

ENGLISH BRASS CHANDELIERS¹

By C. C. OMAN

Although during the last hundred years so much research has been devoted to the history of English art, the resulting flow of literature has to a large extent been canalised into a few narrow streams. The greater English painters have, indeed, had their full share of attention, the goldsmiths, the pewterers and the potters have no cause for complaint, but there are classes of artist craftsmen whose work has been neglected almost completely. The braziers and founders are amongst these, and it may be noted that no book nor periodical has hitherto devoted as much as four pages to the present subject, so that it is not necessary to begin with a bibliography.

That so few should have ventured to treat of it is not surprising, as much difficulty and obscurity surrounds it. Two of the principal obstacles are the manner in which these chandeliers are scattered all over England and Wales, and the fact that the majority of them do not fall within the period to which the Historical Monuments Commission is confined. Little help, indeed, has been obtainable from published photographs. Professional photographers have only included them in general views of churches, whilst amateurs have found them exceedingly troublesome subjects and have usually left them alone.

When I mentioned obscurity I did not refer merely to that of the vestries and church towers to which so many chandeliers have been relegated by unappreciative clergy. Although these chandeliers have been in use for over five centuries, no name for them has ever been generally accepted. Abroad

¹ Read at Burlington House, 3rd February, 1937.

they are usually known by the modern equivalent of the old 'corona luminum.' This name was invented to describe chandeliers such as that in the cathedral at Aachen, where the lights are set around a circular frame suspended from the roof. It is entirely inappropriate as a description of the objects with which we are dealing, which consist of lights borne on branches radiating from a central stem. Although our chandeliers may have inherited their name from the 'corona luminum,' their form would suggest that they were evolved from a common type of candle-beam which incorporated the principal of the radiating branches. In this the candles were set in cups or stuck on prickets attached to a couple of pieces of wood nailed in the form of a cross and suspended from the ceiling.

Although the 'corona luminum' was certainly used in this country¹ in the earlier part of the Middle Ages, I have found no evidence that the name was ever used in England in reference to the type of chandelier at present in question.

Of the various names which have been current, I have chosen 'chandelier' as the one nowadays in most general use. It has a respectable antiquity going back to the eighteenth century, but is essentially no more definite than candelabrum or candlestick. Hanging candlestick is a satisfactory term which has been used since the fifteenth century, but it is apt to be curtailed to candlestick when written by lazy scribes, so that its meaning becomes obscure. Branch is the name which had greatest currency down to the close of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately the same word was also used for small branched candlesticks and also for wall-sconces. Sconce was also used to describe chandeliers down to the eighteenth century, adding still further to the confusion.

The name 'spider' which is current in ecclesiastical circles both in Spain and this country, although admirably descriptive, appears to be of quite recent growth.

¹ For the one in Canterbury Cathedral see Rolls Series *Gervase of Canterbury*, 1879, i, 13.

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PLATE I.



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

(By Richard Addison, c. 1685)



LINCOLN CATHEDRAL, 1698

The history of English brass chandeliers falls into three periods :—

- i. Gothic or Pre-Reformation.
- ii. From 1550 to 1675.
- iii. From 1676 to 1800.

PERIOD I

Brass chandeliers were probably introduced into this country during the fourteenth century, and by the fifteenth century they appear to have been fairly common, particularly in domestic use. Whilst it is likely that those used in houses generally belonged to the smaller varieties, it is improbable that they differed much from those in churches. Certainly in later centuries little difference was made between those made for domestic and those for religious use. Descriptions in wills and inventories are usually quite colourless, but the two following are worth quoting :—

‘ Unum candelabrum pendens cum quatuor gargons’ (Will of William Duffelde, chaplain, of York, 1443).¹

‘ ffirst v candellstickes hyngyng w^t lily pottes wherof the hiest of them hath v braunches and eche of the other has iii braunches ’ (Inventory of the Hall of the Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Boston, 1534).²

It is much more difficult to estimate the extent to which brass chandeliers were in use in churches prior to the Reformation. After a course of reading the Dissolution inventories of abbeys and the Edwardian inventories of parish churches, the conclusion that they were quite unusual seems irresistible. In the ordinary church the supply of candlesticks of any sort was so meagre that there can be little doubt that no chandelier was included. Occasionally we do come across a church which would seem to have had some, but this is rare.³

Six years ago when I read my paper on mediaeval

¹ *Testamenta Eboracensia*, ii, 87. Gargon is clearly the same as gorgona, which is given as the equivalent of gargoil in the *Promptorium Parvulorum*.

² Edward Peacock, *English Church Furniture*, 1866, 211.

³ I am not entirely satisfied as to the character of the ‘ Braunches of Laton longyng to the Churche ’ of St. Christopher-le-Stocks, in 1488 (*Archaeologia*, xlv, 1880, 116-7).

brass lecterns in this country,¹ I tried to show that the amount of brasswork produced in England during the latter part of the Middle Ages was greater than was generally allowed. That brass chandeliers were actually made in this country may be taken for certain, since protectionist acts of Edward IV and Richard III specifically forbid the importation of 'hanging candelstikes.'² None the less, having examined all those Gothic chandeliers which can claim to have been in this country since before 1800, I cannot find any reason for supposing that any are of native origin. None of them seem to present any of those little deviations from the familiar Flemish types which are so noticeable, for instance, in candlesticks and branches found at St. Sampson's, Guernsey.³

As all these chandeliers are in my opinion Flemish, I do not intend to illustrate them, but as they are very few I will name them:—

Bristol, Temple Church.⁴

London, St. Katherine's Hospital,⁵ Regent's Park.

