

John Christopher Hampp of  
Norwich,  
an Importer of Ancient Glass.

BY

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John Christopher Hampp has been represented as a somewhat mysterious being: he has been miscalled a Dutchman by Langloise, and then fitted with a Dutch prefix as van Hamp, and he had previously been called an Englishman by De la Quérière. He has always been associated with the import of ancient continental stained glass from France and Germany. I hope to show that at least his original nationality was not such as has been represented, and that so far as the import of ancient glass was concerned, it was merely incidental to his main source of livelihood. He left no children to survive him, and so, after his death, no one was interested in maintaining his memory, although, as a worthy citizen of Norwich, he was well respected by his contemporaries. His activities in the buying of glass were confined to two periods, *viz.*, after the short lived Peace of Amiens, 1802, and after the Battle of Leipzig in 1814.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Norfolk and Norwich Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, p. 401.

As his tombstone in the nave of St. Giles' Church states, he was born in Marbach in Würtemberg on the 24th September, 1750. For some reason he emigrated to England, for in 1782 we find him described as of No. 2, Red Well Street in the Parish of St. Michael at Plea, Norwich. He was admitted to the freedom of the City on 9th November, 1793, as a worsted-weaver "not apprenticed"; this means that he was admitted "by purchase" on payment of a fee.

He accordingly voted for the Parish of St. Giles in 1794, 1796 and 1799, and in each instance is described as "merchant." In the directory of 1802, he is described as "Master Weaver," and lived in a substantial house, No. 41, St. Giles Street at the corner of Fisher lane, now a part of the site of the Rate Collectors' Offices, and formerly the Norwich and London Accident Insurance Office. What is more significant perhaps is that as "merchant" I find that he had been elected in 1802 as one of the Guardians of the Poor for the Great Ward of Mancroft, and no doubt attended their weekly Committees. The double description of Master Weaver and Merchant probably meant that, while he was a skilled weaver himself, he had arrived also at the position of employing journeymen weavers, and perhaps also fullers and dyers, all of whom would live and work in their own houses, and that he paid them for their work so that the finished product became his, that he undertook the task of selling the goods, and that on him, of course, fell the risks of the market. In 1802, after the Peace of Amiens, he, like others of the same occupation, travelled on the continent with the idea of selling his textiles, and, as a side line, he seems to have entered into a sort of partnership with his learned and artistic friend Seth Wm. Stevenson, of the Market Place, to purchase and import ancient church glass, which in those Revolution days it was not difficult to obtain—for a consideration—and sometimes for as little consideration as paying for reglazing the neglected windows with new plain glass.



This S. W. Stevenson, F.S.A., became a freeman of the City as "Stationer," but he had other occupation than that, for he was part proprietor of the *Norfolk Chronicle* newspaper; he was a travelled and cultured gentleman, the author of two books about his European Travels, and is known, even now, as the author of a Dictionary of Roman Coins, Republican and Imperial, which, with additions by other hands, was published 36 years after his death and became the standard work on the subject.

A notebook of Hampp's has been preserved, and is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge,<sup>1</sup> and this shews in several details how Mr. Stevenson was concerned in sales of glass, *e.g.*—

1803 Feb. 28	Mr. Stevenson sold in London, The Virgin and Child in ruby, Mr. Long.	63	0	0
	Sold by Mr. Stevenson in London, sundry small pieces for 5 paintings on glass at 9 guas. and rest in cash			
	£2 6s. 6d.	11	15	6
1804 Feb.	Remitted to Casenove & Co.	100	7	0

Casenove & Co., of Norwich, like Hampp, were merchants and worsted weavers, and travelled on the continent with samples in order to sell their textiles, and I should think that this item in this notebook would be in payment of a bill drawn on Hampp by a foreign consignor of glass.

Transactions are shewn with Rouen, Paris, Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), Cologne and Nüremberg, the last being not so far from his birthplace in Würtemberg: it is most probable that he then revisited his relatives at Marbach. There are reasons for thinking he may have gone to Basle and Zurich in Switzerland. For many other details as to provenance and ultimate destination

<sup>1</sup> Transcribed by Bernard Rackham and printed in the *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters*, vol. ii, No. 2, p. 86, October, 1927.



of his pieces of glass, the reader is referred to the learned and careful paper by the Revd. Christopher Woodforde in the *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society*, Vol. xxvi, p. 73, where a good number of Hampp's pieces of glass are identified in their present locations. I am chiefly concerned with Hampp himself. His partnership transactions were extensive, for the price of one lot of cases of "coloured glass," with the expenses of carriage, amounted to £688 12s. 8d.

The catalogue of "Ancient Stained Glass for sale at the Warehouse in Norwich and No. 97, Pall Mall, London," printed by Stevenson about 1804 (p. 81 in Mr. Woodforde's paper), seems to me to shew that Hampp used his textile warehouse in Fisher's Lane, Norwich, at the back of his house in St. Giles Street, Norwich, for the purpose of sale, as also (by the probable help of Mr. Stevenson) Mr. Christie's premises No. 97, Pall Mall, London. Although this cannot be stated with certainty, yet, from the Catalogue at the Fitzwilliam Museum of 16th June, 1808, Mr. Christie of Pall Mall was then selling some of Hampp's glass, and twelve years later on, *viz.*, on 17th July, 1820, we find that Mr. Christie was selling some ancient stained glass being "the remainder of a consignment a few years ago from the continent" at his "Great Room, Pall Mall."<sup>1</sup> No. 97, Pall Mall, may not have been the same premises as "the Great Room, Pall Mall," but it would seem very likely, for both are connected with sales of imported continental stained glass. As is well known, Christie's Rooms are now in King Street, St. James', and were moved to that site from Pall Mall in 1823. It seems probable, therefore, that the finding of buyers was a lengthy job: few collectors were to be met with to invest their money, when, as now, domestic window frames were not suitable for the insertion of old leaded glass.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters*, vol. vi, No. 3, p. 129.



Mr. J. C. Hampp continued his business of a textile merchant in St. Giles Street, Norwich, until the date of his death, *viz.*, 3rd March, 1825. He was then 75 years of age, and was buried under the nave of St. Giles' Church.

His Will, dated 2nd November, 1824, was proved in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Norwich on 16th May, 1825. It appears from this that he had three sisters in Germany, all of whom were then dead; one of them left a son, Christopher Frederick Hauserman, who is named as one of the Executors; William Lewis Lohr (the other executor) and his "faithful clerk," George Simpson, are named as trustees. There are legacies to Wm. L. Lohr, to his said nephew, and to a great nephew and a great niece; and he gave rings for his four god-daughters, of whom one, Caroline Thade, appears to have been a daughter of F. C. J. Thade of Hamburg. The legacies altogether amounted to between £600 and £700.

All his property was to be sold and invested in good trustee securities in England, and the income was to be paid to his nephew, Christopher Frederick Hauserman, for his life; and after his death, the investments were to be realised and divided among the children and grandchildren of his three deceased sisters, with certain exceptions which he specified. His trustees were to be allowed the expenses of all journeys that they might be required to make.

Among his legacies may be mentioned one of thirty pounds to the Chief Magistrate of the City of Marbach in Würtemberg, his native city, to be divided among the poor; and also another of nineteen guineas to the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Saint Giles in Norwich, to be divided by such officers among the poor of the said parish.

As the will makes no mention of wife or children, we may conclude that Mr. Hampp lived and died a bachelor.