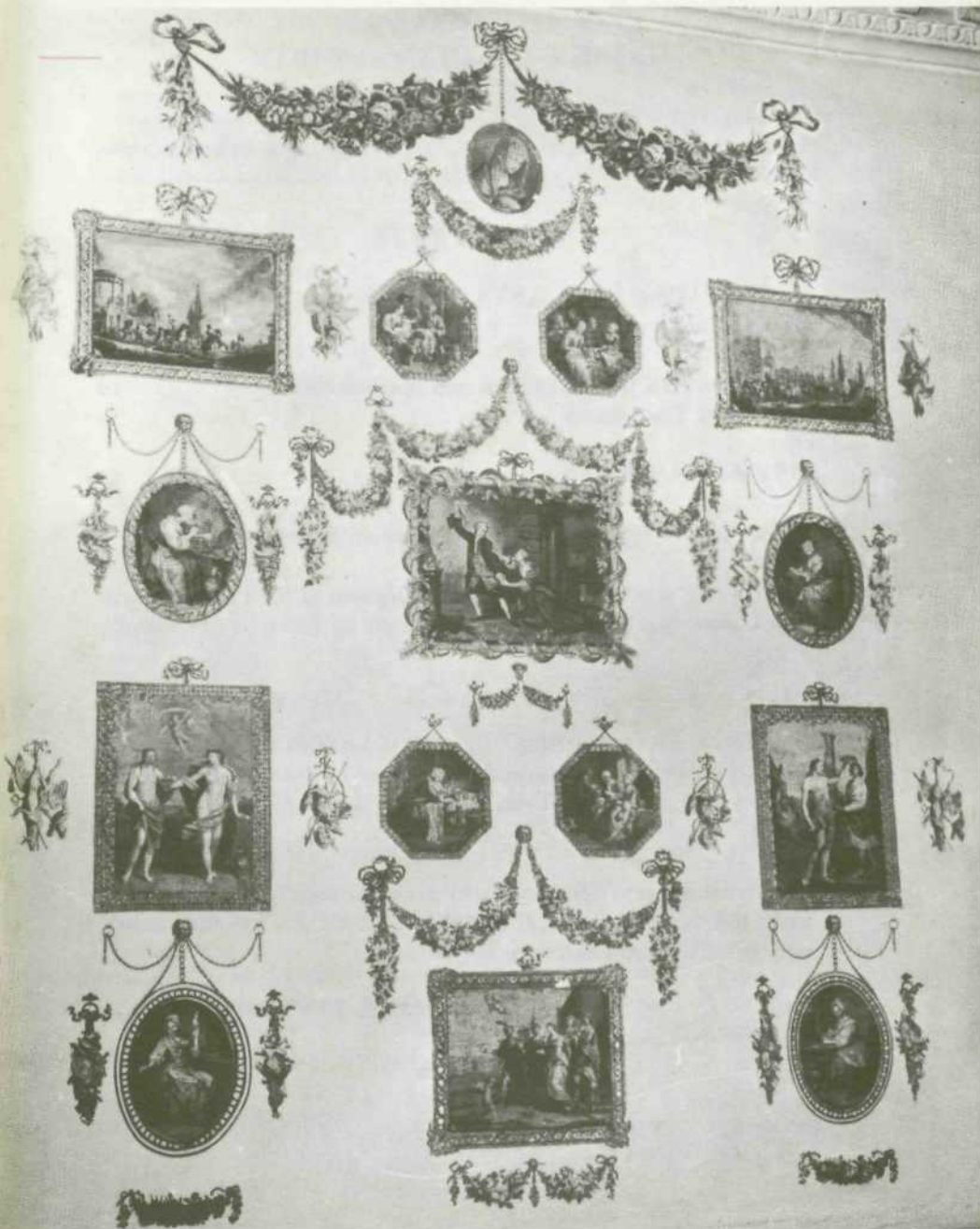


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CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| NEW LIGHT ON CASTLETOWN by The Knight of Glin | 3 |
| IRISH SILVER decoration and re-decoration by Francis Townshend | 10 |
| GEORGIAN KINSALE—the future? by Francis Townshend | 29 |
| GEORGIAN KINSALE—the future? by Francis Townshend | 39 |

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The cover is a photograph by Lucy Lambton of the Print Room at Castletown, Co. Kildare, which was made by Lady Louisa Conolly c. 1770.

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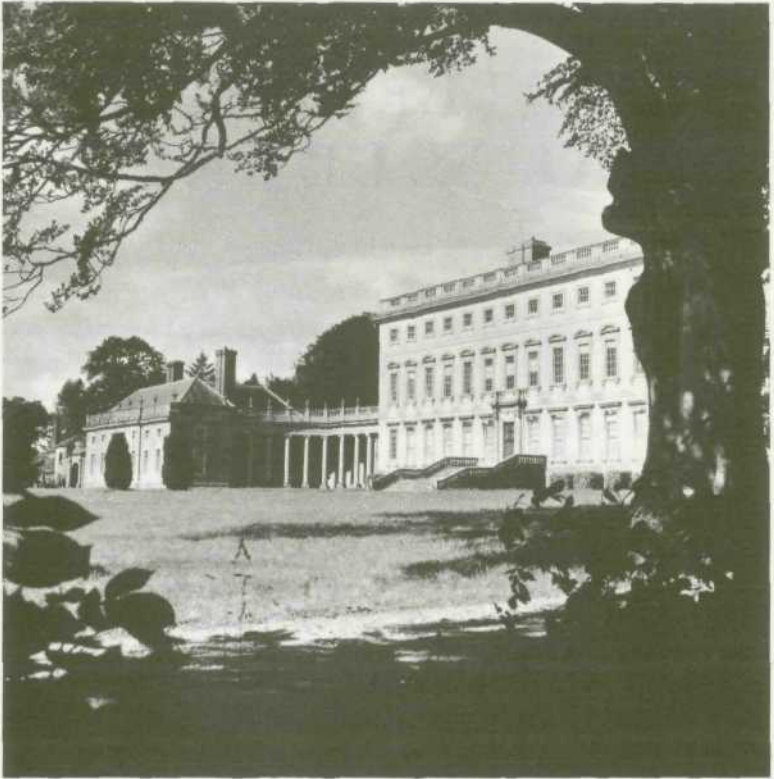
PRICE FIVE SHILLINGS

NEW LIGHT ON CASTLETOWN, CO. KILDARE

by The Knight of Glin

This note on Castletown does not attempt to be a discursive description of the house or its inmates, indeed it is purely a gathering together of early references to the house and incorporates two very important unpublished letters which suggest the initial architectural authorship of Castletown to be by the Italian architect, Alessandro Galilei, and further illuminates the connection between Galilei and Sir Edward Lovett Pearce. I am much indebted to Dr. Ilaria Toesca of Rome who drew my attention to the two letters and Dr. Maurice Craig for additional assistance. It should be mentioned that this article is an extract from my Ph.D thesis on Irish Palladianism, at present in progress.

William Conolly was a self-made man, and a letter from Sir John St. Leger to Lord Chief Justice Parker of 21st February 1711/17 graphically describes him: "This gentleman was lately an attorney, his father keeping an ale-house in the North of Ireland, this being too notorious to be stifled but by making long bills and good bargains he is now reported to be worth eight thousand a year, and by a generous way of living, and adhering to the honest cause in the bad times, was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons this Parliament . . ."* Dean Swift a few years later reported that Conolly was worth sixteen thousand pounds a year.² By far the richest commoner in Ireland and more wealthy than all the Irish nobility with the exception of Lord Kildare, Conolly soon thought of building a suitable country palace for himself. The first mention we hear of Conolly and his building plans is in a hitherto unpublished letter from Robert Molesworth to Alessandro Galilei from Breckdenstown (Brackenstown) near Dublin dated June, 1719.