Norwich, Strangers' Hall.⁶

A little further afield are those in the churches of Llanarmon-yn-Ial⁷ and Llandegla⁸ in Denbighshire, and St. John's, Perth.⁹

PERIOD II

For historical reasons I have divided the period between 1550 and 1800 into two, but artistically it

¹ *Archaeological Journal*, lxxvii, 1930.

² Edward IV, c. 4 and 1 Richard III, c. 12.

³ *Proc. Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd S., xxvi, 1913-14, 3-7.

⁴ With two tiers of branches, having four and eight lights respectively. In an arcade in the stem is a figure of St. George, and, at the top, one of the Virgin (Ill. J. C. Cox, *English Church Fittings, Furniture and Accessories*, 1923, 220).

⁵ With one tier of six branches (all restored). In an arcade in the stem is a place for a statue (wanting), at the top, a lion sejant holding an escutcheon. *Historical Monuments Commission W. London*, Pl. 160.

⁶ With one tier of six branches, the stem surmounted by a lion sejant. Said to have come from St. George Colegate.

⁷ With three tiers of six branches, having a statue of the Virgin in an arcade in the centre of the stem (Ill. *Historical Monuments Commission (Wales)—Denbigh*, Fig. 35).

⁸ With two tiers of branches, having four and six lights respectively, surmounted by a statue of the Virgin (Ill. *ibid*, Fig. 36).

⁹ With two tiers of branches, having four and eight lights respectively. At the top is a statue of the Virgin in a flaming mandorla.

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PLATE III.



ABINGDON, ST. HELEN'S, 1713



STAMFORD, ST. MARTIN'S, 1732

(Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum)

V. & A. M.

might be considered as one. The type of chandelier which began to appear in the second half of the sixteenth century was destined to enjoy almost a monopoly of the market for nearly two hundred years, and had hardly ceased to be manufactured at the date when this study closes.

It consisted, when fully developed, of a moulded stem into which slotted one or more tiers of branches, having at the top a loop for suspension and at the bottom a large globe. Despite its apparent unity, the central portion is in reality made up of a number of separate pieces held together by a central iron rod finished at the bottom with a brass knob, and at the top by a split pin inside the loop. Between the top of the stem and the loop some sort of a finial, such as a dove, usually intervenes, whilst a row of scrolls attached to the stem frequently separate the tiers of branches. Extra slots are sometimes placed between those into which the branches fit, to hold decorative knobs or other ornaments. Only minor details like the scrolls are of sheet metal, all the rest being cast. This meant that once the original patterns had been made, any number of copies could be cast from them, a factor which was largely responsible for the long continuance of designs. Another economical feature was that most of the parts of a small chandelier could be used in the upper portion of a larger one.

There can be no doubt that the new type of chandelier was evolved from the Gothic, despite its very different appearance. It is not possible to trace the stages of the metamorphosis in this country, since material is completely lacking, but continental examples show fairly clearly that the globe developed from the heavy lower portion of the Gothic chandelier,¹ whilst the altered forms of the branches and of the finial are due merely to the replacement of the old style by the new one. A description of a chandelier in the inventory of the goods of Henry VIII taken in 1550,²

¹ A globe of sorts can be seen even on some fifteenth-century examples, such as the one in the church of Katwijk (Ill. *Art flamand et hollandais* iii, 1905, 70).

² 'Item a braunche of Latten w^t nyne candlestickes in it, havinge an antique woman holdinge in thone hand a scutchon' (B. M. Harley, MS. 1419, f. 137a).

suggests that no fundamental change had yet taken place, and this conclusion seems to be borne out by extant continental examples. The critical period in the evolution of the new type seems to have been the third quarter of the sixteenth century, although traces of Gothic influence can sometimes be found as late as 1600. Three chandeliers are mentioned in the inventory of Kenilworth Castle taken in 1588, after the death of the Earl of Leicester. Of one no details are given, whilst the second, 'a hanging candlestick of lattin, with vij socketts hanging about a staggs head,' would appear to belong to a late Gothic type. The third is described as follows:—

'A great brason candlestick to hang in the rooffe of the house, verie fayer and curiuslye wrought with xxiiij branches, xij greate, and xij of lesser size, vj rowlers and ij wings for the spreade eagle, xxiiij socketts for candells, xij greater and xij of a lesser sorte, xiiij sawcers or candlecups of like proporcion to put under the socketts, iij images of men and iij of women, of brass verie finelie and artificiallie done.'¹

The large number of branches and the mention of the 'spreade eagle' finial seem to suggest something approximating much more closely to the new design, though not necessarily fully developed.

As far as we are able to judge from the frequency of references in inventories, there would seem not to have been any remarkable increase in the secular use of chandeliers during this period. References to the use of chandeliers in churches are less ambiguous than in Pre-Reformation times and, although there is little enough to go on, it is not unlikely that they were in fact becoming more common as a result of the growth of the importance of the congregation in acts of worship. In a cathedral the chandelier seems to have been hung in the choir,² but in parish churches the place for it was in the nave.³

¹ It might be conjectured from the manner in which it is listed that it had not yet been assembled. J. O. Halliwell, *Ancient Inventories of Furniture, Pictures, Plate, etc., in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 1854.

² S. Gunton, *History of the Church of Peterborough*, 1686.

³ As was the example given to All Saints, Newcastle, in 1632 (Surtees Society: *Memoirs of Ambrose Barnes*, 1866, 315).



A. OXFORD, QUEEN'S COLLEGE, 1721

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B. RAMSBURY, WILTS, 1751

PLATE V.



