself financially through his first year of employment and felt thereafter that he was overworked; at the end of the fifth year, Chippindall left on bad terms with his employer.⁵ Subsequently, in 1779, Chippindall worked for a Mr Harris, an



1 Matthew Robinson Boulton, by Sir Thomas Lawrence and Sir Martin Archer Shee, 1828–31. (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery)

1 Richard Chippindall's *Apology...* (hereafter RC *Apology*) was in the possession of Barbara Fitzjohn, a Chippindall descendant, in 1966 (letter from D.W. Paine, Publicity Manager, Stothert and Pitt, Bath, 23.3.1966), but present whereabouts are unclear. The photocopy used by the author was taken from a copy in the Stothert and Pitt archive and lent by Hugh Torrens, then of Keele University, in 1973.

2 The Matthew Boulton Papers (hereafter MBP) are deposited at Birmingham City Archives, Birmingham Reference Library (hereafter BRL).

3 Eric Delieb and Michael Roberts, *The Great Silver Manufactory*, London 1971, which scarcely qualifies as a detailed study, more or

less ceases with Matthew Boulton's (hereafter MB) death in 1809. Examples of detailed studies before 1782 include Kenneth Quickenden and Arthur J. Kover's 'Boulton and Fothergill Silver Plate: Upmarket or Downmarket?' in *The Future of Marketing's Past, Proceedings of the 12th Conference on Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing*, Leighann C. Neilson (ed), Long Beach, California, 2005 pp249–59. One detailed study which does extend beyond the early 1780s is Michael Snodin's 'Matthew Boulton's Sheffield Plate Catalogues' *Apollo*, vol CXXVI, no305 New Series, July 1987, pp25–32.

4 RC, *Apology*, pp1–4.

5 RC, *Apology*, pp6–26.

ironmonger in Bath, who promised, according to Chippindall, an annual salary of £60 but only paid £30; having 'foolishly', as Chippindall later wrote, not signed an initial agreement, he was in no position to extract the higher salary. Disgruntled further by working for a man later described by Chippindall as a 'stupid ignorant' dealer in 'low cunning', Chippindall left for London⁶ (at an uncertain date)⁷ to work for a Mr Hewit, a shoe merchant. Chippindall was uncomfortable with the change of trade but when he complained about the 'contraction' in his salary from the initial agreement of £25, Harris was furious and Chippindall was obliged to leave,⁸ again at an uncertain date.⁹ Since Chippindall had lived with Harris's family, he was obliged to find new living accommodation as well as new employment. In a most difficult period, he was obliged to share a flat and when, through a friend, Mr Soltan, he received an invitation from a John Simmons, a Birmingham brass-founder, to be his London agent, he was obliged to find premises in Holborn, which forced him to borrow to pay for the expenses of setting up the showroom. Shortly afterwards he was obliged to move to Watling Street, because it was closer to his customers. Although Chippindall made some 'good commissions',¹⁰ he soon lacked confidence in Simmons¹¹ but continued working for him.

Simmons was only one of Chippindall's contacts with Birmingham. Another was a short period, after employment with Bateman, when Chippindall stayed in Birmingham and met a certain Mr Nelson, a traveller for an unnamed brass foundry.¹² A further possible link with the town was John Rotton of Birmingham who entered a partnership with Harris, Chippindall's employer in Bath, in 1782,¹³ the year that Chippindall left.¹⁴ But according to his *Apology*, Chippindall's link with Boulton was through John Scale, a senior member of staff at the Soho Manufactory, who was friendly with Bateman of Manchester.¹⁵ It was in a letter to Scale in 1782 that Chippindall, working from 59 Watling Street in London,¹⁶ made reference to his first recorded sales commission from Soho, a sword. According to Chippindall's *Apology*, with encouragement from Scale with whom by this point he had become friendly, Chippindall proposed that he should become a London agent for the Soho Manufactory.¹⁷

After years of instability, the prospect of being involved with Boulton and his renowned Soho Manufactory, which produced a wide variety of mainly metal goods, including buttons, buckles, as well as silver and Sheffield Plate, must have seemed an enticing prospect to Chippindall.¹⁸ His proposal arrived at a crucial point in the history of Boulton and his Manufactory: his partner, John Fothergill, died in 1782 and subsequently Soho was split into two Boulton partnerships: buttons with Scale¹⁹ and the Plate Co. with William Bingley.²⁰ At that point the Plate Co. was at a low ebb. Silver production had declined: the amount put through the Birmingham Assay Office declined from a high of approximately 11,831oz in the assay year 1776/77²¹ to only 1,174 oz in 1781/82. That reduction followed a decision to run down silver production because of losses; however, the firm's ambition to replace that with an increase in Sheffield Plate production²² had by the early 1780s been unsuccessful due to a lack of orders.²³

In the *Apology*, Chippindall rightly argued that the Plate Company's difficulties had had much to do with 'the London trade having been long neglected by the firm's agent'.²⁴ That agent was John Stuart, whose commission from 20 November 1781 to 22 June 1782 amounted to a paltry £3 4s 6d.²⁵ Stuart complained that Boulton was unwilling to provide an impressive London showroom²⁶ which meant Stuart had to pay for a showroom which, given his resources, was only modest. An earlier agent, John Wyatt, had made similar complaints; because of his modest premises he was obliged to visit the gentry, which was time-consuming and he was often treated in a haughty manner.²⁷ Wyatt's customers were generally shown only drawings or catalogues, when finished pieces would have been more enticing.²⁸ Another drawback was a lack of a Boulton workman in London so that he often missed general repair work, which was normally a major part of a silversmith's income, but it also meant that modifications and repairs to Soho's plate had, inconveniently, to be returned to the Manufactory.²⁹ Stuart, who had to be pushed into finding new patterns in London from which Soho could learn,³⁰ and who had to be ticked off for sometimes failing to provide enough detail about orders,³¹ was in effect marginalised in 1781 when he was asked to return

6 RC, *Apology*, pp28–30.

7 RC, *Apology*, p31.

8 RC, *Apology*, pp32–33.

9 See note 16.

10 RC, *Apology*, pp31–37.

11 RC, *Apology*, p41.

12 RC, *Apology*, p27.

13 Hugh Thomas, 'The Early Years of Stothert and Pitt', *Journal of the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society*, no9 1977, pp24–30 (p24).

14 RC, *Apology*, p31.

15 RC, *Apology*, p40.

16 The detail in this letter conflicts with RC's inaccurate remark on p31 of the *Apology* that he arrived to work for Hewit in October 1782 and that he left (p34) in the Spring of 1793, which is inaccurate even if '9' is changed to '8' (which is probably what RC had in mind).

17 MBP Chippindall R. box,

item 1, RC to John Scale, 23.7.1782.

18 Kenneth Quickenden (hereafter Quickenden 1980) 'Boulton and Fothergill Silver: Business plans and miscalculations' *Art History*, vol 3, no3, September 1980, pp274–94 (pp274–82).

19 J.E. Cule (hereafter Cule) *The Financial History of Matthew Boulton, Master of Commerce* thesis, University of Birmingham,

1935, pp293–94.

20 MBP Letter Book M, p306, Matthew Boulton (hereafter MB) to William Matthews, 26.6.1782.

21 Quickenden 1980 (as note 18), p279.

22 Quickenden 1980 (as note 18), pp287–88.

23 MBP Hodges, John, box, item 35, John Hodges (hereafter JH) to MB, 15.10.1782.

24 RC, *Apology*, p49.

25 MBP Letter Book L, p988, JH to John Stuart, 22.6.1782.

26 MBP Box S3, item 278, John Stuart to MB, 7.1.1778.

27 MBP Wyatt family box, item 72, John Wyatt to Boulton and Fothergill (hereafter B&F), 27.1.1776.

28 MBP Wyatt family box, item 78, John Wyatt to B&F, 12.3.1776.

29 MBP Wyatt family box, item 72, John Wyatt to B&F, 29.1.1776.

his £120 stock of patterns, told that another salesman would periodically visit London with patterns for customers and that Boulton was generally disappointed with the extent to which London agents had acquired plate orders.³² Orders from Stuart petered out in the mid-1780s.³³

The lack of success in the Plate Co. was also due in some measure to mismanagement at the Soho Manufactory. John Hodges, in Boulton's employment since 1768, brought to Boulton's attention the frequent delays in supplying Sheffield Plate (due in part to the lack of a rolling mill for the plated copper).³⁴ Hodges had improved his credentials by undertaking a formal apprenticeship between 1777 and 1779;³⁵ this had given him the opportunity to assess the business but also gave him the confidence towards the end of 1782 to press Boulton to put him in charge of the Plate Co.³⁶ Hodges replaced Bingley in 1783, though as the manager rather than as a partner.³⁷ Although Chippindall provided Soho with a few orders in 1783,³⁸ it was not until the following year that he was formally made the London agent of the Plate Co. by Boulton.³⁹

The London Agency 1784–1808

Chippindall, with past experience in mind, tried to secure a firm contract with Boulton over his new role as the Matthew Boulton and Plate Company's London agent. Boulton committed himself to paying a 5 per cent commission on sales 'for your trouble and expenses in procuring orders', but that commission was forfeited if the order resulted in bad debts and, to guard against that, Chippindall was expected to obtain as much information as possible about the character of new customers. Orders were to be taken in the name of the Matthew Boulton Plate Co., which was to supply invoices. Trade customers were to be given discounts for Sheffield Plate of 20 per cent if they paid within six months, with a further discount of 5 per cent for immediate payment. Chippindall was to be provided with an assortment of patterns to show customers and was also required to send Soho patterns and designs from London to keep the firm up-to-date. Chippindall was assured that Soho would give 'the utmost exertions from hence in the punctual execution of any orders'. The agreement covered only his work for the Plate Co., but Boulton made no objection to Chippindall continuing to repre-

sent Simmons' brass-foundry,⁴⁰ though that business was soon to go into decline.⁴¹

The letter sent to Chippindall was written on Boulton's behalf by John Hodges and was needed since Boulton failed to make a meeting arranged with Chippindall in London. Although Boulton had played a key role in developing the silver and Sheffield Plate business, often acting as salesman, especially to the rich in the mid-1770s,⁴² Boulton's attention turned subsequently to developing other enterprises. Driven by a desperate financial position (Boulton's business had a deficit of £15,200 in 1782),⁴³ he pursued three new enterprises. His partnership with the engineer, James Watt, which began in 1775, generated an income of £76,000 between 1780 and 1791,⁴⁴ though it required investment beyond that point to finance technical developments and to build the Soho Foundry, completed in 1796, so that the firm would make the transition from consultants (getting others to make parts) to manufacturers of steam engines.⁴⁵ Partly to capitalise upon Watt's development of the double-acting steam engine (in which steam now acted on both sides of the piston), Boulton invested in the Albion Steam Flour Mill near Blackfriars Bridge, London, which opened in 1786, but it was not successful and burned down in 1791.⁴⁶ The third enterprise, coin making, started in 1786, capitalised on Watt's steam engines being utilised with presses, but required heavy investment to about 1790.⁴⁷ However success followed: between 1797 and 1806 Boulton minted 4,200 tons of copper coins for the British government and had contracts abroad.⁴⁸ By the mid-1790s Boulton's financial position was at last healthy with no need for more substantial investment, the deficit was reduced to negligible proportions and major loans were repaid.⁴⁹ Even when Boulton became prosperous in the mid-1790s, his interest did not return to the Plate Co.; his son, Matthew Robinson, started to assume a management role in the Plate Co.,⁵⁰ and Matthew Snr's principal interest was the Mint.⁵¹

The Plate Co. was eventually to recover but in the 1780s it was distinctly less successful than Boulton's other enterprises: in 1787 the profits of the Engine Co. were £7,210, those of the Button Co. £2,100 but those of the Plate Co. were only £1,197.⁵² The Plate Company's production of assay silver slumped in 1782–83 to 263oz.⁵³ The London agency – supposedly the Plate

30 MBP Letter Book I, p656,

JH to John Stuart, 16.11.1780.

31 MBP Letter Book I, p361,

B&F to John Stuart, 9.1.1779.

32 MBP Letter Book I, p716,

B&F to John Stuart, 3.3.1781.

33 A late example was an order for candlesticks for a Mr Bayley (MBP Letter Book N, p337, JH to John

Stuart, 23.5.1785).

34 MBP Hodges, John, box,

item 34, JH to MB, 6.4.1782.

35 MBP Hodges, John, box,

item 2, JH to MB, 9.1.1777.

36 MBP Hodges, John, box,

item 37, JH to MB, 3.12.1782.

37 MBP Ledger 1782–89

November 1783, p76 is the last reference to Bingley's

partnership with Boulton in this ledger.

38 MBP Letter Book N,

p100, JH to RC, 12.4.1783 and p122, JH to RC,

30.7.1783.

39 RC, *Apology*, p40.

40 MBP Letter Book N,

pp260–61, JH on behalf of MB, to RC, 24.4.1784.

41 RC, *Apology*, pp41–43.

42 Quickenden 1980 (as

note 18), p278.

43 Cule (as note 19), p148.

44 Cule (as note 19), p218.

45 Cule (as note 19), p195.

46 Cule (as note 19), pp259–67.

47 Cule (as note 19), pp270–71.

48 Cule (as note 19), p288.

49 Cule (as note 19), p294.

50 Cule (as note 19), p201.

51 Cule (as note 19), p200.

52 Cule (as note 19), p171.

53 Figure based on silver

received and passed at the Birmingham Assay Office

(BAO) and recorded in The Register of Plate and Silver

Wares... 1773–1792.