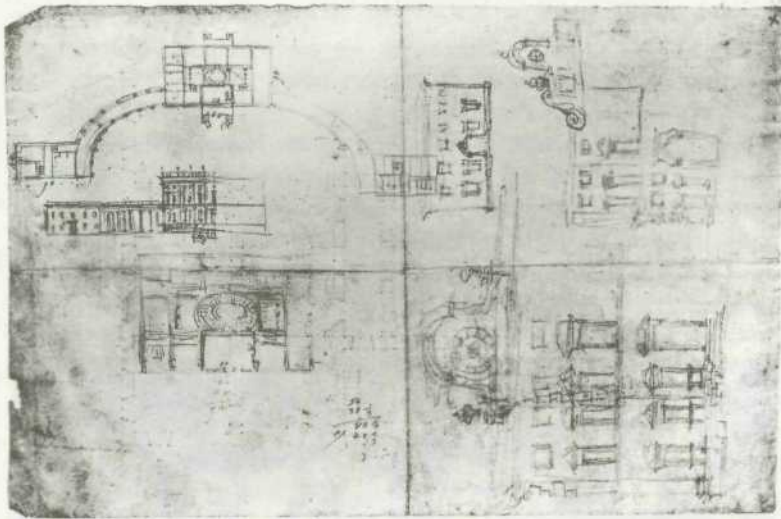
Castletown Co. Kildare (*photograph by Lucy Lambton*)

This letter, besides being important from the Castletown point of view, is worth quoting fairly extensively for the light it sheds on the lack of interest in building in Ireland, before the Palladian invasion of Pearce and Castle during the next decade. He writes: "We have no taste in this country of what is excellent in any of the fine Arts and I doubt shall not have for several years to come." Molesworth then commiserates with Galilei about his ill-treatment in England by such figures as Dubois and certain hoped-for patrons, going on to say "I cannot pretend to be able of myself to give you so great encouragement or entirely to provide for you. However,

as long as you think fit to say I shall continue my allowance, till you come into Sufficient business and I further assure you that if you come over and live in Breckdenstown you still have the same treatment as you had before without putting you to any expense and who knows how the humour of building may go on here. Not indeed for magnificent piles but for handsome and convenient ones. *Mr. Conolly is going on with his designs and no doubt would be glad of your advice now and then. And truly of all your Employers has shown himself most generous.*"³ (My italics.) In another letter from Galilei himself a few months earlier, he speaks of having made drawings for "diversi Signori et Specialmente li deseigni d'un Palazzo di Villa p.il My Lord Governatore di quel regno"⁴ (Ireland). Conolly was, to quote Swift "several times one of the Chief Governors"⁵ and Dr. Craig has suggested that this might refer to Castletown.⁶ This together with the newly published letter above is conclusive evidence that Galilei must have made a basic design for Conolly though the house does not seem to have been started until 1722, for Bishop Berkeley wrote on the 27th July, to Perceval, "Your Lordship knows this barren bleak island too well to expect any news from it worth your notice. The most remarkable thing now going on is a house of Mr. Conolly's at Castletown. It is 142 feet in front, and above 60 in the clear, the height will be about 70."⁷ It is to be of fine wrought stone, harder and better coloured than the Portland, with outhouses joining to it by colonades, etc. The plan is chiefly of Mr. Conolly's invention, however, in some points they are pleased to consult me. I hope it will be an ornament to the country."⁸ Berkeley again writes to Perceval, on the 7th September: "I shall then give you the best account I can of Mr. Conolly's House, in the meantime you will be surprised to hear that the building is began and the cellar floor arched before they have agreed on any plan for the elevation fac,ade. Several have been made by several hands but as I do not approve of a work conceived by many heads so I have made no draught of mine own. All I do being to give my opinion on any point, when consulted."⁹ When Berkeley spoke of "the plan being chiefly of Mr. Conolly's invention" it would probably be fairer to say that Mr. Conolly as a typical eighteenth-century amateur would have used Galilei's ideas; however, Galilei

had been in Florence again for three years by 1722, and judging by Berkeley's second letter the Castletown project was in a considerable muddle; no doubt the "many heads" of the few architects and amateurs that existed in Ireland at that date were all spoiling the proverbial architectural broth. A year later Pearce went to Italy and met Galilei. They had known each other in England in 1719 and Galilei was working for Pearce's cousin and architectural mentor, Sir John Vanbrugh. It comes as no surprise to find Pearce writing to Galilei from Venice on the 9th April 1724, saying: "I writ you twice from Bologna desiring you would send draftings of the Palace to me, at your price . . ." ¹⁰ This surely refers to Castletown. Fortunately, an unpublished reply has recently been discovered from Galilei to Pearce, dated 7th April 1724, "the day afore yesterday I was favoured with two of your letters . . . I have given to the Procaccio the drawings and pills with the directions for Venice . . . the drawings are very well packed up within a blow pipe and can by no means come to any damage but you must take care in taking them out; I have sent you both the forefront and the front of the Court and have charged you for them both but seven pistols, for with such a friend as I take you to be I do not intend to stand on all strictness... I hope you will get everything safe and in time enough to serve your purpose. The brass statues you told me of are not to be sold; but if ever Mr. Conolly resolved to have them statues made in brass I would get them done better and for less money than they would cost." ¹¹ Now all seems clear. The plans by Galilei were obviously for Castletown. Galilei knew Pearce was returning ultimately to Ireland and Pearce was then the obvious person to put Galilei's plans into practice. An extremely interesting drawing adds further impact, for among Galilei's sketches is a working scheme for a large eleven-bay Roman palace-type mansion with Palladian colonnades and kitchen and stable blocks that certainly could be a preliminary sketch for Castletown. It is also a drawing that relates to no other Galilei project (see P. 7). ¹²

So it would seem obvious that Pearce on his return to Ireland took over the direction of the building at Castletown. This is further borne out by the existence of three drawings relating to Castletown in the Pearce-Vanbrugh album at Elton Hall. ¹³



Sketch by Galilei, possibly for Castletown

It is now time to give further details of Castletown itself. The central block is of thirteen bays uninterrupted by any break-front or pediment, decorated on the ground floor only by consoled window cases and surmounting frieze and cornice, and on the first floor by alternating segmental and triangular window pediments. In short it is an Italian town palace and undoubtedly the first example of such a revival in the British Isles,¹⁴ remaining so for over a hundred years until Sir Charles Barry's Palazzo-style became fashionable. But Castletown is not only this. It is fashionably Palladian by its Badoer-like colonnades¹⁵ leading to a pair of wings, of up-to-date English Palladian type.

The general structure of Castletown was finished by 1732 when Loveday visited it. The interior plan is simple enough; a full-length passage divides the house in two and the reception rooms on the garden front are all *en suite*. The present two drawing-rooms, the dining-room and the main staircase are all of a later date.¹⁶ Otherwise the interior has contemporary coved ceilings and plaster

panelling. On the first floor eight of the garden-front bays are taken up by a long gallery with an early ceiling, which Lady Louisa Conolly decorated in the Pompeian manner c. 1770. The garden front repeats the entrance facade.

Castletown is the first stone palace in the Italian style in Ireland and with its extended front of "stupendous monotony",¹⁷ flanking colonnades and wings, this house remains unparalleled as the most magnificent mansion in Ireland. Perceval's hope that "I would have it as it were the epitome of the Kingdom"¹⁸ certainly was amply fulfilled.



San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome (Alessandro Galilei 1732-6)

References

1. B.M. Add. MS. 750 & 244 (Stowe Papers).
 2. Harold Williams (editor), *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift* (Oxford, 1963), Vol. III, pp. 493/4.
- See also Rev. C. I. Graham, "The Rt. Hon. William Conolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons". *JKAS* (Jan. 1900) Vol. III, p. 115, where Primate Boulter observed that Conolly's income was £17,000 per annum.