PENRITH, 1745

F. H. C.

Whilst there can be no reasonable doubt that the chandeliers used in this country during this period conformed to the current continental pattern, I am unable to produce any actual evidence of their manufacture here. Little English brasswork of any sort of this date has survived, and for the same reason that I felt it necessary to brand the Gothic chandeliers as foreign, I am obliged to reject the rare examples of this period. The small early seventeenth-century chandelier in the Lady Chapel of St. Helens, Abingdon, conforms so closely to the patterns used in the Low Countries that there can be little doubt that it originated there. The grotesque masks half-way down the branches are a feature which I believe was never imitated in this country. In the church at Catworth, Hunts.,¹ is another example, dated 1666, which I regard as being equally of foreign origin. The most un-English feature about it is the double-headed eagle at the top, found on numerous examples abroad and on a few later examples in this country, all of which I believe to have been imported. The double-headed eagle occurs in the arms of a number of Netherlandish towns, but is comparatively seldom encountered in English art and heraldry. For the same reason I consider it probable that the great chandelier in the Kenilworth inventory was not of English workmanship, and all the more so because of the Earl of Leicester's connections with the Netherlands.

PERIOD III

The classic period of the brass chandelier in England really only began about the middle of the reign of Charles II, when a great increase in their use becomes apparent. They became the most popular form of illumination for public buildings. The old House of Commons² was, for instance, lit by a large chandelier, whilst old trade-cards almost invariably recommend them for ball and assembly rooms. Armourers' Hall still retains two small and one large examples dated

¹ Ill. *Historical Monuments Commission, Huntingdonshire*, Pl. 59.

² *The Picture of London*, 1808, Frontispiece.

1750 and 1756 respectively, and it may be surmised that many other livery halls were once similarly lighted. Brass chandeliers were probably never very common in private houses. They were rather expensive and householders whose tastes were ostentatious tended to prefer silver or crystal ones. Many of those now in private houses were originally in churches.

It is hard for us nowadays to realise how widespread was once the use of brass chandeliers in churches, so drastic have been the ravages firstly of the 'restorers' whose consciences forbade them to allow anything which was not Gothic to remain in a church; and secondly of vicars and churchwardens whose artistic senses have been so atrophied that they have regarded their chandeliers merely as obsolete lumber to be sold for what they would fetch when gas or electric light was to be installed. It is no exaggeration to say that a hundred years ago every cathedral church possessed at least one, most important town churches had one, whilst their use in country churches was far from rare.¹

There has long been a tendency to describe all late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century chandeliers in this country as 'Dutch.' Whilst, as we have already seen, there seems to be considerable justification for believing that in earlier times the majority of brass chandeliers used in this country did in fact come from the Low Countries, the proportion of imported examples to those made in England seems to have decreased rapidly about the date we have now reached. A considerable number of those made between 1675 and 1700 are almost certainly of English manufacture, whilst only a small minority of those made after 1700 appear to be foreign. The foreign element never entirely disappeared but it ceased to be important.²

¹ Twenty years ago an anonymous writer (*East Anglian*, NS, xii, 1907-8, 263) gave a list of thirteen chandeliers of this period, which he could remember in his youth in Norwich churches, all of which had disappeared. As far as I am aware none survive at Cambridge. Oxford possesses examples in two colleges and one parish church,

whilst the losses from London churches can best be appreciated by looking through old engravings.

² The following, for instance, I consider Dutch:—Cirencester (1701), Horsmonden, Kent (1703), Northiam, Sussex (1727), and Weobley, Hereford (1780).

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PLATE VII.



WOOTTON, OXON, 1750



OXFORD, BRASENOSE COLLEGE, 1749

A second line of argument is also sometimes used, that the chandeliers made in this country were mostly the work of Dutch craftsmen. This I also believe to be untrue. None of the firms which I have identified as makers of chandeliers bear Dutch names. Furthermore Dutch names do not feature conspicuously in such eighteenth-century braziers' and founders' advertisements and trade-cards as I have examined, nor in London and Bristol poll lists. It might be urged that perhaps the master-founders and braziers were English, but that their employées were Dutch.¹ As far as makers of chandeliers are concerned I think that this is unlikely, since it would be fair to suppose that English-made examples would reflect continental fashions much more closely than they do in fact.

The type of chandelier already described seems to have enjoyed an almost undisputed popularity until about 1740. Examples dating after 1760 are probably of provincial make. The characteristics by which they can be recognised from those made abroad are much more easy to see than to describe. The use of the double-headed eagle as a finial has already been noted as a foreign feature. Other characteristically Dutch motifs are grotesque human heads or fish-heads halfway down the branches. The branches of Dutch examples are generally heavier than those of English chandeliers.

Since any number of castings could be made from the same set of patterns, it is only possible to give the date after which an example was made, if it cannot be dated either by an inscription or a document. Two chandeliers of identical appearance are not always of the same date. Thus the chandelier given to Canterbury Cathedral in 1726 by Archdeacon Tenison is identical with the one made by Richard Addison²

¹ Of course, there are exceptions such as the Hallen family, who started to manufacture brass frying-pans at Wandsworth in 1671, and afterwards removed to the Midlands. When the Bristol Brass Wire Company set up in 1702, Dutch workmen were employed for mixing the component metals to make the brass.