Company's principal outlet – had declined to the point where Chippindall's commission was just £5 7s 11d for 1783 and 1784 combined and in the following year advanced only to £18 10s 8d.⁵⁴

The Plate Co. determined to maintain the policy of giving priority to orders for Sheffield Plate, though the production of silver did increase so that 1,174oz were assayed in 1796–97.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the policy of prioritising Sheffield Plate was made obvious through sending catalogues, specifically referred to as being for 'plated' wares to many trade customers in the mid-1780s⁵⁶ and Chippindall distributed many orders of this kind in the 1780s.⁵⁷ The policy was maintained; although Chippindall's customers occasionally ordered modest quantities of silver (Rundell & Bridge's account for 1798 showing silver purchases of £8 0s 9d out of £255 15s 9d),⁵⁸ orders were very often just for Sheffield Plate as was one for John Parker in 1797 for £47 11s 0d⁵⁹ and another in the same year for Fermin & Tartet amounting to £40 0s 0d.⁶⁰ Soho's marketing encouraged customers to view its Plate Co. not so much as a maker of silver but one which concentrated 'chiefly [on] the making of all articles in plated metal...which look equal to [silver] plate and their durability [the firm claimed] is great'.⁶¹

Although Soho strongly promoted Sheffield Plate, there was greater determination to make it look like silver, hence the references to the additions of 'silver moulding' and 'extra plated' metal.⁶² In 1798, the firm offered three types of borders for Sheffield Plate dishes, two of which had silver borders with only one using plated metal for a border, and all Sheffield Plate trays were double plated with silver borders.⁶³ In the same year the firm was quite happy to quote prices for a communion service in Sheffield Plate,⁶⁴ something the firm advised against in 1775, when, unsure about the durability and appropriateness of a relatively new material for important ecclesiastical purposes, they advised the use of silver.⁶⁵ These technical improvements were paralleled by makers in Sheffield,⁶⁶ but Boulton's reputation was the equal of John Roberts who, in partnership with George Cadman from 1784, became during this period the most admired of the Sheffield platers not just because of technical innovation but, too, through a close

attention to design.⁶⁷

According to his *Apology*, when Chippindall joined the firm he felt that Soho's designs were 'old and out of date' but eventually he felt that through the designs he supplied the manufactory it 'eventually caused us to be annually looked up to as the first in the trade and our articles of every kind were copied by all our opponents at Sheffield and elsewhere'. He claimed the credit for this transformation was due to 'my continued employ in supplying them with drawings of every article of modern forms from plated to silver' and further claimed that in doing this he was 'badly...supported from the manufactory'.⁶⁸

Evidence from the Matthew Boulton Papers, as we shall see, largely supports Chippindall's analysis, but the firm introduced new designs immediately after Fothergill's death in 1782 and in the following year⁶⁹ (before Chippindall had had time to influence the firm). Later there were occasional instances of the firm taking designs from sources other than Chippindall: a sketch for a coffee set by the artist Amos Green was used in 1786⁷⁰ and from time to time the firm discussed designs with customers⁷¹ and delighted in impressing customers when new designs were introduced.⁷²

Chippindall's main concern was that in his view senior staff at Soho dragged their feet in introducing new designs and this stemmed from the different positions they occupied. Chippindall, paid on commission, wished to maximise sales; Hodges had to balance the high cost of making new dies, which the firm normally paid for,⁷³ against his assessment of the likelihood of their use for future orders. Boulton, too, mindful of his financial problems up to the end of the century, expressed the hope in a letter to Chippindall that a new candlestick pattern introduced in 1786 'will universally take'.⁷⁴

Occasionally, Soho rejected orders for Chippindall's customers. In 1797, Chippindall was told that an order for silver soup plates for Wakelin & Garrard would be rejected, with the following advice: 'And as to the expense of a dye that is out of the question being too great. We have a soup plate dye not near so deep nor so much diameter, hence are constrained to refuse the

54 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 172, RC to Matthew Robinson Boulton (hereafter MRB), 19.9.1808.

55 BAO, The Register of Plate and Silver Wares 1792–1807. Figures based on silver received and passed at the BAO.

56 MBP eg Letter Book N, p153, JH to Samuel Close, 7.11.1783; Letter Book N, p247, JH to Andrew Vezian, 28.8.1784.

57 MBP Letter Book N, p250, JH to RC, 9.9.1784

(order for £13 11s 0d) and Letter Book N, pp264–65, JH to RC, 29.10.1784 (order for £4 1s 0d).

58 MBP Letter Book S, p255, Account for Rundell & Bridge, 1798.

59 MBP Letter Book S, p155, Order for John Parker and Co., 31.8.1797.

60 MBP Letter Book S, p109, JH to Fermin and Tartet and Co., 11.2.1797.

61 MBP Letter Book S, p144, JH to J. Johnes, 8.6.1797.

62 MBP Letter Book S, p168, MB Plate Co. to T. Williams, 27.9.1797.

63 MBP Letter Book S, p248, MB Plate Co. to Francis Gill, 20.11.1798.

64 MBP Letter Book S, p183, MB Plate Co. to John, box, 10.1.1798.

65 MBP Letter Book G, pp485–86, B&F to The Very Revd Dean Addenbrooke, 9.11.1775.

66 Frederick Bradbury, *History of Old Sheffield Plate...*, reprint Sheffield

1968, pp75–77.

67 Bradbury, as note 50, pp42–43.

68 RC, *Apology*, pp49–50.

69 eg MBP Letter Book N, p5, JH to J. Stuart, 1.7.1782 (new candlestick); Letter Book N, p107, JH to Mr Jefferies, 9.5.1783 (new candlesticks); Letter Book N, p166, JH to Robert Preston, 26.12.1783 (new salt-cellars).

70 MBP Letter Book N, p593, JH to J. Deane, 30.4.1786.

71 MBP Letter Book S, p170, JH to S. Whitty, 12.10.1797.

72 eg MBP Letter Book N, p446, JH to Evill, Naish & Stroud, 24.11.1785 and p296, JH to Edward Lock & Son, 20.1.1785.

73 The firm did however charge for button dies where these were made for a customer's own livery (MBP Letter Book E, p200, B&F to Sir Harbord Harbord, 26.11.1771).

order'.⁷⁵ Presumably judging that they already had enough candlestick patterns for their market, Boulton refused to make dies for a Sheffield Plate candlestick in 1785 for one of Chippindall's customers.⁷⁶ Rundell & Bridge wanted Sheffield Plate dishes to a Sheffield pattern; not having the dies, Chippindall was advised to direct the customer to a firm there.⁷⁷ An order for Sheffield Plate dish covers in an unfamiliar pattern was rejected since the cost of the die would have been £1 10s.⁷⁸ Anticipating varied demands for silver tureen handles in London, Hodges firmly insisted on making 'new dyes for my handles that are likely to please universally'.⁷⁹

Hodges was not always so decisive but had a habit of trying to put customers off rather than rejecting their orders outright. One of Chippindall's customers wanted some polygonal dish covers; Hodges responded direct to the customer, trying to put him off by arguing that it would be very difficult to make these Sheffield Plate covers look like silver (this was undermining his firm's pronouncements at other times about the merit of the substitute) and pointing out that to make them would require expensive new dies.⁸⁰ Again, not having dies for large candlesticks and salts required in an unspecified metal, Chippindall was advised that an order would be 'costly' though apparently leaving the final decision to Chippindall.⁸¹ On another occasion, Hodges, reluctant to make what was for Soho a new tray design in Sheffield Plate, argued that with the required heavy silver borders the main part of the tray would have to be very thick; here, unusually, Hodges's objections had nothing to do with dies, but he thought the customer, a Mr Wilson, might find the tray would be expensive and the order would take a long time to execute.⁸² On another occasion, Sheffield Plate sugars and creamers made for a Chippindall customer had turned out well but, feeling that they were rather difficult to produce, Hodges suggested to Chippindall that he should not seek more orders for a pattern providing 'no profit tho' we obtain credit'.⁸³

According to Chippindall's *Apology*, the 'parsimonious' senior staff at Soho were so slow to agree to new designs that often 'the season was gone by' and 'I was frequently necessitated to apply at the fountain head

and when Mr Boulton gave positive order it was instantly executed'.⁸⁴ Given correspondence already cited that was probably true, but certainly new designs were produced from time to time at Chippindall's request. In 1796 a new die was made for water plates (ie plates filled with hot water) in Sheffield Plate for a Mr Alsop, one of Chippindall's customers.⁸⁵

In 1799 he received back a drawing of 14³/₄in candlesticks (whether for silver or Sheffield Plate is not clear), and Hodges implied acceptance of the pattern remarking that they now have 'new dyes to make'.⁸⁶ There were occasions when Chippindall was sent Sheffield Plate described as being in new designs:⁸⁷ sometimes the firm made straight copies of designs by others as it did at least on one occasion with a candlestick pattern from Sheffield's Law & Co., a pattern Chippindall probably picked up in London. In the same letter to Chippindall reference was made to four sketches made at Soho 'in the stile of the new Sheffield one'; he was asked to say which he thought most likely to sell in London after which Soho would proceed to make dies.⁸⁸

The firm's management of design was sufficient to keep up with rivals or impress provincial trade customers like William Evill of Bath that the firm was making new patterns 'all the run in London',⁸⁹ but the firm had become distinctly less artistically ambitious than it had been in the 1770s when the firm took designs directly from leading fashionable architects such as James Stuart and James Wyatt.⁹⁰ Moreover, at least from 1776 to 1778, the department which made silver and Sheffield Plate had been managed by Francis Eginton, who also made models and designed silver and later went on to establish a reputation as a stained glass artist.⁹¹ There is very little evidence to suggest that the firm continued to take designs for plate from architects,⁹² nor is there anything to suggest that Hodges had Eginton's artistic ability. Although the drawing office routinely produced catalogues⁹³ and copies of drawings⁹⁴ for marketing, there was, as Chippindall said, little creativity at Soho's drawing office. In 1802, Chippindall wrote to Matthew Boulton:⁹⁵

Whatever draughtsmen you now have at Soho in the plated department ... as far as supports the ornamental things

74 MBP Letter Book N, p477, MB to RC, 9.1.1786.

75 MBP Letter Book S, p107, JH to RC, 9.2.1797.

76 MBP Letter Book N, p374, MB to RC, 11.8.1785.

77 MBP Letter Book N, p587, JH to RC, 15.4.1786.

78 MBP Letter Book N, p587, JH to RC, 15.4.1786.

79 MBP Letter Book S, p142, JH to RC, 29.5.1797.

80 MBP Letter Book S, JH to Mr Makepeace, 1.4.1799.

81 MBP Letter Book S, p71, JH to RC, 21.12.1796.

82 MBP Letter Book S, p74, JH to RC, 27.2.1796.

83 MBP Letter Book S, p284, JH to RC, 11.4.1799.

84 RC, *Apology*, p49.

85 MBP Letter Book S, p70, JH to RC, 21.12.1796.

86 MBP Letter Book S, p283, JH to RC, 8.4.1799.

87 MBP Letter Book S, p164, JH to RC, 16.9.1797.

88 MBP Letter Book S,

p211, JH to RC, 28.4.1798.

89 MBP Letter Book N, p620, JH to William Evill, 17.5.1786.

90 Quickenden (as note 18), p278.

91 Kenneth Quickenden (hereafter Quickenden 1995), 'Boulton and Fothergill's Silversmiths' *The Silver Society Journal*, no7 Autumn 1995, pp342-56 (pp351-52).

92 Delieb and Roberts (as note 3), claimed that

Boulton continued to produce much silver to James Wyatt's designs in the late eighteenth century (pp97-99) and early nineteenth century (pp101-05) but there is no evidence for these later attributions. There are, however, similarities in the design of some Soho plate with designs in Charles Heathcote Tatham's *Designs for Ornamental Plate*, London, 1806 (Shirley Bury, 'Assay Silver at Birmingham - II' *Country*

Life, 20 June 1968, vol 143, April-June, pp1699-1702 (p1700).

93 MBP Letter Book N, p153, JH to Samuel Close, 7.11.1783 and p128, JH to John le Coq, 7.7.1783.

94 eg MBP Letter Book S, p126, JH to RC, 20.4.1797. Drawing of a mazarine (a fish strainer) for the London firm of Richard Heming.

95 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 147, RC to MB, 4.12.1802.

to be designs in that department – All you have are copyists – without 3 ideas – and ask them for a fourth – and they cannot ... I appeal to Mr Hodges for the truth of this.

Chippindall went on to deplore the firm's quality of chasing:

you are as far behind in chasing as in drawing – the chasing I daily receive (and particularly what I receive this day – is so neglected that unless some Frenchman – or some superior Englishman is brought to emulate your own chasing I fear these Greenwich people will leave us far behind).



2 & 3 M. Boulton & Plate Co., cup and cover, silver-gilt, Birmingham 1803/04.
(The Birmingham Assay Office, photo of detail: Sally Baggott)

Chippindall continued to press Boulton on the firm's artistic standards. In 1803 he paraded a chased cup [figs 2 & 3] made at Soho, around 'friends' in London, which included the firms of Robert Garrard Jnr, and William Gray, and then reported on their comments to Boulton:⁹⁶

the outline is tolerable but would have been improved by the appearance of a little solidity in the foot not in diameter but in strength and thickness; the leaf work under the body should have come higher, at present it is nearly lost; the border is the worst, the gadroon above the vine is improper and inconsistent and both that [the vine] and ... pearls might have been better substitutes. The vine stems are beautifully chased but they say the grapes should have had a warmer climate, otherwise [they should] have been entirely omitted. Such small shrivelled things can have no connection with stems bold enough to bear ripe fruit.

Despite criticisms of design and sometimes of chasing, there was a reluctance to take on experienced staff. The department's chasers, William Hooker and Edward Hodges,⁹⁷ who had been at Soho in the 1770s, were still working there in 1808.⁹⁸ However, the firm did take on apprentices. George Wyon, a chaser⁹⁹ was an apprentice in 1808.¹⁰⁰ Earlier, in 1793, Matthew Boulton brought

John Phillp (1782–1815) from Cornwall to train as an artist and die-sinker and, very unusually for a Soho apprentice,¹⁰¹ he stayed at Boulton's house.¹⁰² Whatever his motive for his particular care of Phillp (there is a tradition that he was Boulton's natural son)¹⁰³ Chippindall was enthusiastic about the presence of Phillp, in 1802, offering him accommodation when he journeyed to London¹⁰⁴ and later urged Boulton to set up a room at Soho for Phillp, 'where models and designs may be made and classified'.¹⁰⁵ In 1808, Chippindall wrote to Hodges, during a period of Phillp's illness, that the 'loss of a pencil such as his would be felt and not easily replaced; those at Soho feel not its effects perhaps so immediately as myself'.¹⁰⁶

Phillp also worked as a die-sinker at the Soho Mint and the search for artists who could work there as die-sinkers was of greater importance to Boulton than die-sinkers at the Plate Co. In trying to gain new staff, Chippindall was used as an informant. Jean-Pierre Droz, a Swiss medallist who gained a high reputation in Paris, disappointed Boulton when working at the Soho Mint;¹⁰⁷ when he left in 1790, Boulton asked Chippindall to pursue as a replacement a Mr Wilson,¹⁰⁸ who

96 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 153, RC to MB, 25.3.1803.

97 Quickenden 1995 (as note 91), p354.

98 MBP Boulton M. and Plate Co., Robinson, Edkins & Aston box, item 14, List of Workmen at the Plate Co., 1809.

99 MBP Letter Book I, p466, John Scale to George Wyon, 10.8.1779.

100 MBP Boulton M. and Plate Co. Robinson, Edkins and Aston box, item 14, List of Workman at the Plate Co., 1809.

101 MBP Box C3, item 283, MB to T. Creighton, 1.10.1791.

102 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 20.8.2009. Article based on recollections of the Revd C.J. Sneath, Phillp's grandson.