3. Letter in the Archivio di Stato, Florence.
4. Uaria Toesca, "Alessandro Galilei in Inghilterra" *English Miscellany* (No. 3, 1052), p.213.
5. Harold Williams, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 493.
6. Howard Colvin and Maurice Craig, *The Pearce Vanbrugh Drawings at Elton Hall* (Oxford, 1964), p. 16.
7. These measurements square with the existing structure.
8. B. Rand (editor), *Berkeley and Perceval* (Cambridge, 1914) p. 193; Perceval's reply dated 5th August 1722 (p. 195) is worth quoting:

"... I am glad for the honour of my country that Mr. Conolly has undertaken so magnificent a pile of building, and your advice has been taken upon it. I hope that the execution will answer the design, wherein one special care must be to procure good masons. I shall be impatient until you send me a sketch of the whole plan and of your two fronts. You will do well to recommend to him the making use of all the marbles he can get of the production of Ireland for his chimneys, for since this house will be the finest Ireland ever saw, and by your description fit for a Prince, I would have it as it were the epitome of the Kingdom, and all the natural rarities she afford should have a place there. I would examine the several woods there for inlaying my floors, and wainscot with our own oak, and walnut; my stone stairs should be of black palmers stone, and my buffet adorned with the choicest shells our strands afford. I would even carry my zeal to things of art: my hangings, bed, cabinets and other furniture should be Irish, and the very silver that ornamented my locks and grates should be the produce of our mines. But I forget that I write to a gentleman of the country who knows better what is proper and what the kingdom affords.

Dr Sr,

Yr affect, friend and humble servt.,
Perceval.

9. *ibid.*, p. 197.
10. Ilaria Toesca, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
11. Letter in the Archivio di Stato, Florence.
12. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Ilaria Toesca for showing me this drawing and it is her suggestion that this sketch probably relates to Castletown.
13. Colvin and Craig, *op. cit.*, No. 245 "Grand Cornice for ye House at Castletowne", No. 99 a ground plan of Castletown and No. 13 a plan of the entrance hall. See also a discussion of these drawings on p. 15.
14. Lord Burlington's Westminster Dormitory of 1721 could be considered in the same light.
15. Palladio, *Quattro Libri*, II, p. 48.
16. The drawing-rooms and dining room have ceilings by Chambers and as these are 8 feet below the real ceiling they probably hide the original coving. The staircase dates from 1759; the walls were magnificently decorated by the Francini brothers.
17. Sir John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 225.
18. See reference 8.

IRISH SILVER

decoration and re-decoration

by Francis Townshend

Surface decoration, rather than shape, marks a piece of silver as typically Irish. There are outstanding exceptions but here I want only to see how far a piece can be identified and dated by its decoration alone. The process is more difficult than it seems, for over the greater part of the eighteenth century Irish hall-marking laws were made and applied in a way that would have delighted Rousseau but made Montesquieu writhe. The result is that there are few certain reference points. Added to this, and again in contrast to England, pieces were frequently "modernised" during the eighteenth century by adding or removing legs, by changing handles or borders and by decorating plain surfaces, not to mention the universal but confusing habit of changing arms and crests. And even the major additions were done in Ireland without re-hallmarking. Obviously the difficulties of identifying a piece grow at every stage, but the urge to unravel them grows fortunately faster.

So little is known for certain that collectors tend to write-off any decoration they do not like as added "later", while dealers are encouraged to go a step further and have such pieces "face-lifted" to satisfy the current preference for flat surfaces. This could become a tragedy for Irish silver.

To help avoid it, I have illustrated in this article twenty-eight pieces covering the years 1679 to 1917 and made notes on the features I want to bring out. Sometimes I am perfectly happy at the moment about the conclusions drawn, at others I am still frankly puzzled and look to Members of the Irish Georgian Society for help, especially as to the relationship between silverwork and the other applied arts fashionable in Ireland at the same time. These notes are preceded by general comments on techniques and the value of hallmarks. They are followed by a very short appendix on Irish hallmarks themselves.

Techniques and the value of hallmarks

Typical of Irish silversmiths' work is the use of "*flat-chasing*", which gives a light relief by indenting and channelling the surface from above without actually removing any silver. When worn it can sometimes be confused with "*engraving*" a basically different process by which lines of silver are scraped away not merely pushed to one side as with flat-chasing. Engraved Irish silver is exceptional until the end of the eighteenth century, even coats of arms and crests being frequently chased rather than engraved as was more general in England. Another form of decoration used was "*embossing*", also called repousse work or just chasing, which gives a high relief by hammering from the back. In Ireland it was less common than flat-chasing, being used in the time of Ormonde and again a century later in the 1760s and 1770s, often in combination with flat-chasing. In the early nineteenth century it literally came to fruition, bursting out in full leaf, flower and fruit at the same time, as though to impress onlooker and silver alike with the new triumph of man over his surroundings. It is very hard to describe in words this Victorian embossing, often technically superb but deadening. A good understanding of it though is the only direct way by which one can hope to spot the redecoration of those plain earlier pieces which the Victorians felt morally bound to enrich. I have the impression at the moment that most nineteenth-century redecoration is English not Irish work, even on Irish pieces of which a great number must have drained away into England after the Union.

Yet another form of decoration, "*bright-cutting*" is a type of engraving which when unworn gives sharp facets reflecting the light like a diamond. It was very highly developed in Ireland during the flourishing years from 1783 to 1798 and is indeed the glory of Irish silver of the time. By contrast, the use of "*applied work*" by which previously moulded strips of silver are soldered on to the body is very rarely encountered. This highly sophisticated and silver-consuming process was common in the France of Louis XIV and the Regence, and in England in the corresponding Huguenot period; in Ireland a much less costly and externally similar effect was obtained by chasing (see Illustration 13); labour was then cheap and silver dear, labour costs amounting to from 30-150%



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of the cost of the silver used, now the figures are from 400—800%.

When looking at a piece of silver it is best not to look at the hallmarks until you have reached a first opinion about its shape and decoration. Hallmarks are often ambiguous if at all worn; they can be, have been and still are forged, whilst even if perfectly genuine the piece bearing them may have been entirely reshaped at a later date, as is the common fate of ladle handles. In short, an unmarked piece may be much more "genuine" than a fully marked one: treat marks with circumspection and satisfy yourself on all other points first. A special puzzle is caused by pieces altered only a generation after they were made. This makes identification particularly difficult given the slow-moving conditions of eighteenth-century Ireland and the two centuries which separate us from our Georgian forebears. In Paris or in London one can often date a piece of that time within five years on stylistic grounds alone. This is quite impossible in Ireland, even in Dublin, with the possible exception of certain bright-cut designs of the last quarter of the century when original patterns succeeded each other in quick succession—surely in step with the Volunteers and the United Irishmen.