² The chapter minutes for November 19th, 1685, has the following

entry, 'to Dr. Beueridge which he had paid to To (*sic*) Richard Addison who made the Branch as by bill 5-14-0.' The arms of Aucher engraved on the chandelier, show the baronet's inescutcheon, to which dignity Sir Anthony was raised in 1666 (J. Wickham Legg and W. St. John Hope, *Inventories of Christchurch, Canterbury*, 1902, 281).

and given by Sir Anthony Aucher before 1685 [Pl. i), so that we must suppose either that they were both cast from the same set of patterns or that the former was cast directly from the latter.

Some of the earlier chandeliers, like the one of 1699 in Bermondsey parish church¹ (and the Aucher one, already mentioned,) are rather coarse and unimaginative, but others, like the one of 1680 in Southwark Cathedral¹ are as fine and mature as any that were ever made in this pattern. Considering that so many examples were made all conforming to the same pattern, it is extraordinary that they should possess so much individuality. It is only comparatively seldom that we can recognise two as being identical, and it is clear that quite a number of firms must have been engaged in their manufacture. The range of finials is, indeed, small, the Holy Dove or the Cherub appearing on most ecclesiastical examples and a plain loop on the secular. No special significance can be attached to the use of the crown which is found on the ecclesiastical examples at Canterbury Cathedral and Gresford, Denbigh [Pl. xiii A] and, much more appropriately, at Hampton Court.

It is only possible to allude to a few of the more outstanding examples. The one of 1698 at Lincoln Cathedral [Pl. ii] is remarkable for the wide spread of its branches which end in scrolls to which the sockets and grease-pans are attached. This is quite unusual, as ordinarily the socket and grease-pan are screwed on to the end of the branch. This same peculiarity, however, reappears in the 1713 example now in St. Helen's, Abingdon² [Pl. iii]. This is particularly fine and it will be noted that the stem is octagonal and the globe of similar form but with the angles truncated. This use of polygonal forms is extremely effective and is, of course, a familiar feature of the silver and brass ware of this period. Two smaller chandeliers of 1721, with octagonal globes, are in the chapel of Queen's College, Oxford [Pl. v A].

¹ *Historical Monuments Commission, East London*, Pl. 7.

² Rescued from the scrap heap after having been cast out of the church at Horsham, Sussex.

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PLATE IX.



ARMOURERS' HALL, 1750



WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL, 1756

The polygonal stem and globe, however pleasing they may appear to us, never became popular, and the majority of chandeliers do not deviate from the usual rounded forms.

The chandeliers made at Bristol (Pls. xiii, xv) and Bridgwater (Pls. xviii, xix) have frequently a globe beneath each tier of branches, but the stems of examples made elsewhere are no more than balusters.

A great deal of the beauty of this style of chandelier lies in the form and decoration of their branches. Perhaps partly owing to the constant re-use of old patterns, it is not possible to trace the usual trend of design from simplicity to complication. The branches of the Southwark Cathedral chandelier of 1680 are, for instance, considerably more sophisticated than those of the Aucher one at Canterbury Cathedral, probably some five years its junior, whilst the simplicity of the latter is equalled by the example of 1732 from St. Martin's, Stamford, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Pl. iv). The period when the patterns for the most elaborate branches were being made would seem to have been round about 1720 when the attractive examples at Queen's College, Oxford (Pl. v A) were made. The pair of chandeliers at Ramsbury, Wilts. (Pl. v B), bearing the date 1751, are almost certainly late castings from patterns made about this time. The branches of the later globe chandeliers, mostly of provincial workmanship, are only of average elaboration.

Round about 1740 the popularity of the globe pattern chandelier at length began to decline. It is difficult to find an appropriate name for the type which now began definitely to oust it, but I shall call it the vase-shaped. In it the stem and globe seem to merge together, whilst the branches are attached to the thickest portion instead of to the stem as heretofore. The other important constructional difference is that the branches are bolted to the interior of the body, instead of merely hooking on. Like the globe chandeliers they are almost entirely cast work. I have, indeed, seen one example of about 1770 in which the body has been raised, but I believe this to be quite exceptional.

There can be little doubt that the vase-shaped chandelier was first evolved in silver. Silver chandeliers had been in use in this country as far back as the reign of Henry VIII, but we are ignorant of the appearance of any made before the time of Charles II, when the vase-shaped pattern appears in use.¹ The William III example at Hampton Court is familiar to most visitors to that palace.² Silver chandeliers, however, were never very common in this country (only five appear in the 1725 inventory of the Royal Plate), and the commonest material for vase-shaped chandeliers during the first quarter of the eighteenth century was wood. It is difficult to offer an explanation for the lateness of the appearance of brass chandeliers of this type, but the fact remains that examples which can be safely dated before 1725 are hard to find.

Whereas their silver and wooden prototypes were usually elaborately decorated, the brass chandeliers are comparatively free of ornament, a factor which adds greatly to the difficulty of dating them. The Rococo and Adam styles had hardly any effect on them, and they never really lose their Baroque appearance.

Like the globe pattern, the vase-shaped chandelier could be made with any number of tiers of branches. The flame is the commonest form of finial, after the simple loop. In some examples of the middle of the century, the flame is formed of three overlapping rococo scrolls. The dove appears comparatively seldom, and I do not know of any examples with the cherub. Whereas the varieties of bodies are countless, a close inspection is required to recognise the different forms of branches, only a few types being distinguishable at a glance.

The following vase-shaped chandeliers are selected from those which I believe to be of London make; a few more will be illustrated when I deal with the provincial centres.

The pair of chandeliers at Penrith (Pl. vi) are not only of historical interest but are particularly

¹ See the example belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch illustrated in *Old Furniture*, vi, 1929, 219.

² Ill. P. Macquoid and R. Edwards, *Dictionary of English Furniture*, ii, 1924, 6.