103 Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: The Friends who Made the Future 1730–1810*, London 2002, p293.

104 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 122, RC to MB, 2.6.1802.

105 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 165, RC to MB, 1.1.1807.

106 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 169, RC to MB, 15.7.1808.

107 Delieb and Roberts (as note 3), p111.

108 MBP Letter Book Q, p38, MB to RC, 26.3.1790.

109 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 23, RC to MB, 29.3.1790.

110 Delieb and Roberts (as note 3), p111.

111 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 49, MB to RC, 16.2.1793.

112 H.W. Dickinson, *Matthew Boulton*, Cambridge, 1936, p147 (hereafter Dickinson).

113 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 122, RC to MB, 2.6.1802.

114 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 124, MB to RC, 25.8.1802.

115 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 140, RC to MB, 18.11.1802.

Chippindall discovered to be too favourably employed in London to contemplate a move.¹⁰⁹ Droz was replaced by Rambert Dumarest in 1791¹¹⁰ but, dissatisfied with him, Boulton maintained the pursuit of another with Chippindall's help.¹¹¹ Konrad Heinrich K  chler joined the firm in 1793.¹¹² When he left in 1802, Chippindall located him in Greenwich¹¹³ and K  chler negotiated through Chippindall first part-time employment¹¹⁴ and later a full-time contact, though working in the capital rather than at the Soho Manufactory.¹¹⁵

Just as Chippindall criticised and helped to overcome artistic weaknesses at Soho, so too he condemned the frequent delays in completing orders and made efforts to help overcome the problem. This was a long-standing problem at Soho, as Boulton once acknowledged,¹¹⁶ and as we have seen Chippindall was promised speedy deliveries at the outset, but by Hodges' own admission the problem persisted.¹¹⁷ Chippindall complained directly to Boulton in 1790 that Soho had had an order for six months for a Mrs Hastings but Hodges was unable to tell him when the order would be complete.¹¹⁸ In March of the following year, Chippindall insisted that he had had no word about orders placed in January, so that he was obliged to suffer customers' 'uncivil messages of insolent language wch I am daily oblig'd to hear without murmur'.¹¹⁹ Moreover, Chippindall reckoned that because Soho took far more time to complete orders than rival makers in Sheffield, Soho's poor reputation led to the loss of twice as many orders for dishes and covers as he gained, at least in the first part of 1792.¹²⁰

This outpouring of frustration direct to Boulton was the culmination of years of complaints to Hodges about late delivery. Chippindall reported in 1786 the anger of a London shopkeeper, Richard¹²¹ at delay in sending a Sheffield Plate order and the same customer was pressing Chippindall for ice-pails and monteiths (bowls for cooling wine-glasses) a few months later, and Hodges was obliged to send a reassuring message about the order's progress in the Soho workshops.¹²² Hodges, aware of Chippindall's dissatisfaction with late delivery even as early as 1785,¹²³ was constantly soothing awkward situations with words in his anxious and almost daily correspondence. By April 1786 Chippindall had received via a London shopkeeper, Mr Howard, an order for Sheffield Plate oil lamps (improved lamps

designed by Aim   Argand and patented in 1784)¹²⁴ for the Duke of Orleans.¹²⁵ In May the workshops were 'very busy' with the order;¹²⁶ by early June the duke was wanting the lamps quickly and Hodges asked Chippindall to persuade him to wait. Hodges felt obliged to give Chippindall a detailed timetable when the different lamps in the order would be sent, the last of which were promised in about a fortnight.¹²⁷ In fact the last part of the order was sent about 7 July 1786 with a plea from Hodges asking Howard to allow longer delivery periods in future.¹²⁸

Chippindall's anger was increased by an awareness that Boulton and Hodges had either acted late or inadequately in trying to overcome the fundamental causes of delays. As we have seen, as early as 1782, Hodges had advised Boulton that the Plate Co. was in need of another rolling mill at Soho, specifically for rolling plated metal (for Sheffield Plate) the lack of which meant that the rolled silver and copper for these wares had, rather inconveniently, to be bought in.¹²⁹ Boulton did nothing to build the mill in the following few years (his financial difficulties and the need for investment in the other branches of his manufacture probably weighing on his mind) but aware of Chippindall's criticisms, promised a higher level of efficiency in August 1785 as a consequence of building a new rolling mill by 'next spring'.¹³⁰ The mill was in working order by the beginning of the following May,¹³¹ but in January 1787, Chippindall pointedly remarked to Boulton that this had still not stopped orders being delivered late, which meant that another order from Mr Howard, for plated dishes, had largely been lost to Sheffield, and that none of the senior staff had been able to sort matters out. Anxious that Boulton might have taken exception to such comments, Chippindall ended by saying that he hoped Boulton would be 'obliging enough to pardon this freedom'.¹³²

Delays brought up questions about the quality and number of staff. In 1785 Chippindall was promised greater efficiency once some young staff in the workshops were fully trained.¹³³ In 1800, apparently without approval from Soho, Chippindall hired two hands from London; one was being paid 25s a week and the other 30s, which Hodges implied was excessive and he, in agreement with Boulton, still preferred the option of increasing apprentices.¹³⁴ Faced with charges about

116 MBP Fothergill etc box, item 61, MB to John Fothergill, 25.2.1770.

117 MBP Letter Book S, p139, JH to RC, 22.5.1797.

118 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 27, RC to MB, 2.12.1790.

119 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 35, RC to MB, 26.3.1791.

120 MBP Chippindall R.

box, item 41, RC to MB, 22.5.1792.

121 MBP Letter Book N, p595, JH to RC, 22.4.1786.

122 MBP Letter Book N, p643, JH to RC, 27.6.1786.

123 MBP Letter Book N, pp401-02, JH to RC, 24.9.1785.

124 Dickinson (as note 112), pp127-28.

125 MBP Letter Book N,

p595, JH to RC, 22.4.1786.

126 MBP Letter Book N, p629, JH to RC, 29.5.1786.

127 MBP Letter Book N, p632, JH to RC, 5.6.1786.

128 MBP Letter Book N, p649, JH to RC, 7.6.1786.

129 MBP Letter Book N, p422, JH to Joshua Jones, 30.10.1785.

130 MBP Letter Book N, p374, MB to RC, 11.8.1785.

131 MBP Letter Book N, p614, JH to RC, 9.5.1786.

132 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 4, RC to MB, 31.1.1787.

133 MBP Letter Book N, pp410-12, MB Plate Co. to RC, 24.9.1785.

134 MBP Letter Book S, p364, JH to RC, 2.1.1800.

slow working by his staff, Hodges appeared to be reluctant to push them; in 1800, William Smith, a raiser, supported by four staff 'constantly at work' making dishes,¹³⁵ worked at what Hodges admitted was no more than 'jogging pace' but which he felt unable to alter.¹³⁶

Contradictorily, but in a way neatly designed to be a rebuke to Chippindall, Hodges remarked later in the year that small faults reported by the London agent on some silver covers made by Smith were the result of the workman being obliged to work 'quickly'.¹³⁷ Insufficient expertise in die-sinking at Soho was clearly a cause of delay; not only was the need to make dies often cited as a cause of delay,¹³⁸ but on one occasion to meet an order for Kentish & Haynes, one of Chippindall's customers, Hodges ordered another firm to make a new set of spoon dies,¹³⁹ but because of the delay the order was cancelled, and Chippindall was left to recommend another supplier.¹⁴⁰ Belatedly, Soho advised Chippindall of a 'new plan' in 1799 to improve the speed of making dies, but whether anything was actually done is not clear, and only one die-sinker, J. Cole, was listed in 1809 as working in the Plate Co.¹⁴¹ The reluctance to appoint many more staff was probably due to the variability in demand. Chippindall himself had to admit in August 1793 that Sheffield Plate orders 'are now become so scarce those men must soon stand still who depend on London orders'¹⁴² though at other times demand was strong.¹⁴³ To compensate for what Chippindall regarded as a lack of staff and what Soho regarded as the extreme difficulty in finding good staff, Chippindall suggested in 1792 an increased use of machinery and suggested too that Boulton's reputation would be harmed if Sheffield was thought to be technically more advanced; even so, there is nothing to suggest that significant technical changes occurred soon after for making Sheffield Plate.¹⁴⁴

Many customers had items specially made for them but others were prepared to order from stock. Complaints about delays would reduce if customers could order from stock which Chippindall first kept in his warehouse in Watling Street, from where he moved to roomier premises at 119 Fleet Street in 1787 and on to Salisbury Square in 1790, which was well equipped with glass cases for display.¹⁴⁵ Chippindall was supplied with stock of £371 18s 6d in 1785;¹⁴⁶ given that the firm

was against making silver plate for stock,¹⁴⁷ because of the large amount of capital tied up in such expensive pieces, it is probable that most of that total was for Sheffield Plate. Chippindall's stock fluctuated considerably. In 1795 he claimed to have only £40 worth of stock when one customer came for £150 worth of Sheffield Plate. Hodges left to Boulton a decision over whether or not the stock should increase¹⁴⁸ and Boulton instructed Hodges to provide Chippindall with a substantial improvement.¹⁴⁹ On the whole, Hodges felt that Chippindall's stock should be kept down¹⁵⁰ and in 1797 described it as 'greater by far than ever we wish it again',¹⁵¹ though it may be doubted that he had Boulton on his side in the way the word 'we' implied. Later in the year Hodges reinforced his position, expressing his hope that Chippindall had reduced his stock of ice-pails.¹⁵² Not unexpectedly, Chippindall liked to write direct to Boulton about the level of his stock.¹⁵³

Faced with Chippindall's persistent criticisms about delay, it is scarcely surprising that Hodges from time to time found cause to blame Chippindall for contributing to those delays. Even though Hodges had previously asked Chippindall to clarify details on orders,¹⁵⁴ in May 1797 the same problem occurred with an order for octagonal dish warmers and Hodges added 'of late so many orders have been given in a vague manner, or afterward alter'd that we find it necessary to be more in a certainty before we proceed'.¹⁵⁵ Despite this, the problem persisted.¹⁵⁶

Hodges made other efforts to minimise delays and their effects. Occasionally, to relieve pressure on the workshops, he obtained goods from other manufacturers to supply his customers¹⁵⁷ or turned down orders from the public to give priority to Chippindall's main customers, the London shopkeepers.¹⁵⁸ There were instances of Hodges warning that an order would take much time to execute and asking Chippindall to check that the customer would wait that long,¹⁵⁹ often specifying when was the earliest the order would be complete.¹⁶⁰ This meant that it was sometimes necessary for Hodges to turn orders down if he reckoned it was impossible to complete to the customer's timescale.¹⁶¹ Hodges, in his correspondence with Chippindall, which happened every few days, constantly struggled to keep the London agent up-to-date with the progress of

135 MBP Letter Book S, p284, JH to RC, 11.4.1799.

136 MBP Letter Book S, p281, JH to RC 5.4.1799.

137 MBP Letter Book S, pp350-51, JH to RC, 6.12.1799.

138 eg MBP Letter Book S, 281, JH to RC 5.4.1799 and Letter Book S, pp346-47, JH to RC, 23.11.1799.

139 MBP Letter Book S,

p234, JH to Mr Darwin, 20.8.1798.

140 MBP Letter Book S, p239, MB Plate Co. to Kentish & Haynes, 22.8.1798

141 MBP Boulton M. and Plate Co. Robinson, Edkins and Aston box, item 14, 1809.

142 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 54, RC to MB, 2.8.1793.

143 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 165, RC to MB, 1.1.1807.

144 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 41, RC to MB, 22.5.1792.

145 RC, *Apology*, pp41-48.

146 MBP Letter Book N, pp583-84, Annual Account, 1785.

147 MBP Letter Book B, p325, B&F to Benjamin

Molineux, 28.2.1766.

148 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 81, RC to MB, 20.6.1795.

149 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 82, RC to MB, 25.6.1795.

150 MBP Letter Book S, p160, JH to RC, 2.9.1797.

151 MBP Letter Book S, p112, JH to RC, 20.2.1797.

152 MBP Letter Book S,

p160, JH to RC, 2.9.1797.

153 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 148, RC to MB, 7.12.1802.

154 MBP Letter Book S, p78, JH to RC, 5.1.1797.

155 MBP Letter Book S, p138, JH to RC, 22.5.1797.

156 MBP Letter Book S, p163, JH to RC, 8.9.1797.

157 RC asked to obtain a silver coffee pot from the

orders.¹⁶² There is therefore much evidence that Hodges did make efforts to satisfy customers and Chippindall – though clearly, as we have seen, he was some distance from succeeding.

Apart from disputes over delays (and design), there were financial disputes. These were criticisms of Chippindall and, not surprisingly, they are not revealed in the *Apology* but in the Matthew Boulton Papers. On one occasion Chippindall's failure to inform Hodges of a Wakelin & Garrard price specification forced Hodges to reduce the price of Sheffield Plate tureen stands by 13s each.¹⁶³ Hodges was irritated in 1797 that Chippindall had continued to accept orders from two customers, Thomas Holland and also Davies & West, even though they were badly in arrears in paying for previous orders; the matter was referred to Boulton,¹⁶⁴ as was a similar situation with another trade customer, Joseph Brasbridge.¹⁶⁵ In the same year, 1797, Hodges expressed dismay that in April he had still not received from Chippindall his completed accounts for not only 1796 but 1795 as well.¹⁶⁶ Chippindall estimated his stock at the end of 1797 at £688 9s 8d whereas his clerk put the total at £848 17s 10d, a discrepancy which Hodges wrote 'surprises us [Boulton and Hodges] not a little'.¹⁶⁷

Chippindall was at this time badly distracted by family problems but later in his *Apology* he was only willing to admit that he had 'almost' been distracted by mounting domestic difficulties. His wife gave birth to six children between 1788 and 1796 (only four of whom survived infancy) which injured her health. To try to restore her health she had two months in Bath in 1797 and on her return Chippindall set up a second home for her in the agreeable surroundings of Hampstead in addition to the home above his business premises in Salisbury Square. Since the walk home each evening fatigued Chippindall, and since the supposedly healthier air of Hampstead was not having the desired effect, the whole family returned to Salisbury Square. A further consideration had been the 'dreadful expense' of keeping two homes going which only added to the accumulated burden of paying for nurses and doctors to support his wife.¹⁶⁸

In these difficult financial circumstances and in a context where his agency for Rotton's brass foundry ceased in the early 1790s, Chippindall increased his income by

selling goods from Soho apart from those made by the Plate Co. In 1794 he started selling latchets¹⁶⁹ (a thong, as an alternative to a buckle, for fastening a shoe, made in silver or silver-plated metal) for which Boulton entered a partnership with John Smith, which was troublesome but profitable for Chippindall. By 1797 Chippindall was also selling buttons for Boulton's partnership with Scale and letter copying machines for Boulton's partnership with Watt.¹⁷⁰ In 1797 Chippindall was approached by William Bingley, previously Boulton's partner in the Plate Co., about selling his plated wares in London; Hodges asked him not to take on this agency, mainly because he feared a conflict of interest.¹⁷¹ A few days later Hodges wrote to Boulton, anxious to secure his agreement to the position he (Hodges) had already taken with Chippindall, making his case mainly on the grounds that he wanted the agent to concentrate on Boulton's business. Chippindall seems to have complied with Hodges' request, even though he had wanted to take up Bingley's offer.¹⁷²

Another, much more serious issue surfaced at the end of 1797 when Chippindall was summoned to Soho, 'like a culprit at the bar', accompanied by his 'friends' John Rotton and George Stothard of Bath. According to the *Apology*, it was discovered that Chippindall was in debt to the Plate Co. by more than £1,000 and nearly a further £1,000 to all of the other Boulton businesses and John Rotton together (though the combined total was later recalculated at £1,600).¹⁷³ The matter was even more serious than Chippindall's *Apology* implies since in a letter from Hodges to Boulton, reference was made to Chippindall's 'indiscretion', which hints at more than mere financial error since it was of a kind which Hodges did not want to become public; there were, moreover, thoughts by Chippindall about leaving the firm while Boulton's lawyer wanted Chippindall to give up the lease on his house and make an inventory, presumably as a preparation for a sale to repay his debts.¹⁷⁴

Although the debts may have been due to Chippindall's errors or bad debts by his customers, on which by the terms of his contract he was not allowed commission, the *Apology* makes it clear that the review of accounts had mainly been prompted by Chippindall's unhappiness over expenses, for which he wanted payment in addition to his commission, even though, as we

London silversmith Henry Chawner (MBP Letter Book S, p163, JH to RC, 8.9.1797).