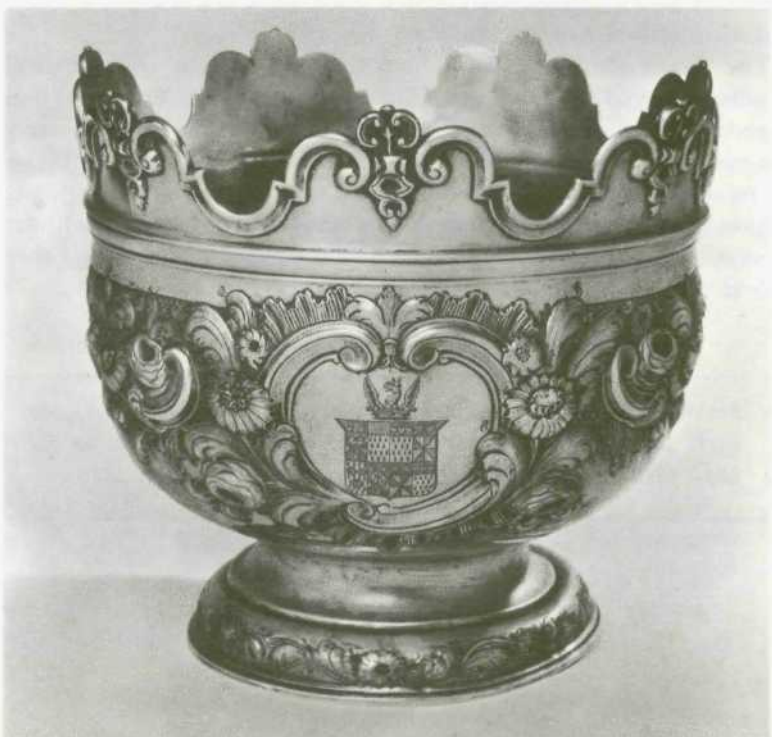
Analysis of twenty-eight typical pieces from i6jg to igiy

The pieces illustrated below are given in straight chronological order to avoid the usual difficulties of classification. The notes that accompany them are in no way a history of styles, but solely descriptions of isolated examples chosen to answer certain queries and to raise others. They are best read together, for common points have usually not been repeated. The study of styles will come in the book I am writing on Irish silver to be published by Faber & Faber next year.

For this purpose I would be extremely grateful to any reader who might care to contact me through the Irish Georgian Society on the points raised or indeed with any information on Irish silver.



3



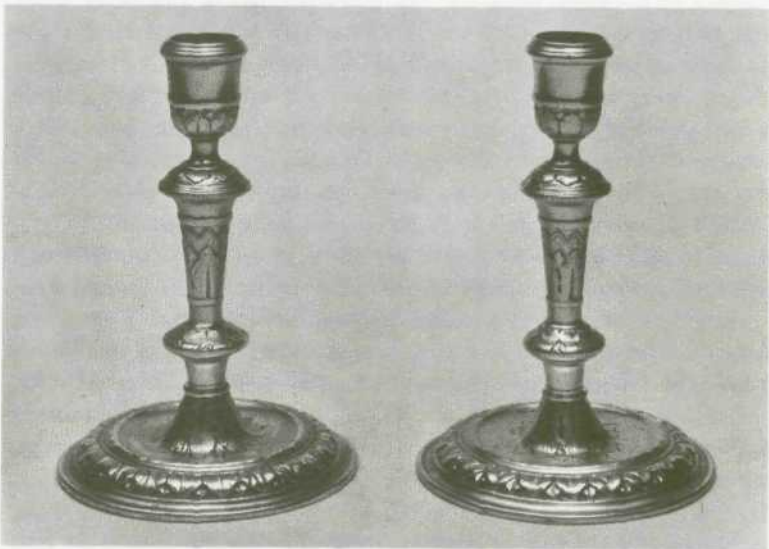
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I. PORRINGER: Dublin 1679, maker's mark of James Kelly (9 in. high; 40 ozs.). This large piece is one of a handful which has survived from the output of Dublin workshops prior to 1680. There is nothing particularly Irish about it, except the maker (practically the only silversmith with an Irish name working in Dublin on any scale at that time). It was a period of rapid economic expansion when the styles of richer neighbour communities were as usual copied. The porringer could well have been English of the preceding generation (for the 20-year time-lag applied at this time to Irish silver as it did later to architecture). The decoration is embossed work in the Franco-Dutch style of the time, while the knob is a direct descendant of the medieval gargoyle. The scroll handles are still thin and unassuming in comparison with their massive later descendants (see Illustration 3). Originally this piece **might** have had a matching salver on trumpet foot as in England, but this is by no means certain in Ireland judging by the list of plate sold by Trinity College in the 1680s.

2. TWO-HANDLED CUP: Dublin 1699, maker's mark of Anthony Stanley (9 in. high; 36 ozs.). The harp handles in this piece came into fashion in the 1690s. In early examples like this one they are chased and not plain, the acanthus-leaf motif of the 1679 porringer (No.i) being still just recognisable even if only vestigially. **There** is no reason to believe that the harp-shape handle was ever associated with the national emblem. **Of French** origin, it was also used at this time in England, but after about 1730 usually **gave** place even **in** Ireland to variations of the double-scroll handle (Nos. 3 and 17). Again in this piece there is nothing yet particularly Irish, although two-handled cups of smaller size became commoner in Ireland than in England in the later eighteenth-century. Around 1700, cups appear always to have had lids, though later Irish ones as distinct from their English relations were usually made without. In the present case, the lid (see the bevel made to take it at the mouth of the cup) would have been low, stepped and conical in form, repeating the gadroon motif of the foot and the fluting of the body. The equivalent English lid tended to be flatter. The mantling of the cartouche and the cypher are contemporary with the date of the pot.



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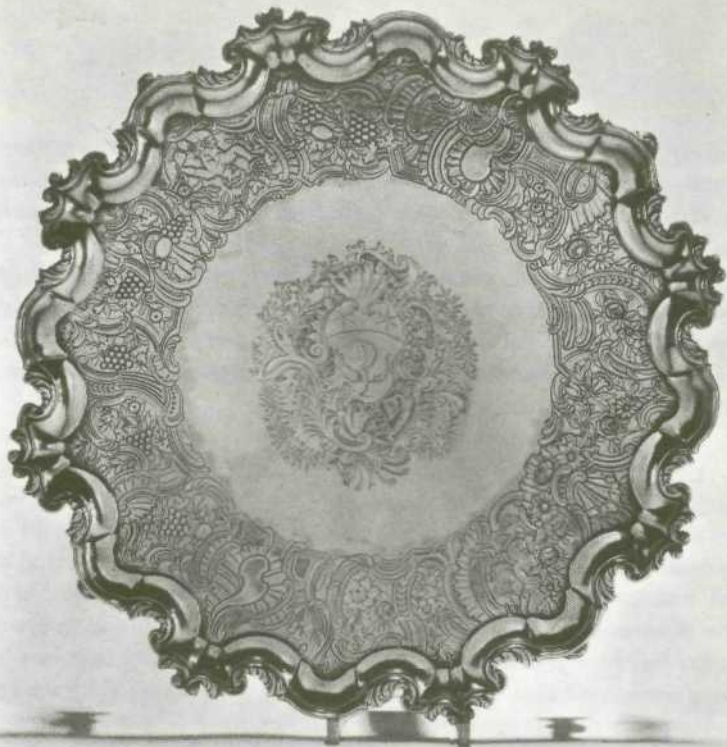