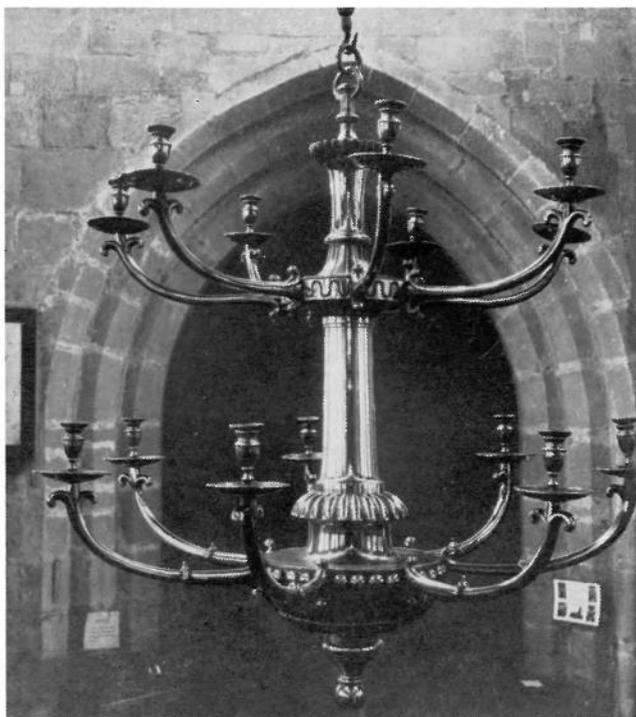
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PLATE XI.



SEFTON, LANCS., 1773

F. H. C.



GRESFORD (FROM CHIRK), 1796

F. H. C.

happy as medium size versions of the design.¹ The upper and lower parts of their bodies are well proportioned to each other, presenting a coherent whole. In this they compare favourably with the example, dated 1750, at Wootton, Oxon. (Pl. vii), where we cannot but feel that the founder has spoilt a good design for a single-tier chandelier by adding an upper portion cast from any models in his shop, which would serve the turn.

It is perhaps in the single-tier chandelier that the vase-shape is seen at its best, although some three-tier examples are certainly very successful. The three single-tier chandeliers at Brasenose College, Oxford (Pl. viii), Armourers' Hall (Pl. ix), and Winchester Cathedral (Pl. x), dated respectively 1749, 1750 and 1756, are all excellent examples of Baroque art, although cast in the middle of the Rococo period. All show the skilful use of fluting and gadrooning very common amongst the chandeliers of this date. The example of 1773 at Sefton, Lancs. (Pl. xi), is rather more closely allied to the general trend of artistic forms of the time. It is not difficult to see the likeness of its bulbous body to those of the contemporary tea-urns of silver, copper and Sheffield plate.

The form of chandeliers was hardly more affected by the advent of the Adam style than it had been by the Rococo. As we shall see later on, globe chandeliers were still being made in the West Country in the seventeenth-seventies. Occasionally, as on the undated example at Cerne Abbas, Dorset, we note that the flame finial is issuing from a shapely classical vase, but the form of the body itself is entirely non-committal. One of the most notable exceptions to the general neglect of classical forms is the chandelier given to Chirk church in 1796,

¹ Inscribed :—' These Chandeliers were purchased wth y^e fifty guineas given by the most noble William Duke of Portland to his Tenants of y^e Manor of Penrith : Who under his Graces Encouragement associated in defence of the Government and Town of Penrith against the Rebels in 1745. The Rebels after their

retreat from Derby were put to flight from Clifton and Penrith by his Royal Highness William Duke of Cumberland after a short skirmish near Clifton Moor, which began at 4 in y^e afternoon on Wednesday y^e 18 Dec^r 1745. Rebell Prisoners taken by y^e Tent^s of Penrith and y^e neighbourhood were upwards of 80.'

but now at Gresford, Denbigh (Pl. xiii A). It cannot be claimed that the breach with tradition has here been justified by the result. Although this study is not being carried beyond the year 1800, it may be remarked that early nineteenth-century chandeliers are generally equally neglectful of contemporary fashions, as may be seen, for instance, in the example at Frodsham, Cheshire, made at Birmingham in 1805.

Having given a rough sketch of the evolution of these chandeliers, it is time to say something of their makers. The available sources of information are most disappointing. A certain amount of material of a general nature can be gleaned from trade-cards and notices in newspapers. These do not, however, help us to identify the makers of particular examples. A few West Country founders signed their work, but unfortunately they did not make a regular practice of so doing and their example was not followed elsewhere. I have not found any documents throwing any light on the origin of any chandeliers which have always been in secular use. Documents relating to chandeliers in churches are not usually very helpful. The price of a chandelier seems to have been anything from £16 upwards according to size, a sum which a parish could not ordinarily afford. Nearly all chandeliers in churches are gifts, and since the parish did not have to foot the bill no mention of the maker's name appears in the vestry minutes. Even when the churchwardens actually settled the bill, they did not always mention the maker in the accounts, as an intermediary was sometimes employed.

The number of brass-founding firms at work during this period was very large, but it would seem that chandeliers were only made by fairly important businesses at comparatively few centres. I have found nothing to suggest that makers of chandeliers were scattered all over England in small towns, like the bell-founders. A certain number of bell-founders did also make chandeliers, but the two trades do not seem by any means to have always gone together. Small brass-founding firms would not have found it



F. H. C.

A. GRESFORD, DENBIGH
(By Brock of Chester (?), 1748)

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B. DUNSTER, SOM., 1740

PLATE XIII.