158 MBP Letter Book S, p365, MB Plate Co. to the Revd Scott, 6.1.1800.

159 MBP Letter Book S, p74, JH to RC, 27.12.1796.

160 MBP Letter Book S, p398, JH to J. Howard (an order obtained via RC), 15.3.1800.

161 MBP Letter Book S,

p403, MB Plate Co. to William Gray, 31.4.1800 (part of an RC customer's order turned down); MBP Letter Book S, p163, JH to RC, 8.9.1797 (order for vegetable dishes); MBP Letter Book S, p350, JH to RC, 6.2.1799 (a new candlestick design) and MBP Letter Book S, p107, JH to RC, 9.2.1797 (a new design for silver soup plates).

162 MBP Letter Book N,

p460, MB Plate Co. to RC, 10.12.1785 (delay in making a candlestick); MBP Letter Book N, p632, JH to RC, 5.6.1786 (a lamp order for the Duke of Orleans, some ready tomorrow, some next Thursday, remaining part to be ready following Thursday or Saturday).

163 MBP Letter Book S, p208, JH to Wakelin & Garrard, 13.4.1798.

164 MBP Letter Book S, p118, JH to RC, 11.3.1797.

165 MBP Letter Book S, p81, JH to RC, 12.1.1797.

166 MBP Letter Book S, p123, JH to RC, 10.4.1797.

167 MBP Letter Book S, p184, JH to RC, 13.1.1798.

168 RC, *Apology*, pp50–55.

169 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 62, RC to MB, 7.4.1794.

170 RC, *Apology*, pp48–53.

171 MBP Letter Book S, p176, JH to RC, 5.12.1797.

172 MBP Hodges, John, box, item 59, JH to MB, 7.12.1797.

173 RC, *Apology*, pp53–54.

174 MBP Hodges, John, box, item 60, JH to MB, 3.1.1798.

have seen, his letter of appointment made it clear that the 5 per cent commission included expenses, a fact which Chippindall failed to acknowledge in the *Apology*.

In Chippindall's view, if expenses had been allowed by Boulton on the same basis as the London agents of Sheffield's makers of Sheffield Plate, his accounts would have shown a balance. Chippindall thought it was normal for Sheffield's agents to be given incidental expenses, and not unusual for them to pay for the expenses of warehouse rent and fittings. He received nothing extra from Boulton for his annual business trips to Soho or for his warehouseman, porter and a clerk, which had become necessary with the increase in business. Chippindall further remarked in his *Apology* that he had been at the expense of converting and fitting up with glass cases the Salisbury Square premises¹⁷⁵ (though he made no mention of the fact that a set of drawers, owned by Boulton, had been transferred from Stuart at the end of his agency).¹⁷⁶ Ignoring his initial contract and presumably feeling pressed by personal financial problems, Chippindall harassed Hodges and blamed him for procrastination in failing to agree to separate expense claims.¹⁷⁷

Chippindall's resentment was accentuated by what he regarded as the firm's meanness. He felt that he had 'exerted' himself 'in the advancement of the plate company'¹⁷⁸ and, even though he was guilty of some shortcomings later in the 1790s, Boulton had earlier complimented Chippindall for his 'care and punctuality in the execution of the several commissions I troubled you with...'.¹⁷⁹ Chippindall had boosted sales in his London agency for the Plate Co. from '£100 per annum to upwards of £6,000'¹⁸⁰ and the Plate Co. was operating profitably: the profit in 1793 was £1,141 and rose subsequently.¹⁸¹ Although Chippindall didn't mention it in the *Apology*, his resentment towards Soho was probably increased by this willingness to do all sorts of favours for staff there, which included such things as getting a copy of his father's will for the chaser Hooker, obtaining green and souchong tea for Mrs Hodges,¹⁸² running errands to Windsor,¹⁸³ and inviting Boulton's daughter to stay.¹⁸⁴

The review had several outcomes. Chippindall was allowed expenses closer to those given by Sheffield firms and this included an allowance of £15 per annum for a clerk for the Plate Co.,¹⁸⁵ rising to £50 in 1806 which, together with Chippindall's contribution of £100, gave him an annual salary of £150,¹⁸⁶ though in the *Apology*, the total was remembered as £100 per annum.

In his *Apology*, Chippindall stated that he was required to pay back his debts to all parties at the rate of £100 per annum; while that is confirmed by the Matthew Boulton Papers, Chippindall's claim that it was agreed to cut his debts by a half¹⁸⁷ is not confirmed, as this account of 1799 shows:¹⁸⁸

Claimants	Sum	Apportion of £100		
	£	£	s	d
M. Boulton Plate Co.	761	38.	09.	10
Boulton and Scale	562	28.	08.	06
Boulton and Smith	285	14.	08.	04
James Watt and Co.	214	10.	16.	06
Boulton and Watt	85	4.	06.	00
Matthew Boulton Esq.	14		14.	02
John Rotton	56	2.	16.	08
	1977	100.	00.	00

A further outcome of the review was a greater closeness of the various parties. In 1802, following the death of Chippindall's wife, Boulton agreed to pay for a year for Chippindall's son, Charles William, to attend a school at Winson Green¹⁸⁹ not far from Boulton's Manufactory, which Chippindall saw as an act of generosity.¹⁹⁰ Hodges looked after Charles during the holidays and Boulton provided advice and support as Chippindall struggled to cope with both work and the task of bringing up his family. Relationships improved as Chippindall finished paying off his debts to all parties in 1804, which in his difficult circumstances was regarded as a commendable achievement.¹⁹¹

Chippindall's capacity to meet his debts was due to a steady increase in his commission, which in 1785 had only been £18 10s 8d. In 1808, Chippindall reckoned that each year after 1797 his commission was £400,¹⁹² though in the *Apology* he recollected that after 1800 the figure was £500.¹⁹³ A statement from July 1799 to December 1799 shows that his commission was £282 12s 5d based on sales (just with the Plate Co.) of £5,652 9s 11d.¹⁹⁴ The Plate Co.'s profits, only £1,197 in 1787, increased from £2,000 in 1802 to £3,564 in 1805.¹⁹⁵ Despite the Napoleonic wars, Chippindall reported in 1807 that demand for Sheffield Plate [fig 4] was strong, as to a lesser extent was the demand for silver.¹⁹⁶ The firm's production of assay silver increased from 2,994oz in 1799–1800, to 10,016oz in 1805–06.¹⁹⁷ Although Chippindall carried on with his earlier tasks of gaining and delivering orders and sending designs,¹⁹⁸ the new context of prosperity brought with it a new relationship between Chippindall and Hodges. Hodges, ever-con-

175 RC, *Apology*, pp48–54.

4.12.1790.

176 MBP Box S3, item 285.
J. Stuart to MB, 13.3.1788.

180 RC, *Apology*, p54.

177 RC, *Apology*, pp53–54.

181 Cule (as note 19), p216.

178 RC, *Apology*, p54.

182 MBP Letter Book S, pp74–75, JH to RC, 27.12.1796.

179 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 28, MB to RC.

183 MBP Letter Book S,

p82, MB to Benjamin West, 21.11.1788.

184 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 80, RC to MB, 27.4.1795.

185 MBP Letter Book S, p368, RC Account, 1799.

186 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 169, RC to JH, 15.6.1808.

187 RC, *Apology*, pp55–64.

188 MBP Letter Book S, p386, 'Claimants', 1799.

189 MBP Chippindall R.

box, item 134, MB to RC, 24.10.1802.

190 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 136, RC to MB, 26.10.1802.

191 RC, *Apology*, p56.

192 MBP Chippindall R.



4 Pair of candlesticks, Sheffield Plate, M. Boulton and Plate Co.
(The Birmingham Assay Office)

scious of Chippindall's criticism of late delivery, firmly rejected orders if he felt they could not be delivered on time,¹⁹⁹ and Hodges could now even joke about the matter: 'when you come [to Soho] we will see what can be done to move an immovable male or two'.²⁰⁰ Chippindall's friendlier relations with Soho, together with his very significant contribution to the success of the Plate Co., were to determine the next step in his career.

Management of the Matthew Boulton Plate Co. 1809–15

In January 1809 Chippindall became the manager of the Matthew Boulton Plate Co., a position which became vacant following the death of John Hodges in September 1808. The decision to invite Chippindall had been made by Matthew Boulton, but it was made through his son, Matthew Robinson Boulton, by now taking an increasing role in the management of Soho as his father's health declined, which led to his death in August 1809. The knowledge that the son, rather than the father, would be

his employer made Chippindall hesitate for a couple of weeks before accepting the offer since, while he regarded Boulton Snr as his 'best friend', Chippindall was uneasy about working for his son. Chippindall also hesitated because of his age and the family upheaval, and he doubted whether he would enjoy as much success as he had by now built up in London. Nevertheless, his friends in London thought the opportunity too good to miss, while Soho's management countered his arguments by arguing that Boulton Snr had had his greatest success in his 60s (the age Chippindall had now reached). The Boultons also pointed out that if Chippindall did not accept the position, the Plate Co. might crumble, leaving the future of the London agency in doubt, and argued too that living in the Birmingham area would be cheaper than in the capital.²⁰¹

Chippindall's move to the Soho Manufactory had also been eased by other provisions. Chippindall had hoped, while still the firm's London agent, that his son, Charles William, would become an apprentice at Soho,²⁰² and after Chippindall had accepted the job at Soho on 19 September 1808,²⁰³ intimated his fear later in the same month that his own death might, through lack of parental support, prevent the completion of the apprenticeship.²⁰⁴ Not only did Matthew Robinson respond by offering a seven-year apprenticeship to the Plate Co., without the payment of a premium (as Chippindall acknowledged in the *Apology*),²⁰⁵ but additionally Chippindall was paid £80 extra to cover his son's board and lodging²⁰⁶ (for which Chippindall made no acknowledgement in the *Apology*). Nor did Chippindall acknowledge substantial help with removal expenses. Matthew Robinson indicated a willingness to pay a 'part' of Chippindall's removal expenses,²⁰⁷ and later paid £51 19s 6d²⁰⁸ out of the total bill of £65 16s 0d, which included rent of £2 12s 6d on a house in Handsworth, near Soho, which Chippindall occupied while assisting with finalising the accounts of the Plate Co. after Hodges' death for two months before the formal move to Soho in January.²⁰⁹ Although that assistance had been at Matthew Robinson's request, so that Chippindall had a right to expect that that expense would be covered, Matthew Robinson had, at Chippindall's request, gone to the trouble of helping him find accommodation.²¹⁰

Chippindall's later hostility to Matthew Robinson was

box, item 172, RC to MRB, 19.9.1808.

193 RC, *Apology*, p50.

194 MBP Letter Book S, p368, Commission Account with M. Boulton Plate Co., July to December 1799.

195 Cule (as note 19), p216.

196 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 165, RC to MB, 1.1.1807.

197 BAO The Register of Plate and Silver Wares... 1792–1807.

198 MBP Letter Book S, p402, JH to RC, 24.3.1800.

199 MBP Letter Book S, p402, JH to RC, 24.3.1800 (reject an order to Mr Gray if he cannot wait two months).

200 MBP Letter Book S,

p427, JH to RC, 24.7.1800.

201 RC, *Apology*, pp57–62.

202 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 169, RC to JH, 15.6.1808.

203 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 172, RC to MRB, 19.9.1808.

204 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 176, RC to MRB, 27.9.1808.

205 RC, *Apology*, p63.

206 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 190, 'Extra Allowance Beyond the Stipulation of the Agreement', MRB to RC, 14.1.1809.

207 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 178, MRB to RC, 30.9.1808.

208 MBP Chippindall R.

box, item 176, MRB to RC, 14.3.1810.

209 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 195, RC expenses RC's move to Soho, 12.3.1810.