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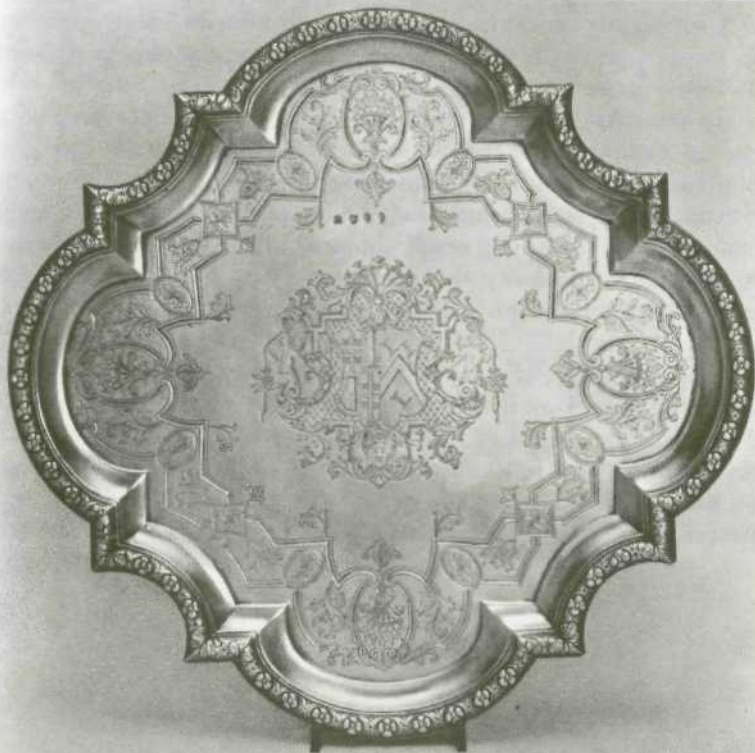
On the other hand the shell crest above them seems in a different hand and is rougher in technique. This difference is frequently seen in Irish pieces of the early eighteenth-century and occasionally on English ones. I do not yet know the reason. An indication of the impressive size of this piece is that it comfortably holds a champagne bottle. Generous size remained a characteristic of Irish silver right up to the time of Parnell, when English dimensions seemed to take over: had the Union only such staunch opponents as the silver-smiths!

3. TWO-HANDLED CUP AND COVER: Dublin 1714, maker's mark illegible (13¹/₂ in. high; 74 ozs.). This is a puzzling piece. There is no doubt that the marks on the base of the cup and on the lid are genuine and also that the basic outline of the bowl and foot and the lid (except the knob) are of the 1714 period. On the other hand, the decoration on the cup as well as the knob and handles are all later, but how much later is very hard to say, in any case not less than forty, probably 140 years. Originally the cup would have had quite plain double-scroll or harp handles with acanthus-leaf tops, their lower ends joining the cup on the mid-rib. It is a characteristic of Irish eighteenth-century cups that the mid-rib has a tendency to move upwards from the lower end of the handles to a point half-way between the two ends, rather as a woman's waistline rose in the later years of the century. The handles might have been on a cup of the 1740—50s, but the surface decoration on the body, a combination of low relief embossing and flat chasing, is almost certainly much later, being dead and on too large a scale to suggest country work. This piece is still not clear to me, though it is certain that it did not look like this in 1714. It may have been changed more than once but this is a risky assumption without further facts.

4. MONTEITH PUNCH BOWL: Dublin 1715, maker's mark of David King (10¹/₂ in. diameter; 66 ozs.). The upper serrated rim is detachable and belonged to the bowl from the beginning, but the embossing in high relief on the body and the matching decoration on the foot are undoubtedly later, as are both the coat of arms and the crest. The coat (its earliest date could be checked by the alliance



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it shows but I have not yet looked it up) is in a shield of a type fashionable in the 1790s at the earliest. The crest is of a type common in the early nineteenth-century and the embossing probably dates from the time the crest was added. Only the cartouche is asymmetrical, the remaining design being fundamentally similar on each side of it. Originally then this punch bowl would have been absolutely plain except for the serrated rim. Notwithstanding the high technical quality of the chasing the general effect is terribly heavy and deadening. Mid-eighteenth-century Irish chasing of this type (see Illustrations 15, 16 and 17) is always much less heavy and does not give the impression of hot-house luxuriance, of "bringing the garden into the drawing room", so dear to the early Victorians.

5. HELMET CREAM JUG: Dublin *c.* 1735 (no date letter), maker's mark of John Williamson (5 in. high; 5 ozs.). This is an example of the earliest shape of the Irish cream jug, a helmet on a single foot; the later and more common pattern having three scroll feet. The light flat-chased decoration of a repeating pattern of acanthus and shell is a pre-rococo design not common on Irish silver. Shortly after this time it became a characteristic of the decoration of Irish jugs that the design was non-repeating, the whole surface from handle to handle being treated as one canvas. On equivalent English pieces the tendency was towards basically repetitive patterns usually dividing the whole surface into two parts, though this is no iron-clad rule.

6. PAIR OF CANDLESTICKS: Dublin *c.* 1735 (no date letter), maker's mark illegible; (6 in. high; 22 ozs. together). Basically this is a normal candlestick shape for Irish silver of this time and of English silver of a little earlier. The decoration though is unusual, and its simple repeated use of the acanthus leaf at no less than six different levels points to the workshop of John Hamilton which used this motif very frequently.

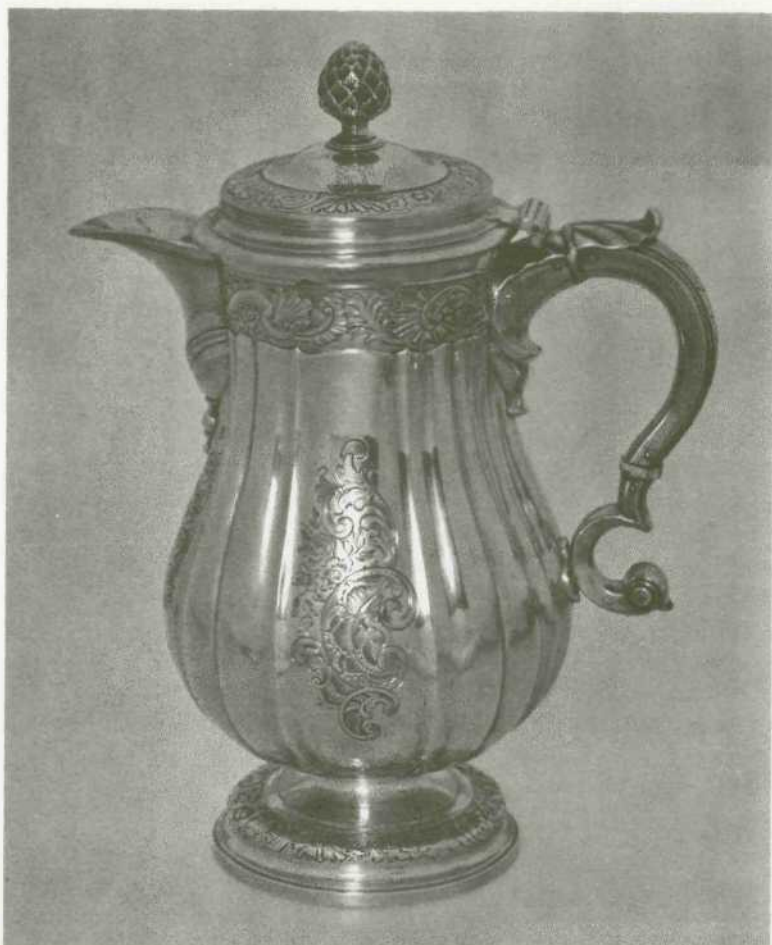
7. SALVER: Dublin 1736, maker's mark of Robert Calderwood (15[^] in. diameter; 72 ozs.). The ornate pie-crust border on this



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salver might equally have come from the London workshop of George Hindmarsh in the very same year (for the twenty-year time-lag had ceased to apply to Irish silver following the battle of the Boyne and was not to return until the Union). The flat-chased surrounding border is unmistakably Irish. Although in two halves, one is devoted to fruit and the other to flowers, and no two elements are the same despite the overall effect of symmetry. The cartouche and mantling (the arms are those of La Touche, the bankers) are engraved and by a different hand.