BRISTOL, ST. NICHOLAS, c. 1725

economic to stock all the patterns for making chandeliers, unless they had the prospect of receiving several orders. Chandeliers were easy to take to pieces and to assemble, so that there was no difficulty about sending them long distances. The two large Penrith examples came from London¹ and, except when there is evidence to the contrary, it seems safest to assume that an example is London made. Although I have only been able to trace some half-dozen London firms which advertised themselves as makers of chandeliers, I have no doubt that there were a good many others.²

Except in the West Country, where conditions were particularly favourable, I have only been able to find evidence suggesting that chandeliers may have been made at Chester and Newcastle. A passage in the vestry book of Gresford church seems to suggest that the maker of the chandelier (Pl. xiii A) was one of the Chester family of Brock,³ of which at least five members followed the calling of brazier and founder during this period. In the *Newcastle Courant* for February 27, 1725, William Packer, founder, late of Bristol, announces that he is now established at the 'Five Bells,' and that he makes and sells all sorts of brass-work including 'large branches for Church Sconces.'

¹ In the church accounts is an entry, 'For carriage of chandelears from London £3-18-0.'

² I have not been able to discover whether Richard Addison who supplied the Canterbury Cathedral chandelier, was a Londoner or not. The following London firms, arranged alphabetically, advertised chandeliers:

ANDREWS, 68 Fore Street, Moorgate (*Daily Advertiser*, 18, 8, 1772).

BERRY, Edward, 'Two Candlesticks & Bell,' St. Paul's Church Yard (Trade card, c. 1760, Heal Colln.).

FORD, Thurston, 'Cross Keys,' Wood Street (Trade card, c. 1740, Heal Colln.).

GILES, John, and MULLINER, Shadrach, 'Two Candlesticks & Bell,' Addle Street (Trade card, c. 1760, Heal Colln.).

MILLER, William, 'Peter & Key,' West Smithfield (Trade card, c. 1770, Heal Colln.).

WALKER, J., Cheapside (*Craftsman*, 1735, *passim*).

³ 'Ordered, that, whereas the Inhabitants of this Parish are dissatisfied with Mr. Brock the Braziers Bill for the repair of the Church sconch, Charles Leadward, one of the Churchwardens, do & shall give notice to the said Mr. Brock that He is required to name an Indifferent workman on his part & the Parishioners to name another, to value the sd work & that the sd Charles Leadward be empowered, if He can, to agree & make up the matter in dispute with the sd Mr. Brock—as witness our Hands Dec. 27, 1748.' In the churchwardens' accounts is the following entry, 'Pd to Mr. Brock towards the sconch, £20-0-0.' Though nothing is here said regarding the maker of the chandelier, the amount of Mr. Brock's bill is so large that it is difficult not to conclude that he was the vendor as well as the repairer.

He may have been the son of the Bristol bell-founder John Packer, who was working at the beginning of the century, but I am unable to point to any chandelier as being wholly or partly his work.

Considering the importance of Birmingham as a centre of the brass industry, it would be strange if no chandeliers were made there. At Frodsham, Cheshire, is a large chandelier provided for the church by William & Homer Silvester, of Birmingham, in 1805. It is not of pronouncedly nineteenth-century character, so that it is quite likely that it was cast from models made within our period.

The reason for the extensive manufacture of chandeliers at Bristol and Bridgwater is not far to seek. In the year 1702 the Bristol Brass Wire Company began the manufacture of brass at the Baptist Mills. Bristol was a particularly suitable spot for such an enterprise since calamine could be obtained from the Mendips, whilst copper could be brought without much trouble from Cornwall. The Avon and Frome provided water-power and the neighbouring collieries fuel for smelting.

The Bristol founders seem to have availed themselves to the full of the advantage of having a supply of their raw material ready on the spot. It is not unlikely that William Packer had already gained experience of the manufacture of chandeliers before he left for Newcastle in 1725. At any rate, chandeliers were certainly being made at Bristol by this date.

When gas was introduced into Yeovil church in 1859, the churchwardens disposed of a handsome chandelier inscribed: 'The Gift of Mr. Edward Boucher Tobacconist, 1724, Richard Rennells fect. Bristol.'¹ This is clearly the Richard Reynolds, brass-founder, who appears in the Bristol Poll lists as resident in St. Augustine's parish in 1739 and in St. Stephen's in 1754. Unfortunately no illustration of the Yeovil chandelier seems to exist, so that we have no clue as to the characteristics of his work.

In the vestry minutes of St. Nicholas, Bristol, for

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1824, pt. II, 17-19, and J. Goodchild. *The Parish Church of Yeovil*, 1925, 18.

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PLATE XV.



PILTON, SOM.
(*By Roger Rice, 1749*)



CROSCOMBE, SOM., c. 1750

1725, the churchwardens are empowered to procure 'a new cross branch with iron stay as in the middle aisle.'¹ This seems to imply that the chandelier in the middle aisle was already in position. Although the St. Nicholas example (Pl. xiv) was somewhat mutilated when it was adapted for electricity, it is important as the earliest identified Bristol chandelier of the vase-shape. Its branches are identical with those of the globe type chandelier at Pilton, Som. (Pl. xv), which is inscribed: 'R RICE BRISTOL FECIT 1749.' The name of Roger Rice, of Clifton, brass-founder, occurs in the poll list for 1754, and if we cannot be certain that he was actually responsible for the St. Nicholas chandelier, it is clear that he inherited the patterns from which it had been cast.