210 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 181, RC to MRB, 18.10.1808.

mainly based on his contract, which Matthew Robinson had drafted before the end of 1808, the provisions of which Chippindall found to be either incomprehensible or unacceptable. He thought the workload heavy since it entailed purchasing all kinds of stores, paying workmen, overlooking all accounts at Soho and London and superintending the design and execution of all orders as well as supervising the whole of the Plate Co. Chippindall was unhappy both about not being able to discharge workmen without Matthew Robinson's approval and the lack of any reference to the duration of the contract save for a six-month period of dissolution by either party. Chippindall was to be paid 25 per cent of net profits; this was written in a way which led Chippindall to believe that he would receive £60 per month irrespective of profits (which would have been a big increase on his previous earnings and probably a significant factor in his decision to move). Only later did it become clear to Chippindall that his share was dependent on profits but at the time (1808–09) his anxieties about the contract were met by reassuring verbal responses, including a reference to a permanent agreement, but the final contract was not given to Chippindall until after he moved with his family to Soho in January 1809 – by which time Chippindall had no realistic option but to accept, even though the provision he objected to remained.²¹¹ Correspondence between Matthew Robinson and his attorneys about the contract makes it clear that their client knew that William Chippindall, a lawyer acting on his brother's behalf, was unhappy about the contract which, suspiciously, has not survived in the Matthew Boulton Papers, even though much correspondence has.²¹²

The disastrous consequences of the contract were only to become apparent with time; initially things went well. Matthew Robinson bought the lease and fixtures of the warehouse in Salisbury Square,²¹³ Chippindall employed his son at Soho,²¹⁴ and his eldest daughter married in 1810. Chippindall's share of profits in 1810 was £1,561 with which he was 'well satisfied'. Matthew Robinson agreed to Chippindall's recommendation that his former clerk in the London agency, John Glynn, should be made the new London agent.²¹⁵ Glynn was to receive £50 per annum for expenses for each year of the seven-year contract (a clearer and more generous provi-

sion than Chippindall had enjoyed), but his commission starting at 3 per cent, was only by increments to reach 5 per cent in 1816; however, since sales were high – £20,690 in 1809 and £22,142 in 1810 – his commission reached £621 and £664 5s 0d in his first two years.²¹⁶

This favourable situation was not to last. Chippindall soon regretted the clause which prevented him from dismissing staff without Matthew Robinson's approval, which Chippindall felt generally weakened his authority with staff in the Plate Co. In 1810 an R. Shaw was 'insolent' to Chippindall and 'a promoter of a disturbance', but Chippindall could do no more than recommend to Matthew Robinson (who was in London at the time) that the workman should be dismissed.²¹⁷ Shaw had earlier been described as the 'leading man' (in an industrial dispute) in a list of Plate Co. workers; although some were described as 'satisfied' or 'industrious', others were described as 'dissatisfied' or 'backward' or 'old' or 'not overindustrious'.²¹⁸ John Scale once expressed the view that no silversmith should be paid more than £1 5s 0d per week;²¹⁹ a little over half of the 41 staff on the Plate Co. list earned more than Scale's maximum and even some of those were not highly regarded. Even so, '30 to 40' workers assembled in 1810 and demanded a wage rise: Chippindall advised Matthew Robinson, in London, to resist the claim and the workers refused to resume work until he returned.²²⁰ Two years later Chippindall was still corresponding with Matthew Robinson over discharging staff.²²¹ In the *Apology*, Chippindall reflected on his bitterness towards Matthew Robinson for not allowing him a freer hand in managing staff and regarded this as a key factor in his lack of success in running the Plate Co.²²²

The London agent, John Glynn, complained about a 'want of support' from Soho,²²³ but according to Chippindall, Glynn's new position made him 'dizzy with his own importance. He carried himself so highly and so unaccommodatingly to his customers that in their letters to me they made loud complaints of his conduct'.²²⁴

The Plate Co. declined. In 1811, Glynn's sales dropped from the previous year's high of £22,142 to £16,338 and that downward trend continued so that, in the first half of the following year, sales amounted to only £8,963.²²⁵ There was a steep drop in the production of silver: the amount of assay silver produced in 1813 was only

211 RC, *Apology*, pp58–60.

212 MBP eg Box A and J Weston, J. Weston and Teasdale 1802–20, item 15, William Chippindall to A. and J. Weston, 6.2.1809; item 16, A.J. Weston to MRB (a copy of draft contract sent to MRB) 13.2.1809; item 18, J. Weston to MRB, 'I still think Mr W. Chippindall is not quite satisfied', 24.2.1809.

213 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 200, Statement of RC's Account for Salisbury Square, 1809.

214 RC, *Apology*, p70.

215 RC, *Apology*, p63.

216 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 203, RC to MRB, 31.8.1812.

217 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 199, RC to MRB, 27.6.1810.

218 MBP Box Boulton M & Plate Co. Robinson, Edkins & Aston, item 14, 'Workmen for the Plate Co.' c.1809.

219 MBP Letter Book E. pp119–20, John Scale to William Matthews, 6.7.1771.

220 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 197, RC to MRB, 2.6.1810.

221 MBP Chippindall R.

box, item 204, RC to MRB, 28.9.1812.

222 RC, *Apology*, p69.

223 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 206, RC to MRB, 9.12.1812.

224 RC, *Apology*, p64.

225 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 203, RC to MRB, 31.9.1812.

226 BAO Work Assayed and Marked 1 May 1811 –

15 May 1822.

227 Sheffield Assay Office, The Plate Register shows that 41,064oz were received and passed there in 1805 and in 1813 48,220oz. Corresponding figures at BAO were 58,879oz and 78,753oz (Jennifer Tann, Birmingham Assay Office 1773–1993, Birmingham, 1993, p70).

228 RC, *Apology*, p64.

5,156oz,²²⁶ about half of what was produced before Chippindall left London. This was against the national trend which, despite ups and downs, generally moved upwards over that period.²²⁷ In 1811 Chippindall's profit share was down by a half compared to the previous year, to only £736. In 1812, his share was £185 and in the following two years the Plate Co. made a loss, which he blamed on Glynn and staffing difficulties. Despite the losses, Chippindall continued to be paid.²²⁸

The losses alarmed both Matthew Robinson and Chippindall; the latter now had 'the melancholy prospect of ruin' and decided in 1815 to leave Soho with his family. The day before he left, Boulton asked Chippindall to sign a legal document to repay him (according to the *Apology*) £1,818²²⁹ (but according to the bond £1,650)²³⁰ for £565 paid to Chippindall in 1813 and £1,152 paid to him in 1814²³¹ plus presumably a small amount for the beginning of 1815. There were two implications; firstly that Boulton had been willing to pay Chippindall despite the losses as long as he stayed at Soho and secondly that it was only at this point that Chippindall realised that his contract, though signed six years earlier, only gave him £60 per month if profits allowed. Boulton was furious that Chippindall refused to sign before returning to London, but Chippindall was determined to consult his brother who had negotiated the contract, about the justice of Boulton's claim, and initially returned the bonds unsigned. However, despite the brother's confidence that Boulton would not prevail²³² and a letter by the brother to Boulton (the angry tone of which Chippindall felt bound to apologise for),²³³ Chippindall signed and then returned the bond on 15 July 1815,²³⁴ agreeing to repay £1,650 plus interest of 5 per cent per annum to be paid at £150 on 24 June 1816 and then at £200 in each June thereafter until the whole was repaid.²³⁵ This was a faster rate of repayment than the £100 per annum Chippindall had in mind.²³⁶ The struggle to repay that debt cast a dark shadow over Chippindall's life for many years.²³⁷

The London Agency 1815

Before the dispute over the bond had been settled, Chippindall returned to London early in May 1815,²³⁸ It had been agreed that Chippindall would replace Glynn as the Plate Co.'s London agent, whose sales had gone

down and who had alienated so many customers that Boulton had spoken to him about the matter; Glynn's response was so 'impertinent' that it was agreed that he would leave at Midsummer 1815, a factor which influenced the date at which Chippindall took up his new job.²³⁹ Boulton ordered Glynn to leave immediately after he had made an inventory.²⁴⁰

Chippindall took over the Salisbury Square premises²⁴¹ and paid rent to Boulton.²⁴² Some of Chippindall's old customers such as William Gray and Robert Garrard were still using the Plate Co. as a supplier,²⁴³ despite Glynn's behaviour. Chippindall reckoned that his return encouraged some customers to come back so that the Plate Co. then received as many orders as the workshops could cope with.²⁴⁴ The number of trade customers was substantial: one letter to the firm's bankers in 1818 shows that on that occasion payment was being demanded for 23 of Chippindall's customers.²⁴⁵ Some account customers were buying large quantities of plate: early in 1819 a payment of £258 17s 4d was required of Joseph Brasbridge and Rundell, Bridge & Rundell owed £338 9s 4d.²⁴⁶ The production of assay silver markedly increased, reaching 12,464oz in 1817–18, which surpassed any previous annual total produced by the Soho Manufactory. However, corresponding figures for the next two years declined to only 6,874oz and 4,590oz.²⁴⁷ Some firms, according to Chippindall's *Apology*, had been so alienated by Glynn that they had forged links with other suppliers and these Chippindall was unable to undo.²⁴⁸

Chippindall's commission was only at a level that enabled him to repay his debt to Boulton at the rate of £100 per annum and the seriousness of Chippindall's position resulted in a stress-related attack one evening in May 1820. He reckoned that with a period of rest and the help of his son he would be able to carry on. However, Boulton, now angrily labelled the 'factotum' by Chippindall, thought Chippindall was no longer fit enough to do so, and he was dismissed, with his son temporarily taking charge.²⁴⁹

Postscript

Following Chippindall's illness in 1820, his son Charles suggested to Boulton that he could superintend the agency under his father's general direction.²⁵⁰ Charles'

229 RC, *Apology*, p65.

230 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 217, 'Judgement upon the Bond...'. 24.6.1815.

231 RC, *Apology*, p64.

232 RC, *Apology*, pp65–67.

233 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 219, RC to MRB, 1.7.1815.

234 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 223, RC to MRB,

13.7.1815.

235 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 218, RC to MRB, 24.6.1815.

236 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 216, RC to MRB, 16.6.1815.

237 RC, *Apology*, p70.

238 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 212, RC to MRB, 12.5.1815.

239 RC, *Apology*, pp68–69.

240 MBP G2 box, item 67, MRB to John Glynn, 15.5.1815.

241 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 212, RC to MRB, 12.5.1815.

242 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 227, RC to MRB, 18.7.1817.

243 MBP Letter Book 1815–19, p4, W.D. Brown to M. Boulton and Watt Co., 3.8.1815.

244 RC, *Apology*, p68.

245 MBP Letter Book 1815–1819, p220, W.D. Brown to M. Boulton and Watt Co., 19.10.1818.

246 MBP Letter Book 1815–19, p233, W.D. Brown to M. Boulton and Watt Co., 14.1.1819.

247 BAO Work Assayed and Marked, 1 May 1811 – 15 May 1822. Figures based on silver received

and passed.

248 RC, *Apology*, p68.

249 RC, *Apology*, pp70–71.

250 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 237, Charles Chippindall to MRB, 24.5.1820.

forwardness upset Boulton and in June Charles had to accept that his father would be succeeded by someone other than himself; however, he pressed for a salary in excess of the £80 to £100 per annum proposed by Boulton and wanted commission too. Charles was no longer content with his existing salary of £60 because of the need to support his father as well as himself.²⁵¹ His father's successor was a Mr Edkins, who had worked as a clerk at Soho and was friendly with Boulton, who at this stage was now dubbed by an increasingly bitter Chippindall in his *Apology* as, 'the grand snake and Factotum'. However, Boulton had agreed that Charles should have a salary of £100 per annum plus commission, that generally gave him another £20 per annum, which even Chippindall thought was not ungenerous. But Charles misbehaved badly; in the *Apology* Chippindall related how Charles appropriated money owed to his father while he was the agent, and finally, keeping low company, started to steal from the Plate Co.²⁵² As a result he was dismissed by 1822, Boulton labelling him an 'offender', giving him 'the punishment he merits'.²⁵³ Charles gathered from relatives the £300 he owed, but his personal financial position deteriorated and he was imprisoned for three months in 1823 and again in 1824.²⁵⁴

Up to that date Richard Chippindall's financial position remained precarious. In 1820, in order to pay off his remaining debt to Boulton and the Plate Co., Chippindall had to agree to the sale in July of his furniture and effects apart from a few pieces which he kept back for his own use when returning to Birmingham to live for the rest of his life. In return, Boulton agreed to pay him an annuity for life of either £60 or £90, depending on the proceeds from the sale. Since, according to the *Apology*, the sale failed by £300 to reach the amount Boulton stipulated to qualify for the higher annual payment, Chippindall borrowed the £300 from members of his family.²⁵⁵ Although there is no suggestion of this in the *Apology*, a letter from Chippindall to Boulton in 1820 implied that he was let off a part of the debt: he referred to 'your kindness in having reduced the debt which stands against me...'.²⁵⁶ Although from that point Chippindall was credited with the annuity, Boulton refused to pay, despite pressure from Chippindall,²⁵⁷ until the debts (which included a further £275 when the Plate Co. books were again examined) were cleared with money from the annuity and also until his son's debts to

the Plate Co. were also repaid. Chippindall did not begin to receive any annuity until Christmas 1823.²⁵⁸

Although Chippindall was still burdened with debts which had to be repaid to his family, not only to repay Boulton, but to pay for his own subsistence, the £90 per annum from Boulton and £60 more from his family, left him in a tolerable financial position.²⁵⁹ Moreover, family expenses had gradually been reducing; his eldest daughter Mary having been happily married for over ten years,²⁶⁰ Jane (who lived with her father) and Elizabeth Matilda²⁶¹ had by now gained employment as did Charles in 1824.²⁶² But Richard Chippindall's more fortunate position lasted only briefly since he died in 1825.²⁶³ His gravestone is propped against the wall of St Paul's Churchyard in Birmingham, a mile or so from the Soho Manufactory. The Plate Co. was sold in 1833 to a partnership including Edkins,²⁶⁴ formerly the London agent. By the middle of the century there was little production of any kind at the Manufactory either by the Boulton family or by others who had bought various businesses at Soho,²⁶⁵ which was demolished in 1862.²⁶⁶ Matthew Robinson Boulton died in 1842.²⁶⁷

Conclusion

By revealing management's internal disputes this article could easily give the impression that the Matthew Boulton Plate Co. was less successful than it was in maintaining the production of silver and Sheffield Plate throughout the period of Chippindall's involvement from the early 1780s to 1820. Chippindall played a significant part in this success. Up to 1809 Chippindall was the Plate Co.'s agent in London and he very significantly raised sales in the capital, helped the firm keep its designs up-to-date and harassed the manager John Hodges over delivery and staffing. The firm's success and efficiency could, however, have been greater. Improvements were slow. The Plate Co. was not very well managed by Hodges and Matthew Boulton gave priority to other ventures. After Chippindall took charge of the firm at Soho, he lost control and sales dipped in London, though he restored some stability when he resumed the London agency.

Chippindall was very willing to acknowledge Matthew Boulton's support in both his business and family affairs, but the *Apology* above all reveals Chippindall's despondency and failure to provide for his family as he wished, despite a life-time of hard work

251 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 239, Charles Chippindall to MRB, 12.6.1820.
252 RC, *Apology*, pp74-76.
253 MBP MR Boulton General Correspondence L3 Box 2, MRB to Fisher

Braithwaite & Jones, 11.7.1822.
254 RC, *Apology*, pp76-80.
255 RC, *Apology*, pp76-77.
256 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 240, RC to MRB, 11.7.1820.

257 MBP Chippindall R. box, item 244, RC to MRB, 5.11.1821.
258 RC, *Apology*, pp76-77.
259 RC, *Apology*, pp74-76.
260 RC, *Apology*, p50.
261 RC, *Apology*,

pp74-76.
262 RC, *Apology*, p80.
263 MBP MRB Correspondence Box 3, G. Richard to MRB, 4.6.1826.
264 MBP Box Boulton M. and Plate Co. Robinson, Edkins & Aston, item 131.