8. SALVER: Dublin 1737, maker's mark of John Hamilton (15¹/₂ in. wide; 61 ozs.). This elaborate salver makes a particularly good example as it is virtually in the condition it was when it left the workshop. The strapwork and rosehead border is another typical Hamilton motif, often wrongly looked on as Victorian. It is on a salver of similar outline of 1741 in the National Museum of Ireland. It also appears in the covered jug described below (No.9) and on the much altered cup already described (No.3). It may well have been taken from the portico of St. Martin's in-the-Fields or from Gibb's *Book of Architecture* (1728) which illustrated it. The broad border decoration and the coat of arms is highly formalised flat-chasing with some engraving, all probably by the same hand. It is basically derived from Berain's designs, doubtless through the Huguenot silversmiths who emigrated to Dublin as they had in even greater numbers to London following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This is an example of a piece which was completely decorated, save possibly for the arms, before being hallmarked—as is shown by the unusual position of the marks. In Dublin, it was quite common to complete the decoration of a piece before sending it to the Assay Office; in London this was not the general practice. But it is no golden guide to the contemporary nature of the decoration since there are plenty of Dublin pieces with decoration done after the hallmarking, presumably when a stock piece was decorated to order on sale (see No. 15).

9, ga. COVERED JUG: Dublin c. 1735 (no hallmarks), maker's



mark of John Hamilton on base and cover (g| in. high; 40 ozs.). This is a most interesting jug, at one time thought to be entirely or very largely later-decorated, partly perhaps because of the mid-nineteenth-century arms and the inscription of the same period on the other side. It is worth analysing: (a) the acanthus leaves on the cover and lower half of the jug. This is common enough on the covers of Irish jugs and cups at this time, but very unusual on the jug itself. On the other hand, it is a familiar motif of the time both on silver (e.g. the candlesticks, No. 6) and on Meissen porcelain. The tooling on cover and jug also seem to be by the same hand; (b) the strapwork and rose-head border of the cover is an equally familiar Hamilton motif (see No. 8); (c) the decoration around the neck of the jug differs from the simple acanthus below, though it is a standard neck ornament of this date; (d) the handle is divided by ivory insulators and together with the spout is flat-chased to match the neck. These are common nineteenth-century practices. Leaving aside the question of insulation and when it was first done by these means, I know of contemporary examples of decorated spouts, but not yet of handle-undersides. Yet it is difficult to imagine that the Victorian craftsman would trouble to chase the handle alone, assuming that the rest was already decorated, as I believe it could well have been, (e) both the later arms and the inscription cut into the chased decoration, show that the latter at least anti-dates *them*, while there are no special reasons to suggest successive alterations. In short, because a piece is unusual and has later arms and inscription, it is not at once to be written-off as later decorated. The more unusual pieces of silver are studied and related to work in other materials, the closer we will get to defining and dating Irish decoration.

10. COVERED JUG: Dublin c. 1740 (no hallmarks,) maker's mark of John Hamilton (11-J in. high, 43 ozs.). Another jug by John Hamilton, also with no hallmarks, but this time easier to analyse. The three bands of flat-chased decoration on the foot, neck and cover respectively are typical of the period. The bands are not identical and neither the spout nor the handle underside are here decorated. The vertical panels in the middle of the body and



13



14

under the spout are, however, engraved, not chased. They have absolutely symmetrical sausage-like scrolls with a radial design blocking any effect of movement. This is typical mid-nineteenth-century decoration of the "Crystal Palace rococo" school. The two types and dates of the decoration on the same jug make comparison easy: an instructive piece.

11. BEER JUG: Dublin *c.* 1745 (no date letter or maker's mark), (8 in. high, 30 ozs.). Even this decoration was once put as "later", yet it could surely not be more typical of its time. On the neck, the spout, beneath the spout, on the foot and again within the mouth of the jug light flat-chasing is used, while the handle underside is again plain. Round the lower part of the body is a broad band in higher relief, but still obtained by flat-chasing the heavy walls of the jug (although the raking light in the photo exaggerates the relief). Even this type of chasing in relatively high relief is very unlike Victorian work: it is flat-chased, the scrolls are free-flowing and asymmetrical, and the creeping flowers and luxuriant leaves so dear to Victorian rococo are missing.

12. COFFEE POT: London 1746, maker's mark of Henry Morris (9[^] in. high, 26 ozs.). Although London-made, I have included it as a possible example of an Irish-decorated English piece: the roughly contemporary arms are those of Clibborn, Co. Westmeath, and the flat-chased decoration headed by the naturalistic girl's bust (there is a boy's bust on the other side) has an unsophisticated Irish look of perhaps a decade later than the pot. The silver handle is probably much later, although Irish, like Scots pieces, seem occasionally to have had silver handles from the early eighteenth-century. This sort of attribute of the chasing is very problematic in the absence of documentary evidence, but the families of the old Ascendancy may well have had many such composite pieces.

13. SET OF 3 TWO-HANDLED CUPS: Dublin *c.* 1750, maker's mark apparently of William Townsend (7 in. and 5 in. high, 60 ozs. together). An unusual set of three of the type made without



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a lid. The design around the lower half of the cups imitates by flat-chasing the applied "cut-card" technique of the Huguenots. The decoration around the top and foot is similar to other examples discussed here (Nos. 11, 15, and 17).

14. SALVER: Dublin c. 1745 (no date letter or maker's mark) (8 in. diam, 10 ozs.). This is an unusual type of salver with its lightly undulating rim carrying flat-chased acanthus at intervals. Here again the broad border inside the salver is flat-chased and a very clear example of Dublin work of the mid-eighteenth-century. It is divided into three segments in this case, differing only in detail. If the attribution of 1745 is correct, this is an early use of the bird motif which became a favourite in the following decade. The hallmarks were put on after the decoration; they can be seen on top of the chasing to the upper left of the photo.

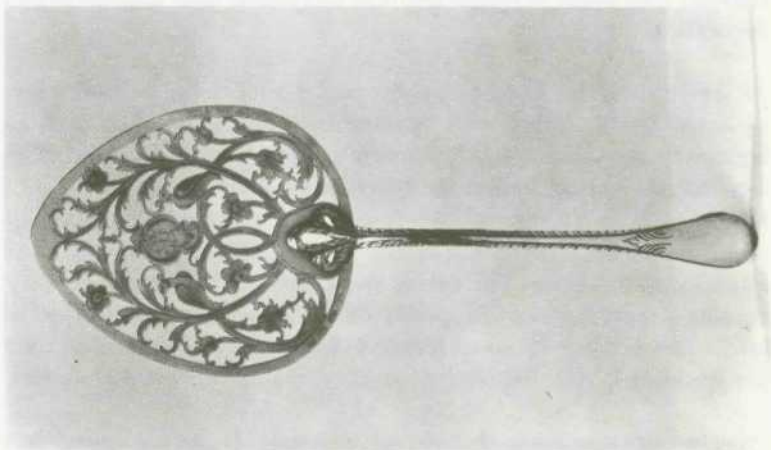
15. COFFEE POT: Dublin c. 1755 (no date letter), maker's mark of William Townsend (11¹/₂ in. high, 41 ozs.). This is a small masterpiece of the flat-chasing technique, treating the surface like plaster. I hope the photo is clear enough to speak for itself. As usual in Ireland, the treatment of the two sides is entirely different. The bird knob is not a crest, contrary to later English practice, but a popular Irish motif of the period. The hallmarks were applied before decorating.

16. SPOON TRAY: Dublin c. 1765, maker's mark SU? (8 in. wide, 11 ozs.). Spiral fluting with beading between was widely used in Ireland in the 1760s and 1770s, more so even than in England. The fact that the cartouche has the shape of the *būtā* or typical cone of Kashmir (later Paisley) shawls is probably coincidental, although these shawls were being imported, at least into England, in some quantity at this time. The sitting swan and the pheasant—country cousins of that native of Chippendale overmantels the English Ho-Ho bird—now become common features of Irish silver. Notice that they are embossed, not flat-chased as they would have been earlier.