At Iron Acton, Glos., is a chandelier, dated 1725, having a finial in the form of a dove and two tiers of seven branches. The globe at the bottom is of the normal form, as are also the two smaller ones upon the stem. An examination of its branches shows that they were cast from the same models as were used fifteen years later for the one at Dunster, Som. (Pl. xiii B). The Dunster churchwardens, accounts record a payment for bringing the chandelier from Bristol and another of £16-5-0 to a Mr. Treer for the chandelier itself.² As I have not been able to trace a founder of this name at Bristol, it is perhaps best to regard him merely as a middleman. Until this question has been settled satisfactorily, I shall describe these two chandeliers as forming Bristol Group A together with an undated one at Newland, in the Forest of Dean.

There can be no doubt that the chandelier in Croscombe church, near Wells, is the most impressive in the West Country (Pl. xvi). The elaborate bosses to which the serpentuous branches are attached seem at first sight quite foreign to the English tradition. The form of the grease-pans, also, is no less unusual in being unmistakably rococo. With it can be associated a smaller example in Uffington church, Berks., inscribed: 'The Gift of Thomas Boddeley Printer, of the City of

¹ *Bristol and Gloucestershire Arch. Soc. Trans.* xxxii, 1909, 161.

² F. Hancock, *Dunster Church and Priory*, 1905, 116.

Bath 1754.' Another example (Pl. xvii) is now in America. It is inscribed as having been given by the 'young men and women' in 1764 to some church which I have not been able to identify. It passed through the hands of Messrs. Stair & Andrew about thirteen years ago, who assure me that it came from the West Country, though no record of the locality was kept. Although I have no actual proof that these examples were made at Bristol, I shall call them Bristol Group B until more evidence is forthcoming.

Bristol Group C comprises two undated chandeliers in St. Peter's, Bristol (Pl. xviii A), and one of 1786 in Backwell church. The peculiar manner in which the sections are held together by scrolls and the form of the branches are quite unmistakable.

Though I have found it necessary to have recourse to this anonymous grouping, this does not imply that I have not traced the names of any other Bristol makers. John Griffith, for instance, who had 'a brass-founder's melting-house in Lamb Street,' was advertising his 'brass branches of all sorts and sizes' in the *Bristol Oracle* in 1745. Likewise, Thomas Willshire, 40, St. Thomas Street, was advertising his 'Branches and Sconces' in Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal* in 1777, and was still carrying on the business in 1800. There is at present no means of connecting these makers with any piece, nor can we tell how many firms were making chandeliers at Bristol at this time.

The founders of Bridgwater were only less fortunate than those at Bristol in not being quite so close to the source of their raw material.

The earliest makers of chandeliers was John Bayley who signed and dated the examples at Stogursey (Pl. xviii B) and Lympsham in 1732 and 1744 respectively, but who was also undoubtedly the maker of the unsigned one of 1730 at Axbridge.¹ He may be presumed to be related to Thomas Bayley, of Bridgwater, a bell-founder, who seems to have been

¹ The Axbridge chandelier differs from the other two in having a six-petalled flower on a stalk slotting in between each branch. It has the

Holy Dove as its finial, the Lympsham example has a cherub's head, whilst the Stogursey one has a flying cherub.



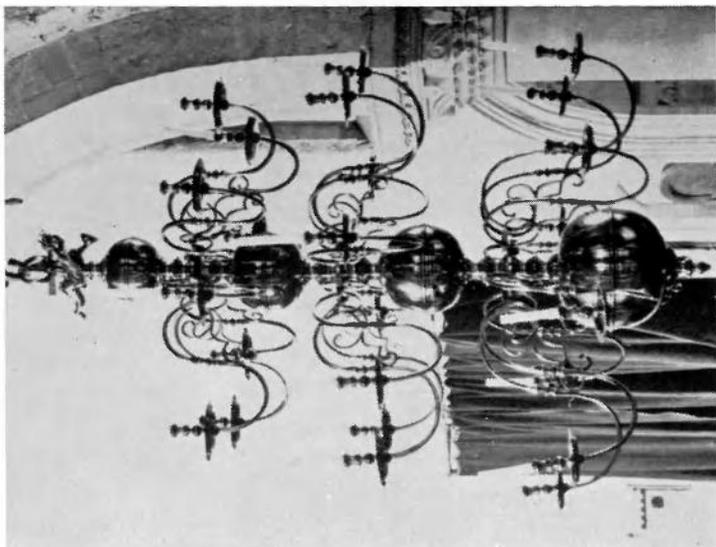
IN PRIVATE POSSESSION, 1764

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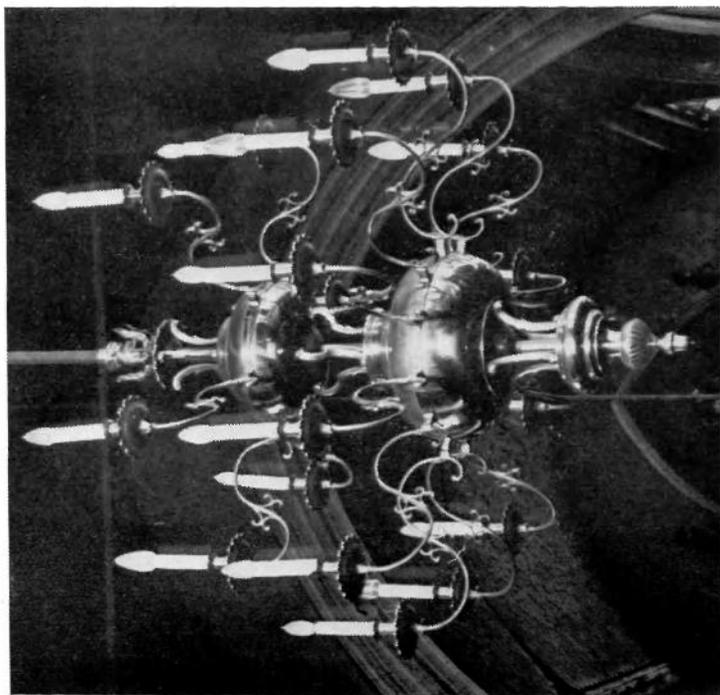
PLATE XVII.