'Proposition for purchasing the Plate Trade at Soho', 7.11.1833.
265 W.C. Aitken, *A Slight Sketch of the Manipulatory Processes in Electrometallurgy, Glass and Papier Mache Manufacture*...

Birmingham 1851, p24.
266 BRL Manuscript no.661022, Joseph Hill, Notebook vol.16, Handsworth and Perry Barr, p96.
267 Shena Mason, *The Hardware Man's Daughter, Matthew*

and his association with a business which was generally profitable. Although Chippindall acknowledged that his family commitments, ill health and his wayward son played a part in his problems, as did his ill-judged recommendation of Glynn to the London agency, he cursed Matthew Robinson for a contract in 1809 which made it seem that he was guaranteed a good commission, irrespective of profits, which enticed Chippindall away from a profitable agency in London and which led to deep financial problems in his later years. However, Chippindall's account also reveals his unwillingness to acknowledge that he repeatedly failed to secure firm or satisfactory contractual agreements before taking up his posts, not only in 1809 but also when first working for Matthew Boulton and indeed before.

Moreover, the Matthew Boulton Papers reveal, especially in the 1790s, that Chippindall allowed his attention to slip over ordering and keeping accounts, which was not acknowledged in the *Apology*. Detail in the Papers shows that Chippindall's later recollections were sometimes inaccurate and that his bitterness towards Matthew Robinson made him look less reasonable than he was. On the other hand there are suspicions that the

Papers have been edited to conceal detail about the 1809 contract which would probably have put Matthew Robinson in a bad light.

Chippindall's *Apology* reinforces the impressions of others about the characters of the Boultons. Chippindall's favourable opinion about Matthew Boulton was shared by James Watt, who described him as 'humane and charitable'.²⁶⁸ On the other hand, Watt's wife, Annie, once described Matthew Robinson as having a 'haughty over bearing and unkind manner',²⁶⁹ which was a description similar to Chippindall's own assessment.

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Boulton and his 'Dear Girl',
Chichester 2005, p195.

²⁶⁸ Dickinson (as note 124), p208 (Memorandum concerning Mr Boulton, 17.9.1809).

²⁶⁹ Mason (as note 267), p147 (Annie Watt to James Watt Jnr, 14.2.1811).

On techniques

The instrument for weighing gold, invented by W. Bradford, and J. Hulls, of Camden, with a book of directions, price 5s. may be had by retailers &c by sending to E. Cave at St John's Gate. They are sold also by W. Clarke at the Royal Exchange; J. Payne, in Pater-noster Row, booksellers; T Jeffrys, near Charing Cross, printseller; J. Ellington, at Huntingdon; W. Dicey at Northampton; R. Raikes at Gloucester; and T. Baddeley at Bath. This instrument effectually prevents frauds by counterfeits as it gives the weight and shews the alloy, with the quantity of adulteration (if any) in as little time as gold is weighed, and is as portable as a penknife.

Gentleman's Magazine, August 1753, p195.
[Previously in Newsletter 46]

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.

The Public Advertiser, 17 October 1767.

To extract the silver out of a ring that is thick gilded, so as the gold may remain intire: a curious secret

Take a silver ring that is thick gilt; make a little hole through the gold into the silver; then put the ring into aqua fortis in a warm place; it will dissolve the silver and the gold will remain whole.

Smith's Laboratory or School of Arts, 1799 edition.
[Previously in Newsletter 16]

A method to work a cup, one side gold and the other silver

Take a piece of fine silver; flat it and file it rough all over on one side; raise with a graver little points upon it. Then take a piece of gold in proportion to what thickness you would have it; form it exactly to the dimensions of the silver, in a flat square; heat both the gold and the silver red hot; then lay them quick on one another, and with a wooden hammer strike them gently together: when thus you have united these two metals, you may make thereof what you please; one side will be silver and the other gold.'

Smith's Laboratory or School of Arts, 1799 edition.
[Previously in Newsletter 16]

Silver is tarnished superficially, by certain vapours, as that of putrified urine, to a colour so like that of gold, that several edicts have been issued in France to prevent frauds of this kind with regard to wires and laces.

A. Rees, *The cyclopedia or universal dictionary of arts, sciences and literature*, London 1819. Taken from *Jewellery News*, March 1994. [Previously in Newsletter 18]

A Method to preserve Gilders from the ill Effects of Mercury.

When the gilders have coated a piece of metal with an amalgam of gold and mercury, they put it into the fire that the mercury may evaporate, and the gold alone be left upon the metal: and they intercept and save the mercury which flies off by stopping the chimney of their furnace with a wisp of hay. During this operation they must take in by respiration a considerable quantity of mercurial vapours, which diffuse themselves all over the room. These vapours are extremely pernicious, they make the gilder pale, meagre and sickly, and bring on irremediable tremors.

To prevent these ill effects, gilders in the first place, should have two doors in their work-room opposite to each other, which they should keep open that there may be a free circulation of air; besides, they should have a piece of gold applied to the roof of the mouth during the whole time of the operation. This piece will attract and intercept the mercury as they breathe, and when it grows white they must cast it into the fire that the mercury may evaporate, and replace it when it is cool again. They should indeed have two pieces of gold, that one may be put into the mouth whilst the other is purifying and cooling: by these means they will preserve themselves from the diseases and infirmities which mercury occasions.

Those who are apprehensive of the ill-effects of mercury which they have already drawn in with their breath, may get rid of all, or the greatest part of it, by this easy method. Let them melt a few leaves of gold in a crucible, and when it is cool swallow it: the gold not being dissoluble will only pass through the body, and in its way will attract and collect all the mercurial particles it meets with. The gilders know where to find the gold again, and may soon purifie it by passing it through the fire. Thus they will preserve their health without loss, pain or danger.

Gentleman's Magazine, April 1753.
[Previously in Newsletter 48]

The Goodwin silver competitions

JOAN UNWIN

Stuart Goodwin gave the Bradbury collection to the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in 1945 and then assisted financially with further acquisitions and an annual design competition to encourage local silversmiths. This is a description of the competition, the winners, the designs and the pieces, using the Company's archives.

The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire was established by an Act of Incorporation in 1624. This Act gave Sheffield craftsmen the right to elect annually a Company of 33 men drawn from the freemen – trained craftsmen making knives, scissors, shears, sickles and scythes. The Company maintained control of apprentices and the registration of identifying marks for the local cutlery craftsmen in Hallamshire, an area made up of the ancient parishes of Sheffield, Ecclesfield and Handsworth. For more than 200 years the Company controlled the main industry in the town, but it was also an important local institution in a town which did not have a town council until 1843. In 1860 the Company extended the right to become freemen to the manufacturers of steel and tools, drawing in the nationally and internationally important nineteenth-century manufacturers.

From 1625 the Company has celebrated each year (with a few exceptions) with a Feast to which influential people are invited. A desire to decorate its Hall and the tables with silver was understandable, and the Company now has an enviable collection of Sheffield-hallmarked silver – having at least one piece for each year since the founding of the Sheffield Assay Office in 1773. The records of the Company – its letters and the Minutes of various committees – show that until the 1940s the Company was obliged to hire silver for its feast. It is not known what silver, if any, decorated the tables from its beginnings in 1625, whether silver spoons were provided for guests or if they were expected to bring their own. It is in the Account Books of the eighteenth century that information about silver first appears and, with the building of the second Hall in 1723 and its refurbishment, details emerge showing the increasing grandeur of the Feast. During the 1730s the Company regularly had to hire plates, glasses and cutlery and nearly every year had to pay for lost pewter, etc. The first mention of silver is the replacement cost of 2s 9d for a silver teaspoon missing at the 1739 Feast. In 1767 the Company purchased silver-handled knives and forks from Thomas Law for £4 14s 6d and, in 1776, 7 guineas-worth of spoons from Winter & Co. By the 1790s the Company was having its plated silver repaired by Morton & Co. and was buying more spoons from local silver manufacturers. In 1821, an inventory was taken of the Company's possessions, room by room, which reveals that it owned some silver and plated tableware, including eight pairs of plated salts, nine plated candlesticks and nine three-light branched candlesticks, nine plated fruit baskets and some plated knives, forks and

All illustrations courtesy of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire.



1 Stuart Goodwin (1886–1969) was the Managing Director, later President, of the Neepsend Steel and Tool Company, a member of the Cutlers' Company from 1943 and High Sheriff of Nottingham in 1955. He was one of the most significant local benefactors in recent times, and gave away an estimated £500,000 to the City, Sheffield University and the Company. He received a knighthood in the Coronation Honours in 1953.

spoons. It also owned a large race cup, presented to the winner at Sheffield races in 1777, which is the earliest of three such cups in the Company's collection, but there is no indication that it was on display in the Hall. Following the building of the third Hall in 1832, the accounts show that more table silver was purchased, but silver still had to be hired. In an inventory of 1845, the silver was stored in a 'Stone Safe' along with tablecloths and two volumes of *Law of Election*. By 1914 only 11 large decorative pieces of silver were in the strong room, including the ceremonial mace and two Newcastle-hallmarked tankards, but none was on permanent display.

Although some significant pieces had been acquired, the impetus for the Company's serious collecting began in January 1944 with a letter from Frederick Bradbury to William Wood, Master Cutler. Bradbury expressed concern about his silver collection, since the city museum and town trustees seemed unable or unwilling to purchase it. A few months later, his elder brother Joseph died aged 85 when Frederick, who had spent his life travelling the country for his firm, was almost 80 years old. The family firm of Thomas Bradbury went into voluntary liquidation, its assets taken over by Atkin Brothers. It is not surprising that Frederick should have thought about the future of his collection and by the end of the year, the collection had been purchased by Stuart Goodwin.^[fig 1] In February 1945, a formal document signed over the collection from him to the Company and a flurry of activity followed – press releases, arranging insurance and moving the collection into safe storage in the bank next door to Cutlers' Hall.

Having acquired a collection of silver with hallmarks for almost every year from 1773 to 1840, the Company discussed the idea of completing the run of Sheffield silver to the present time. This idea did not, however, meet with the approval of Frederick Bradbury, who considered the Victorians to have had poor taste in design and not unnaturally thought his collection from 1773 to 1840 needed no addition. The idea took hold however, and Stuart Goodwin offered to purchase further pieces. Letters were sent to members and freemen of the Company, to the Goldsmiths' Company in London and to dealers and auction houses asking for information about pieces of Sheffield silver to fill in the 'missing years' and throughout the 1940s and 1950s a steady trickle of items was acquired. Stuart Goodwin assisted financially in the

purchase of identified 'year pieces' and, more importantly, proposed a scheme to pay for a new piece each year. His aim was to encourage Sheffield silversmiths by organising a design competition through the Master Silversmiths' Association and the Sheffield College of Art. There was to be a cash prize for the winner and runner-up. The winning design would be produced and presented to the Company, however on occasion both designs were made, sometimes being funded by the Master Cutler, as well as by Mr and Mrs Goodwin.

The early years of the competition

Before the Goodwin design competition got into its stride, the Company wanted to obtain a new piece for the coming year. The first commission came in April 1946 when the Company asked six local manufacturers to submit a 'specially decorative piece' with a 1945 hallmark to celebrate the end of the Second World War. (Sheffield's assay year ran from August to July, so the 1945 date letter was put on items made in January–July 1946.) James Dixon & Sons' design was chosen and the 'Victory Cup' was purchased for £104. A newspaper cutting identifies the designer as Charles Holliday, who

was a prolific designer at the firm, working on cups for the Grand National between 1957 and 1964, among other pieces. Over the next decades, he was often the winner or runner-up in the Goodwin competitions. The 1946 piece, a simply styled, tall vase and cover made by Walker & Hall, was given by Stuart Goodwin and involved several letters back and forth from the Company to manufacturers, clarifying what kind of items might be suitable.

The piece for 1947, selected from 20 submitted pieces, is a standing cup and cover by James Dixon & Sons.^[fig 2] In contrast is the large piece for 1948. David Flather, who had been Master Cutler in 1926, had died and left a legacy with specific instructions that it was to be used to commission a cup, and the minutes record that the firms of Mappin & Webb, Walker & Hall and James Dixon & Sons had submitted



2 Cup, James Dixon & Sons, Sheffield 1947/48. Height: 22cm (8³/₄in). A letter from the Company to Stuart Goodwin described it as 'absolutely typical of the period and is also a handsome little cup'.

designs. The winning design was a large three-handled loving cup engraved with the words AMORE ET AMICITIA. In 1949 and 1950, two very similar cigar boxes made by Walker & Hall, were given to the Company by Mr and Mrs Goodwin, though there is no indication of their being competition pieces, and the piece for 1951 was also a cigar box, given by Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Flather, Master and Mistress Cutler.

The 1950s

The competition really got going in the 1950s when letters were sent to the Master Silversmiths' Association and the College of Arts and Crafts in Sheffield, indicating the design brief for that year's competition. Prizes for the winner and second place were 20gns and 5gns respectively and the cost of the piece was to be no more than £50 plus purchase tax. Minutes and letters reveal that problems were created by this insistence on a maximum value of silver to be used, which restricted the designers to some extent, but it was obviously necessary to maintain control over the funding of the competition. It is not clear how or why the Company came up with their design brief or how the winners were chosen. In 1947 all the entries were laid out for viewing, but when drawings only were submitted the task was probably more difficult and at least one firm asked to submit (and was refused) an actual piece. In 1953 the Company appointed Dr Seddon and Mr Singleton of Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, to do the judging, but in other years it appears to have been done by members of the Library Committee of which Stuart Goodwin was not a member.

In 1952 the Company received designs for a cup or dish from Walker & Hall, Frank Cobb, Gladwins, Cooper Bros, Roberts & Belk, Mappin & Webb, James Dixon and the College of Art. Only the winning design of a beautiful comport, by James Dixon & Sons, was given to the Company.^[fig 3] In 1953, the brief specified a cup, for which 15 designs were received. The Cooper Bros design was for a very tall (48cm (18⁷/₈in)) two-handled cup and cover, with the finial in the shape of an Imperial Crown – a reference to the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in that year.

The following year, the Company received 17 designs for a bowl and chose George Hobson's attractive deep bowl (35cm (13³/₄in) diam) resting on an eight-sided stem. The 1955 fruit dish by Peter Marks of Walker &

Hall has a plain, shallow bowl, 29cm (11¹/₂in) diameter, and stands on a trumpet foot. This dish is now a rose bowl, but the lid is probably an addition to the original piece. The lid is pierced with a design of swords (for the Company) and arrows (for the city). The decoration on the competition pieces borrowed heavily from the symbols in the coats of arms of the Company and the City of Sheffield as well as the Yorkshire Rose.