17. TWO-HANDLED CUP (one of a pair): Dublin c. 1770 (no



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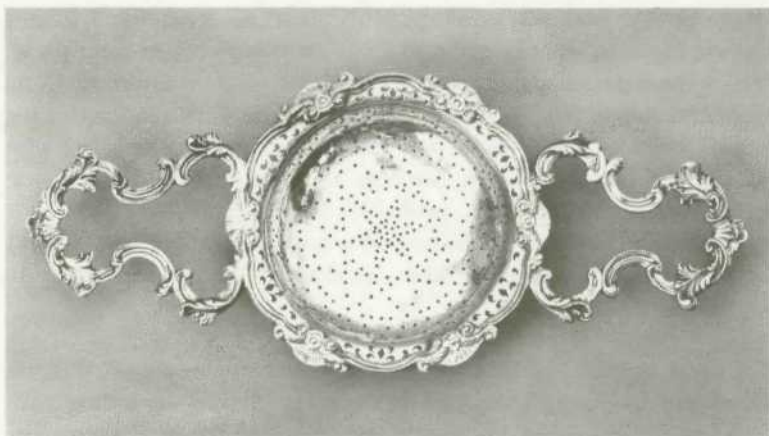
date letter), maker's mark possibly that of Richard Williams (5[^] in. high, 30 ozs. the pair). This is another problematical piece. There is no doubt about the shape and the position of the rib. The difficulty lies in the flat-chased decoration. It is rather crude, the scrolls are heavy and obese, but the general impression is not that of nineteenth-century work (see Nos. 10 and 27). My feeling is that it is certainly Irish work, probably of the 1770s, but that it is provincial. Alternatively, the cups may have been made by a country silversmith who brought them, perhaps already decorated, to Dublin for hallmarking.

18. FISH SLICE: Dublin 1771, maker's mark apparently of William Bond (12 in. long, 4 ozs.). The blade is pierced according to a London pattern used for a very short period around 1770. The hollow-ended handle is, however, an Irish type which I have only seen on these slices. Its engraved "feather edge", again a well-known London design, never found wide favour in Dublin. It straggled through the 1770s, to be replaced early in the next decade by the celebrated series of bright-cut designs (No.23).

19. LEMON STRAINER: Cork c. 1770, maker's mark of John Nicolson (11 in. long, 6 ozs.). A most unusual piece, French in inspiration and a late survivor of the heavy punch-drinking habits of earlier in the century. It is said that Cork silver often shows French influence, but I do not know how far this is true.

20. GILT DISH: Dublin 1770, Charles Townsend (9 in. diameter, 12 ozs.). The outline of this dish crops up in Ireland, France and England from the early eighteenth-century. The spiral flutes at the edge belong, though, to the 1770s. The fine flat-chased, gently spiralling pendants recall Augsburg work of a little earlier. It is always hard to say whether gilding is original; it probably is in this case since the flat-chasing is absolutely crisp and unworn (gilt surfaces are cleaned with soap and water alone). Silver-gilt plate is exceptional in Ireland.

81. COVERED JUG: Dublin 1774, maker's mark of John Craig



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(12 in. high, 25 ozs.). The decoration is done by flat-chasing with some embossing. It makes only the slightest concession to the Adam style then dominating in England. The design is also much more naturalistic than in earlier years and makes no use of scrolls. Perhaps this growing naturalism accounts for the cool Irish reception given to the highly abstract Adam silver designs; I think it is fair to say that they were only fully absorbed in the bright-cut patterns. The square-sided handle on this pot must have been painful to hold; it was fortunately unusual.

22. SALVER: Dublin 1774, maker's mark of Matthew West (19 in. diameter, 96 ozs.). Typically Irish is the broad flat-chased band including birds, houses, a windmill and a figure drinking. The use of house and windmill motifs with life-like figures became popular in the 1760s. There are still scrolls on this piece, but they are few and seem even out of place. Notice that the design is non-repetitive and is treated rather as a picture than a pattern. The later arms, engraved in fine virtuoso manner, are nineteenth-century work.

23. SET OF SPOONS: Dublin 1783, maker's mark of Michael Keating. These spoons and ladles form part of a set of fifty, once probably even larger. They have one of the earliest bright-cut designs, one of the few to be used in both Dublin and London. I do not yet know who started first but Ireland was soon lengths ahead with this type of decoration, even developing distinct provincial variants for the first time. The pointed handles are a characteristic of Irish spoons of this period and remained the dominant pattern until the Union, after which they rapidly blunted-off into the so-called "Old English" end. This is a nice example of the relationship between politics and silver design! The pointed handle is also found in Scotland (a connection which also applied to earlier styles) and in Holland, but was not used in London.

24. FISH SLICE Dublin 1789, maker's mark of Robert Breeding (12 in. long). Pierced with a band of scrolling foliage which might have been twenty years earlier, this piece again only makes a



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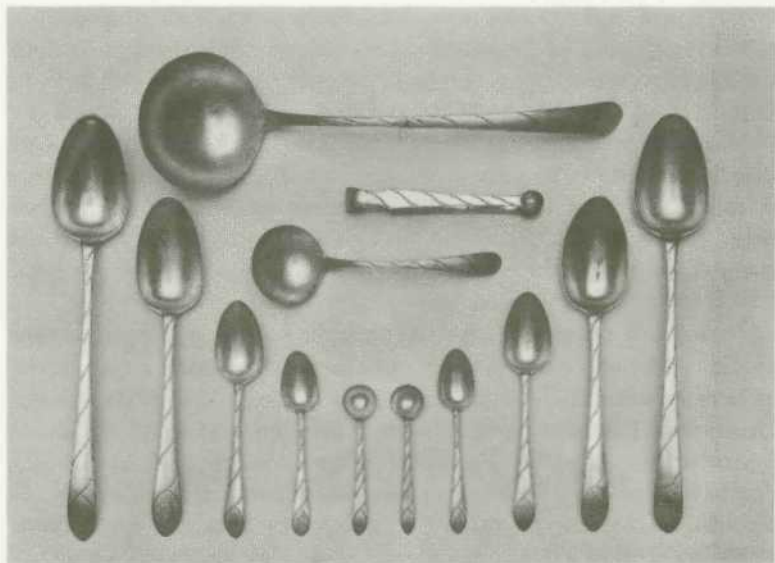
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cursory nod to the Adam style. Its handle is not Irish, though it is the original one; it has Sheffield marks of 1788, the year before the blade was marked, a common practice at this time when both Dublin and London used large quantities of Birmingham or Sheffield machine-made handles. Unlike the costly heavy cast handles of the early years of the century, they were made of thin stamped sheet metal filled with pitch, some being so thin that they could hardly have survived the first wash-up. But this I should add is a good one!

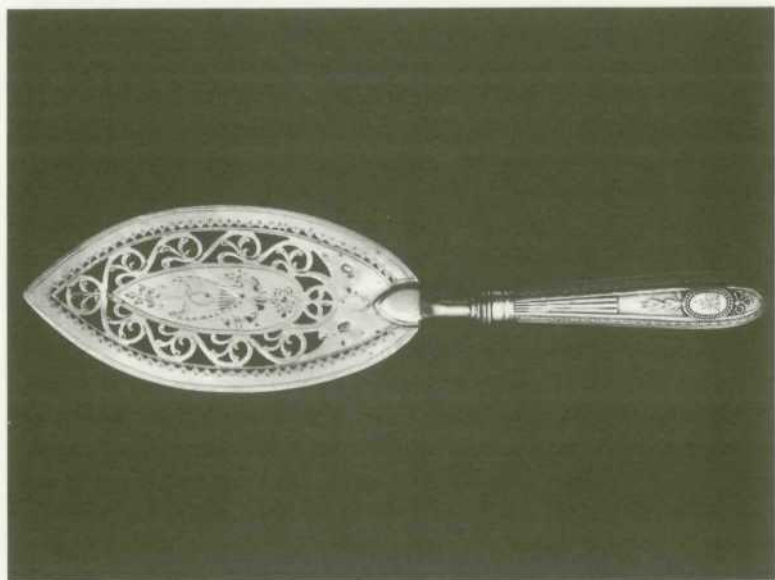
25. SUGAR BASKET: Dublin 1799, maker's mark of Joseph Jackson (7J in. wide, 9 ozs.). Boat-shaped baskets of this sort, either fluted as here or straight-sided were a feature of Dublin silver during the Grattan period being larger, more elongated and relatively more frequent than English examples. The decoration is exclusively engraved, for very little silver was flat-chased at this period. A roundel for a crest (or often for initials alone at this time) floats above a dried-up Adam festoon, soon to be completely discarded.