C. L.



B. STOCURSEY, SOM.
(By John Bevelly, 1732)



A. BRISTOL, ST. PETER'S, c. 1780

working on his own from 1743 to 1748, in association with one Street from 1749 to 1756, and once more independently from 1756 to 1773.¹ Whether he had made any chandeliers before he separated from Street has not yet been settled. In 1770, however, he made a two-tier chandelier for Old Cleeve church, Somerset, followed by another for Burnham in 1773, whilst one at Stogumber is undated (Pl. xix).² Anyone who compares his work with that of John Bayley, forty years earlier, will see how difficult it is to date chandeliers.

Street, after Thomas Bayley had left him, went into partnership with Thomas Pyke, a bell-founder, and some time about 1760 they issued a most attractive trade-card in which is depicted a three-tier globe chandelier (Pl. xxi). Actually the only chandelier I know which bears the firm's name is a vase-shaped one, dated 1774, in St. Sidwell's, Exeter (Pl. xx). The business was carried on under different names until about 1830,³ but I have not been able to establish its responsibility for any of the early nineteenth-century examples scattered about this district.

It must be understood that this paper does not pretend to be more than an introduction to a long neglected subject. Though by waiting a few years longer, I might have been able to speak more fully of the examples in certain districts with which I am unfamiliar, it was obviously too much to hope that I should ever be able to make anything like an adequate survey of the more important of the numerous chandeliers scattered over the length and breadth of England and Wales. My intention, therefore, in publishing these notes is to invite others to criticise and to extend them, so that eventually it may be possible to review more adequately the history of these objects which, if belonging to a comparatively recent

¹ As may be inferred from H. T. Ellacombe, *Church Bells of Somerset*, 1875.

² The Old Cleeve and Stogumber chandeliers are identical, the Burnham

example differs only in having an extra tier of branches.

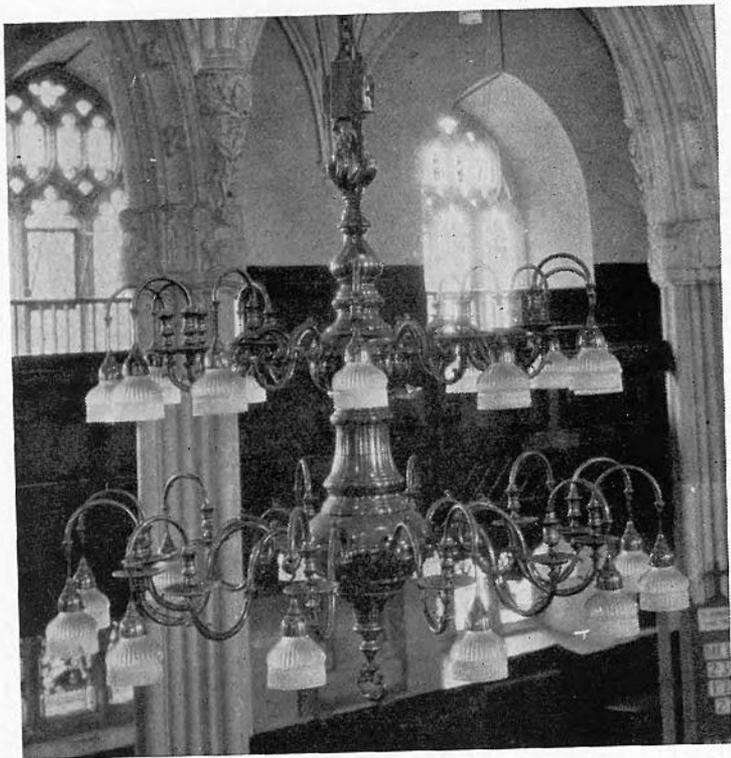
³ H. B. Walters, *Church Bells of England*, 1912, 227.

period, are generally possessed of so much artistic merit.

It is only possible for me to mention by name a few of the many who have helped in the compilation of this paper. Especial thanks are due to Mr. F. C. Eeles for drawing my attention to many West Country examples, and for lending the block of the Ramsbury chandelier. Mr. Francis Buckley has provided me with a quantity of valuable extracts from contemporary newspapers relating to the brass industry in the eighteenth century. Mr. A. E. O'dell has similarly given me copies of a number of poll-lists of the London brasiers and founders of the same period. Sir Ambrose Heal has allowed me ready access to his well-known collection of trade-cards, one of which is illustrated. Mr. F. H. Crossley, of Chester, has provided the excellent photographs marked *F.H.C.*, and Messrs. Stair & Andrew the one marked *C.L.*, which I am permitted to reproduce by *Country Life*. The Dean of Winchester and Brasenose College have both lent blocks of the chandeliers in their charge, whilst the Victoria and Albert Museum has given permission to reproduce the photograph marked *V & A.M.* The remaining illustrations are from my own photographs.



STOGUMBER, SOM.
(By Thomas Bayley, c. 1770)



EXETER, ST. SIDWELLS
(By Street & Pyke, 1774)



TRADE CARD OF STREET & PYKE OF BRIDGWATER, c. 1760