Up to this point, although the runner-up received a prize, only the winning design had been made up for the Company, but in 1955, for the first time, both the winning and second-place designs were produced. In that year, Sir Stuart Goodwin was appointed High Sheriff of Nottingham and Frank Cobb & Co., as runner-up, was also able to make their entry, engraved to commemorate the event. The oval dish, with rich saw-pierced decoration, was given to the Company by Sir Stuart and Lady Goodwin.

In the second half of the 1950s Charles Holliday, the designer at James Dixon & Sons, came to dominate the competition, being winner or runner-up in four out of the five years. His contemporary at Mappin & Webb was Wallace Smythe who, although he seems to have been submitting designs previously, did not find success until 1960. The Company was again given the runner-up designs in 1956 and 1958, the first being given by the Master and Mistress Cutler and in 1958, by Lady Goodwin.

The competition in 1956 required designs for a rosewater dish and co-incidentally the same winner and runner-up were chosen as the previous year. The second-prize design was made and given to the Company by the Master and Mistress Cutler, Mr and Mrs Phillips. The well of the winning design is in the shape of a large Yorkshire Rose and both dishes have a raised central boss chased and engraved with the Company's coat of arms. In 1957 and 1958, Charles Holliday designed the winning three-handled loving cups. In 1957 there were 14 entrants, but there are no details of the runner-up. The records for 1958 are slightly confusing. Although the winning design was a cup, the runner-up, Wallace Smythe of Mappin & Webb had submitted a design for a rosewater dish, so what exactly had been the design brief? Smythe's dish was presented to the Company by Lady Goodwin and has a fluted well with a smaller, central raised dish. Perhaps because of this mixed response, the instructions for the 1959 piece were more specific than previously. The table centrepiece was to cost no more than £100 and 11 designs were submitted. Choosing the winner seems to have been a close thing as the voting by the Hall and Library Committee is recorded as being five to four. We cannot appreciate their difficulty, as only the winning piece was made, but perhaps the close voting was because the design was quite unusual. It is a polygon dish, with five taper holders and a central boss bearing the arms of the Company of



3 Comport, James Dixon & Sons, Sheffield 1952/53.
Height 25cm (9⁷/₈in).

Assay year	Object	Winning manufacturer/college	Designer	Runner-up	Designer
1945/46	The 'Victory' cup	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday		
1946/47	Vase and cover	Walker & Hall			
1947/48	Small cup	James Dixon & Sons			
1948/49	Loving cup	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday		
1949/50	Cigar box	Walker & Hall			
1950/51	Cigar box	Walker & Hall			
1951/52	Cigar box	George Ibberson			
1952/53	Fruit stand	James Dixon & Sons		Mappin & Webb	
1953/54	The 'Coronation' Cup	Cooper Brothers & Sons Ltd		James Dixon & Sons	
1954/55	Bowl	Walker & Hall	George Hobson	Mappin & Webb	T.R. Glenn
1955/56	Fruit dish	Walker & Hall	Peter Marks	Frank Cobb & Co.	Frank Watts
1956/57	Rosewater dish	Walker & Hall	Peter Marks	Frank Cobb & Co.	Frank Watts
1957/58	Loving cup	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday		
1958/59	Loving cup	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday	Mappin and Webb	Wallace Smythe
1959/60	Table centre	Walker & Hall	Peter Lumby	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday
1960/61	Floral display container	Mappin & Webb	Wallace Smythe,	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday
1961/62	Fruit dish/tazza	Walker & Hall	Ronald Shaw	Roberts & Belk	
1962/63	Dessert fruit dish on pedestal	College of Art	David C. Dixon	College of Art	C. Maxfield
1963/64	Cruet set	British Silverware	Wallace Smythe	Roberts & Belk	A.E. Billard
1964/65	Dessert dish on a pedestal	British Silverware	Barry Lee	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday
1965/66	Piece of table silver	Cooper Brothers & Sons Ltd	Peter Lumby	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday
1966/67	Rosewater dish	James Dixon	Charles Holliday	Frank Cobb & Co. Ltd	Sydney Watts
1967/68	Three-piece cruet set	Frank Cobb & Co. Ltd	Sydney Watts	James Dixon	Charles Holliday
1968/69	Goblet for the Master Cutler	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday	Frank Cobb & Co. Ltd	Sydney Watts
1969/70	Goblet for the Junior Warden	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday	Cooper Brothers	Peter Lumby
1970/71	Sweet dish	College of Art	Fiona Susan King		
1971/72	Goblet suitable for a lady	John Turton & Co.			
1972/73	Badge for the Clerk	David Mellor	David Mellor		
1973/74	Dish	David Mellor	David Mellor		
1974/75	350th anniversary goblet	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday		
1975	Dish with new Assay mark	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday		
1976	Goblet for Jnr Warden's lady	College of Art	Valerie Mead		
1977	Goblet for Snr Past Master	College of Art	Janice Wightman		
1978	Single taper candlestick	James Dixon & Sons	Charles Holliday		
1979	Biscuit container	Sheffield Polytechnic	Jayne Harding		
1980	Limited to £150 cost [lectern*]	Parkin Silversmiths Ltd			

*(see text p73)

Cutlers. Wallace Smythe was finally successful in 1960, winning ahead of six other entries.[fig 4]

After the first ten years of the design competition, some aspects emerge. The Company obviously wanted to have substantial decorative pieces of silver, which would enhance its display within the Hall, at dinners and the annual Feast, but the restrictions on the cost of silver may well have contributed to the declining number of entries, from 17 in 1954 to 7 in 1960. Although the competition was apparently open to the students of the College of Art, none had so far succeeded and the dominance of the designers from the large manufacturers, Mappin & Webb, Walker & Hall and especially James Dixon & Sons, may well have discouraged other firms. At the end of the decade, the Company had added significant pieces to its collection. A number of second-place designs had also been made, a trend which continued in the next decade, when Masters Cutler chose to commemorate their year of office with gifts of silver.

The competition had been conceived as a means of encouraging good design but the designers were rarely accorded public credit for their work. Their names were consistently recorded only from 1954 and even though the Company had specified it would keep the



4 Flower holder, designed by Wallace Smythe, Mappin & Webb, Sheffield 1960/61. Height 28cm (11in).

designs, unfortunately only one survives in the archives. It is only through the written records of this competition that we can identify the work of some designers, though the 1960/61 piece by Wallace Smythe [fig 4] does have his name engraved on the base. James Dixon & Sons' designer, Charles Holliday, was the most frequent winner, said to have been influenced by Scandinavian designs. Both he and Wallace Smythe were trained at the Sheffield College of Art.

The 1960s

The 1960s saw the competition looking for pieces of table silver. This focus may well have been the result of financial constraints but the pieces are much more modest in conception. The designs are more restrained, with less elaborate saw-pierced decoration, though the several rosewater dishes allowed for some intricate chased designs and heraldic symbols as decorative features. From surviving letters it would seem the design brief was sent out sometime between May and July, with an August deadline in order to meet the Assay Office's assay year. By 1968 the prizes continued to be 20gns for the winner, with the second prize having been increased to 10 gns.

In 1961 and 1962, the brief specified a fruit dish or tazza with only the winning designs being made for the Company. Dr Seddon reported to the General Purposes Committee in 1961 that though the eight entries were 'reasonable', he did not think they were of a sufficiently high standard to be worthy of presentation to the Company, but the Company did acquire a plain circular tazza, with the foot being formed by an inverted cone.

The Company was once again enforcing its cost restrictions in 1963, asking that the pieces cost no more than £100 and requiring a certificate saying so. It specified the first of a series of condiment sets and, out of 11 entries, only the winning design was made; two condiment sets were given. Both the winning and runner-up designs were made in 1964. Barry Lee's design is a plain tazza resting on a narrow stem, while Charles Holliday's comport rests on an inverted cone-shaped stem. The General Purposes Committee minutes record that there was concern about the small number of entrants (seven), possibly reflecting the current value of the prizes and the limitation on the silver value to be used. Sir Stuart was to be made aware of the situation.

In 1965 the brief for an unspecified piece of table silver resulted in two rose bowls being chosen and given by Sir Stuart and Lady Goodwin. These are two lovely pieces, quite different in concept, Peter Lumby's being an oval basket with handle and a circular lid pierced with a design of Yorkshire Roses. The runner-up design by Charles Holliday has a curved triangular body with a silver-gilt pierced lid. In that year, Holliday also designed the 'Hallamshire Bell' used at Company meetings, which was given to the Company by the Master and Mistress Sir Eric and Lady Mensforth.

In 1966 the Company once again asked for a rosewater dish. The winning design is a heraldic design but the runner-up was very much in keeping with the times, celebrating England's win in the World Cup, several of the earlier football matches having taken place in Sheffield. The dish has a reeded border engraved with the names and national flags of the 16 participating countries and the raised domed centre is engraved with an image of the Jules Reme trophy. As part of the city's celebrations during the World Cup, the Company proudly mounted a public exhibition of its silver.

The 1963 condiment sets were obviously intended for regular use at the Company dinners and since two sets were not sufficient, the Company asked for a three-piece condiment set again in 1967, when both winner and runner-up designs were made. The winning design by Sydney Watts [fig 6] is more traditional than Smythe's 1963 design. The Company has two sets of these but received seven sets of the Charles Holliday runner-up design, which was in a more modern style.[fig 8] Sir Stuart and Lady Goodwin presented two sets, the others being given by Mr and Mrs J.R.A. Bull and Mr and Mrs K.H. Lewis, Masters and Mistresses Cutler in 1964 and 1973 respectively.

In 1968 and 1969, the Company continued the theme of pieces for its dinner table. The 1968 winning design is an elegant goblet with silver-gilt decoration on an inverted cone-shaped stem. This is used by the Master Cutler at all Company dinners and the letter to Charles Holliday in September, telling him of his success, asked if he could make the goblet for the beginning of the Master's year in October. There was some difficulty with the runner-up design, made for the Senior Warden by Sydney Watts. In a letter to Watts in February 1969 the goblet was rejected since it did not have two elephants' heads, as designed. The Company insisted on this feature, which was rectified. The elephant's head is



5 Dish, mounted on a laminated support, David Dixon, Sheffield, 1962/63. Diameter: 45cm (17³/₄in). A student of the College of Art, Sheffield, Dixon was the 1962 winner out of 17 entries. The runner-up was also from the college.



6 Cruet set, designed by Sydney Watts, Frank Cobb & Co.,
Sheffield 1967/68.

7 Cruet set, designed by Charles Holliday of James Dixon & Sons,
Sheffield 1967/68.

an important symbol for the Cutlers' Company being part of its coat of arms, where the head represents ivory, an expensive material once used for making high-quality knife handles. Having acquired a goblet for the two senior members of the Company, the design in 1969 was one for the Junior Warden.

The competition in 1970 was limited to the students at the College of Art, Sheffield, but the Company did consider opening the competition to designers outside Hallamshire. There would be two prizes of £15. In a letter to the College of Art, quite specific competition requirements for a finger bowl or sweet dish were given, suggesting that any engraving should show local craftsmen at work. There seems to have been some anxiety about the recent designs and a hope was expressed that the designs may display 'some of the freshness of design and method seen in recent work from centres other than Sheffield'. The winner submitted an unusual design – the bowl being formed in the profile of the then Master Cutler, Mr T.H. Burleigh. It is engraved with the arms of the Cutlers' Company and the device of a circular saw, representing the Master's firm, Firth Brown Tools.

The 1960s competitions saw the Company choosing practical pieces and several runner-up designs were made. Sir Stuart Goodwin died in June 1969 and more than 2,000 mourners attended his funeral – a tribute to his generosity to many aspects of Sheffield life. Sir Stuart had created a Trust fund to continue the design competition, which would supply an annual income to pay for the 'year pieces' and the prizes. Following his death the Company continued the competition, but it was much reduced, having to rely on a restricted income.

In 1970 the Company began considering how to observe the bicentenary of the founding of the Sheffield Assay Office in 1773. It wanted to have some substantial item of silver and therefore restricted the competition pieces in 1971 and 1972, there being no runner-up prize, in order to accumulate sufficient money to pay for the piece. From this time, the competition becomes more difficult to follow in the minutes and letters, as fewer designs were submitted and there was an increasing trend for the Masters Cutler, both past and current, to become involved in the donation of 'year pieces', either the winning competition piece or a separately commissioned item.

In 1971 another goblet was acquired. This time, an elegant goblet with a silver-gilt stem was designed for the Mistress Cutler. The 1972 acquisition was not purchased out of the Silver Fund, but was given to the Company by Mr and Mrs Richard Doncaster, Master and Mistress Cutler. This was a badge for the Company's Clerk, made by David Mellor, whose design was chosen by Sir Eric Mensforth and William Ibbotson, members of the Company. Unfortunately it has subsequently been stolen.

For almost two years, the Company was in correspondence with a number of designers about the bicentenary piece, eventually choosing the design submitted by David Mellor, the Sheffield-born designer. The deceptively simple dish was to be made from separately forged silver strips, soldered together, then engraved with the date of every year from 1773, together with the British monarchs against their year of accession. There was a great deal of discussion about the sketch, and a rather amusing twist in these discussions, in that the Company's letters to David Mellor talk of the 200th anniversary as '200 years' and obviously think of the dish as having 200 strips of silver. Shortly after the confirmation of the sketch, on 12 May 1972, someone with slightly more mathematical skill inconveniently pointed out that the 200 years from 1773 ended in 1972 and that 1973 was actually the 201st year! The dish is therefore not only a tribute to the silversmith, but also to a competent mathematician.[fig 8]

The Cutlers' Company saw 1973 as an appropriate moment to assess its collection of silver. Trevor Brighton, Sub-Dean of the School of Art and Design, Sheffield Polytechnic (now Sheffield Hallam University) was asked to write a review, which includes a short summary of the design competitions. The survey traces the development of the Sheffield silver industry, highlighting specific examples in the Company's collection. Sheffield became noted for the candlesticks it produced and the Company has a fine set of old ones.

The celebratory theme continued for two more years. In 1974 Charles Holliday won the competition for a goblet to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding

8 Detail of a dish, designed and made by David Mellor, Sheffield 1973/74. Diameter: 47cm (18½in).



of the Cutlers' Company in 1624. Just over 200 were made and sold to the Company and freemen. The Company has four of them, of which two are used at dinners by the Clerk and Chaplain. In 1975, the Sheffield assay mark was changed from the crown, which had been used since 1773, to the Yorkshire Rose and the assay year became January–December. Until then, the assay year had run from July, a fact which accounts for some of the confusion when Masters wished to commemorate their year of office, which ran from October. Charles Holliday once again designed the piece of silver – a 28cm (11in) diameter rosewater dish, inscribed 'Commissioned by the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in 1975 to celebrate the first use of the Rose by the Sheffield Assay Office'. The rim is engraved with a bark pattern and the raised boss contains a silver medallion, which is stamped with the arms of the Assay Office. On the underside is the first stamp of the 'Rose' mark.