26. WINE COOLER (one of a pair): Dublin 1829, maker's mark of William Nolan, (7 in. diameter, 82 ozs. together). Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Irish silver liked to stand on three or four claw or hoof feet, and to stand firmly, even heavily, upon them. In the Regency period, this foot was also popular in England, but it never had the standing it enjoyed in Dublin. The "twenty year" rule now returns for a time and the applied anthemion and shell band on these wine coolers could have come straight off a Paul Storr piece of the Regency.

27. SALVER: Dublin 1845, maker's mark of J. Mahoney (10 in. by ~7 in., 15 ozs.). Here is a terribly clear example of how the Victorians handled the rococo and makes a useful reference when questioning the date of decoration on earlier pieces. The design is strictly repetitive, consisting of four identical segments. Twisting leaves and flowers predominate, a *nature moribonde* if not quite dead, of the "frost on the window" variety. The hallmarks can be seen to the right, on top of the chasing (still flat-chasing in this example) showing that the



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salver was sent for assay after being decorated, a practice soon to become the general rule.

28. TRAY: Dublin 1917, maker's mark of West (29 in. wide, 152 ozs.). This is an outstanding example of the use of Celtic motifs which came into fashion in the wake of the Gaelic revival early in this century. I have not traced the origin of these particular designs, but they seem to be derived from filigree work of the eighth-century or thereabouts, related to the Ardagh Chalice group. Usually Celtic motifs on silver at this time look as if they were added as an afterthought. Here they fit in with the character of the piece and in an entirely original manner: the last unselfconscious innovation of the Dublin silversmiths?



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APPENDIX

A note on Irish hallmarks

There are scattered records of a Dublin Goldsmiths Company since the late Middle Ages, but not of any hallmarking requirements until the seventeenth century. Occasionally, the maker of a large ecclesiastical piece (no domestic silver has survived) would sign it, even incorporating his name in the decoration. That is all. Not until 1605 did the City Council decree the marking of silver with "a harp, a lion and a castle", but no pieces bearing these marks have survived. In 1637, the Company, virtually a new one, obtained a Charter from Charles I under which Dublin silver had to be marked with a crowned harp, a date letter and a maker's mark. There have been breaks for Cromwell and for William, and for fifty years around 1750 the date letter was more often omitted than not, but the system broadly worked as a method of guaranteeing the Sterling standard of silver (g₂ 5% pure). Some time in 1730 an additional mark of the seated figure of Hibernia was added to show payment of an agricultural tax of sixpence an ounce levied under one of the tillage encouragement Acts (had some wag thought of turning at least silver-handled swords into ploughshares?). In 1807, the English tax-mark of the king's head joined the other marks and remained there until the tax was abolished in 1890, the Irish tax-mark, however, survived the demise of its *raison d'être* and continues to this day. It is impossible to describe the alphabets and date letters used or the all-important shapes of the punches: they can be found in simplified form in a booklet costing 8/- at the larger silver dealers, or else in Jackson's basic *English Goldsmiths and their Marks* on which it is based. Provincial marks, usually consisting of the town arms or a punch of the word "Sterling", but without using date letters, are also outlined in the same sources.

Since Jackson's work had its last edition in 1925, much new material has come to light and a new edition is in gradual preparation. The aim is to reproduce all marks with photos, not the old approximate drawings. One further Dublin assay plate (for the 1770s) has come to light confirming a most useful "dot" on Hibernia's skirt used from 1770 (optionally) and 1771 (compulsorily). Mr. Kurt Ticher of Dublin has made a painstaking study of variants in Hibernia and Harp punches of the mid-Georgian period when the date letter was often omitted. It is very much to be hoped that he will find time to publish his results with actual photos of the marks on which they are based. Finally, the maker's marks section can also be expanded, but the old attributions—based largely on inspired guess-work and the encyclopedic knowledge of the late Mr. Dudley Westropp—cannot yet be improved, as known records of marks against makers' names are still extremely few.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

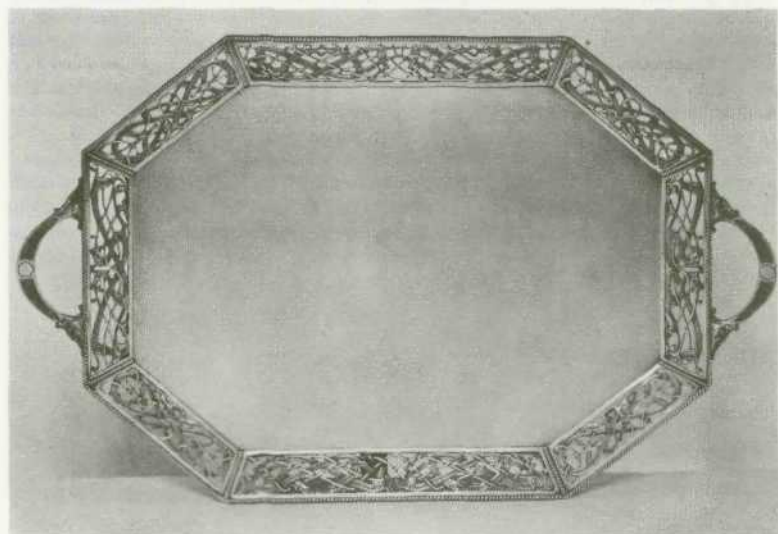
Fine Art Gallery, Dublin: Nos. 6, 11, 16, 28, 23 and 28.

Louis Wine Ltd., Dublin: Nos. 19, 20, 21, 22 and 26.

All Dublin photos by Con Conner.



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38

GEORGIAN KINSALE

The Future?

Kinsale has rapidly become the most fashionable tourist resort west of Cork, and the money brought to the town through its sudden popularity instead of saving it, is likely to destroy its character. How long can it stem the tide of "progress", or development, or whatever name the piecemeal spoliation of our towns chooses to adopt?

The part of the general streetscape that is now threatened, 5 and 6 Pearse Street, can be seen in the accompanying photographs (by Liam Kennedy of Cork). The wrought iron lampholders are unique, and no other house in the town has a staircase to protect it from the world below. These fine Georgian houses have been bought by the Munster and Leinster Bank. If they could only restore them without

Nos. 5 and 6 Pearse Street, Kinsale, declared "worthy of preservation."
in Bord Faille's 1962 survey



altering their character as regards the facades what a good example they would be setting. One house could perhaps be the Manager's residence and the other become the Bank itself.

Kinsale has had its own National Monuments advisory committee for the last seventeen years, and our new Physical Planning and Development Institute would do well to keep in touch with local organisations such as these. In 1958 the courthouse was rescued from destruction and now houses a museum as well as providing the inhabitants with a hall for plays, debates and so on. Here is a town with pride in its appearance and the past. But those who care for the simple dignity of the street architecture are forced to stand by and watch the gradual desecration of the town they love.

Wrought iron lampholders