It is clear from the minutes and correspondence that the design competition was coming to the end of its life. Without the ongoing generosity of Sir Stuart and Lady Goodwin, the fixed income from the trust was no longer sufficient to commission pieces which the Company wanted. Also, the concept of the 'year piece' was increasingly attractive to Masters Cutler who wished to leave some tangible memory of their year in office. They began to commission more substantial silver than the design competition could propose and the competition pieces became subordinate. However, during these later years, the students from the College of Art were once again prioritised and 19 entries were received in 1976, suggesting a renewed desire to encourage the students. In 1976, 1977 and 1979 three women produced pieces for the competition. Valerie Mead produced an attractive goblet for the Junior Warden's lady and the runner-up, Janice Wightman made her goblet for the Senior Past

Master for 1977, when no competition was held. [fig 9] This goblet was hallmarked on 4 January 1977 with the 'Jubilee' hallmark honouring the Jubilee year of HM The Queen. It was presented to the Company by Mr and Mrs Norman Hanlon, Master and Mistress Cutler in 1975.

In 1978, the competition was once more open to any designer and out of eight entries, Charles Holliday won his final design competition with an ornate single candlestick on a circular base covered with a sheet of 'barked' silver. The stem is a pyramid formed from four triangular sheets of highly polished silver and the deep silver-gilt drip pan has high, saw-pierced sides. The 1979 winner, Jayne Harding, did not fare so happily. Her design for a biscuit barrel was best out of 18 designs, but when it had been made was returned by the Company as being unsatisfactory. The Company's only piece for 1978 is a dish with a chased and engraved image of Cutlers' Hall in the centre. It was presented by Sir Samuel Roberts when he was elected to the Company.

By 1980 it was becoming clear that the design competition was not what it once was. The Possessions Committee felt moved to reassert the parameters of the competition, with some revision of the rules. A summary of the aims of the competition was drawn up, whereby there would be only one prize of £50 and the competition would be restricted to students. Probably because of the experience in 1979, there was no commitment to make the winning design and the original drawings would be the property of the Company, with copies given back to the student and college. The design for 1980 was to be a piece of silver limited to £150 cost, which was later revised to be specifically for a lectern. The Possessions Committee was then reminded that the Master had been planning to give a lectern, with the result that there was no competition and Mr and Mrs J. Mallett, Master and Mistress, gave the lectern, which was made by Parkin Silversmiths Ltd.



10 Water ewer, Suzanne East, Sheffield 1982/83. Height 35.5cm (14in). The last competition piece.



9 Goblet to be used by the Senior Past Master, Janice Wightman, Sheffield 1977/78. Height 18cm (7in).

The Goodwin Design Competition was running out of steam. With the death of Sir Stuart, the financial reality of running an annual competition was brought home to the Company. Not only did the winning and runner-up designers expect to receive a prize, but there was also the commitment to have the winning piece made up. The competition had clearly been popular with the designers employed by the major manufacturers, especially Charles Holliday, and had resulted in several significant pieces being added to an increasingly important collection of Sheffield-hallmarked silver. But the encouragement to new designers and students had not been so successful and the competition sometimes had to be restricted to students in order to give them a chance. In 1977, 1979 and 1980, there was no competition and the increasing involvement by Masters who wished to donate pieces, sometimes retrospectively, further eroded the role of the competition.

The end, 1981–84

There is no record in the Possessions Committee minutes of any competition in 1981 but the Company received a badge for the Chaplain, given by Mr and Mrs Bernard Cotton, who were Master and Mistress in 1979. In 1982, the competition was run again but restricted to students of Granville College, a Further Education college in Sheffield. Suzanne East won and made a deceptively simple water ewer, with a pear-shaped body and extended lip. The cost of making it was £422, highlighting the problems in financing this competition.[fig 10]

After the royal wedding of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981, the design brief for 1983 had initially been for a set of cutlery, to be called 'Prince

of Wales' or 'Diana', but enquiries to Kensington Palace showed that this would not have been allowed. Instead, another Sheffield student, Mark Budden, designed a small goblet for use by the immediate Past Master which was made by Parkin Silversmiths and presented by Mr Kenneth Clephane, Master Cutler, 1982. The idea for a cutlery design continued to be discussed, but the 'year piece' for 1984 was a water jug given by Rabone Chesterman with an inscription recording that firm's bicentenary, made by James Dixon & Sons. In 1984, the Possessions Committee merged with the Fabric Committee and this is the last that is recorded of the design competition.

Conclusions

For 30 years, the Goodwin Design Competition generated a number of significant, beautiful and technically demanding pieces of silver made by local craftsmen, and added to an important and coherent collection of Sheffield-hallmarked silver. However, the rising cost of producing the designs became an important issue when the legacy from Sir Stuart Goodwin no longer covered the costs of any substantial piece. The Company's archives trace the administration of the competition – the sending out of the design brief, the choosing of the winner and runner-up and the commissioning of the pieces to be given to the Company. Unfortunately, the discussions about what the design would be and the process of choosing the winner are not recorded and apart from the design by David Mellor of the dish in 1973, none of the designs survive.

Many of the competition pieces grace the table at small dinners and the goblets and cruet sets are regularly used. Together with the Bradbury Collection, the competition pieces are on permanent display in the Cutlers' Hall and the most impressive pieces are put on show at the Cutlers' Feasts.

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Times past



Left: 'J.W. Watkinson'. Photograph of an English suburban jeweller's shop and its proprietor, circa 1930. Such shops were commonplace in most towns, but the few that remain are an endangered species.

Bottom left: 'On Cleaning and Preserving Plate & Jewellery'. Back and front of a pamphlet published by Mappin & Webb Ltd, Sheffield, late nineteenth century. It advertises branches at 'Manchester, Nice, Johannesburg, etc'.

Bottom right: 'Barfield's Diamond Plate Powder'. Advertisement from an unknown source, English, circa 1835.

(Photos: Culme collection)

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magically cause a most Brilliant Polish. It
saves time and expense, as plate once cleaned
with it will not tarnish. It is used for cleaning
Gold, Silver, Plated Goods, Brass, Copper,
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Sixpence per Box.

The Wine Label Circle

BRUCE JONES

Labels made of silver and inscribed with the name of a wine were first made in about 1730, an elegant way of indicating the contents of green bottles and clear glass decanters. Indeed they were originally known as bottle tickets and today are often described as decanter labels or, where appropriate, sauce labels.

The Wine Label Circle was formed in 1952 to study these small items and it has prospered steadily for over half a century. Today there are some 170 members, two thirds living in the UK and Ireland, the remainder in a dozen other countries. They are attracted by factors such as the multiplicity of designs, the numerous silversmiths involved and the names on wine labels.

The designs of labels reflect the changing styles seen in larger items of silver, from rococo through to elegant neo-classical forms, then ornate cast Regency and distinctive Victorian designs. Silversmiths continue to produce striking designs: illustrated below is a sample of those commissioned by the Circle's current President, Tony Hampton, exhibited at the V&A in 2006.[figs 1-3]

More than five hundred different silversmiths' marks are recorded on silver labels. This provides the opportunity to acquire items, of varied technique and often of

great quality, from a wide range of makers, and to study numerous different marks. Other materials employed include Sheffield and electroplate and enamel.

Over two thousand names of wines, spirits and cordials, sauces and medicines have been found on labels, shedding fascinating light on the tastes and habits of earlier times.

The Circle meets formally twice a year, when papers are presented and aspects discussed. The autumn meeting alternates between London and the provinces. In the spring, the Circle usually meets at the Savile Club in London, a favoured haunt of the much missed Tom Barlow, who was Chairman of the Silver Society and President of the Circle.

Professor John Salter has also held both positions, and he has been deeply involved in the publication of two books, *Sauce Labels* and *Wine Labels, 1730-2003*. The Circle publishes a Journal twice a year, discussing labels and makers, and has a website. A number of members of the Silver Society are also members of the Circle, including the Society's current Chairman David Constable; and Silver Society members are always welcome to meetings and to membership.



1 (left) Label for Chambertin Clos de Bèze, Jacqueline Mina, London 2002.



2 (centre) Label for Chassagne Montrachet, Simone ten Hompel, London 2002.



3 (right) Label for Romanée-Conti, Rod Kelly, London 2002.

www.winelabelcircle.org

Museum focus: new displays

The Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris

SIMON BLISS

Since all objects in museums are part of some kind of narrative, it is the purpose of this short paper to concentrate on how certain silver objects have been deployed within the new displays at the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris. For reasons of brevity (and to coincide with my own interests) I have chosen to discuss some key examples from the art nouveau and art deco displays and to discuss their rôle in the museum's strategy of treating individual objects as part of an integrated ensemble. Whether by accident or design (but almost certainly the latter) the inclusion of some key pieces tell a story of change and decline in the fortunes of French silver in the period circa 1889–1939.

In September 1905, the Parisian journal *Art et décoration* published a lengthy description of the new home of the Musée des Arts décoratifs: the Pavillon Marsan, part of the Palais du Louvre. Much excitement was created by this timely canonisation of the decorative arts within the hallowed walls of the Louvre. Hard on the heels of the successes of the *Expositions Universelles* of 1889 and 1900 which gave rise to the primacy of the art nouveau style in France, the opportunity now existed to demonstrate the achievements of French decorative art in a coherent way. One of the principal aims of the collection was to open up a fruitful dialogue between contemporary forms and those of the past.¹ Alongside the permanent collection, retrospectives of key French designers and makers were regularly held from the museum's inception.

The layout of the museum's collections in 1905 was rigorously chronological and dominated by a series of period rooms, evoking the spirit of each époque.² This pattern of display remained more or less intact until the museum was closed in 1996 for a major renovation. Almost exactly 101 years after the collections were first installed in the Palais du Louvre, the museum reopened its doors to the public on 15 September 2006, promising a different set of opportunities for appreciating the collection:

tous ces objets qui traduisent les situations les plus diverses de la vie seront présentés dans une muséographie contemporaine associant à un parcours chronologique une galerie d'étude destinée à approfondir l'approche des oeuvres autour de thèmes choisis et renouvelés.³

[all those objects which convey diverse aspects of life will be presented via a contemporary museology combining a chronological route with a study gallery destined to deepen the approach to the works around chosen themes and new insights]

The promise of a new museological approach is certainly fulfilled in some parts of the museum. For example, the new galleries des études, offer a new dialogue between forms of all periods, concentrating on revealing how the function and form of certain typical objects have changed with the passage of time. One might, for

1 For a discussion of this, see Paul Vitry, 'Le nouveau musée des arts décoratifs', *Art et décoration*, septembre 1905, p65.

2 As note 1. Vitry's description of the period rooms is extensive.

3 Les Art Décoratifs, Press

Release, April 2006. See also *Dossier de L'Art*, no133, septembre 2006 and *Connaissance des Arts*, no 291 / 1, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 2006. Both are special issues and contain extensive accounts of the new displays.

example, compare an eighteenth-century 'love seat' with a contemporary essay in the art of sitting. The dominant means of understanding the bulk of the museum's collection remains, however, the *parcours chronologique*.

Art nouveau

The displays and room reconstructions deal with the tastes of the late nineteenth century French *haute bourgeoisie*. The furniture of Guimard and Majorelle are dominant in this respect. The silver objects (and many of those in glass by, for example, Gallé) are largely kept apart. It is an unfortunate separation, for art nouveau works best as an ensemble and one could probably be more satisfied in this regard by the reconstructions of art nouveau interiors at the Musée d'Orsay. Nevertheless, some of the silver objects displayed here are extraordinary examples of that peculiar mix of conservatism, animism and modernity that characterises both the art nouveau style and the characteristically sinister and Janus-faced nervousness of *fin-de-siècle* culture.

The tea service by Bapst and Falize [fig 1] was shown at the *Exposition Universelle* of 1889. It represents, if not a fully blown piece of art nouveau fantasy, then a 'transitional' piece. Stylistically, we can place it somewhere between the historicism of the mid nineteenth century and the beginnings of art nouveau. Some of the foliage and other detailing is too literal to be comfortably classified as belonging to the more modern style and the jug (left) is almost a rococo throwback – a style which was very much still in evidence as a French national style at the 1889 *Exposition*. Furthermore, the lizards, snakes and snail recall elements of mannerism. Here, the cult of nature is observed not as an abstraction (as in the fully mature art nouveau style of a decade later) but as an attempt to reconcile quite traditional shapes with an applied language of plant and animal forms.

This attempted reconciliation has been interpreted in an interesting way by Claudia Kanowski. She has pointed out that the formal innovations of French art nouveau could perhaps be seen in another light:⁴

Probably in no other country the requirement for reconciliation of tradition and modern age was so strong as it was in France. Maybe, just the radical political revolutions and the rapid industrialisation led to this strong re-insurance in the common cultural patrimony.

The French *belle époque* was, of course, an age of cultural confidence which allowed for the emergence of modern art in an unprecedentedly peaceful and prosperous era. Amongst all the decadence and luxury, though, lurks a shadow of paranoia and pre-science.

The position of this piece within the beginnings of the art nouveau/art deco museological *parcours* is a useful one, for what follows is a series of rooms dedicated to the full flowering of the art nouveau style after the impact of the later English arts and crafts had been absorbed and the style was heading for its exalted position as the style of *fin-de-siècle* Europe.

In Bonvallet and Cardheilac's *chocolatière* of circa 1900, [fig 2] we encounter a canonical piece in the development of art nouveau. The variety of materials used perhaps renders the piece awkward from the point of view of the silver connoisseur, but interesting for those looking for a way of explaining the nature of the art nouveau con-



1 Tea service, partly chased and gilded, ivory, agate, Germain Bapst and Lucien Falize. Height of teapot: 14.5cm (5¾in). Exhibited at the *Exposition universelle*, Paris, 1889. (*Les Arts Décoratifs*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; photo: Jean Tholance)
Colour illustration p18



2 Chocolate pot with whisk, Lucien Bonvallet and Ernest Cardheilac, circa 1900, with turned ivory and wood handles. Height (with whisk): 28cm (11in). (*Les Arts Décoratifs*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; photo: Laurent Sully Jaulmes)

4 Claudia Kanowski, 'The Way to Art Nouveau Silver', paper delivered at the International Symposium *Modern Art of Metalwork* at the Bröhan

Museum, Berlin, 6–8 October 2001. Records of the proceedings can be found online at www.broehan-museum.de