

# A MACE FOR MINCING LANE PRECINCT

ROSEMARY WEINSTEIN

A recent loan to the Museum of London is a staff of fruitwood, with late 17th century silver mount bearing the inscription:

'In memory of James Burkin Esq<sup>r</sup> Merch<sup>t</sup> in Mincing Lane buried in St Dunstons Church 10th Nov 1689. This staff securd by Mr Rich<sup>d</sup> Grew is by him recommended to posterity as A mace for Mincing lane Precinct at ye choosing Common Councill men and other officers being the same which Mr Burkin used to ride withall'<sup>1</sup>.

Maces, or wands of office, are recorded from at least the 13th century, but possession of maces by the wards is peculiar to the City of London. Some 17th century ward maces survive, but none hitherto described specifically as a precinct mace<sup>2</sup>.

The owner of the mace, James Burkin (1622–1677) was the son of James Burkin, a wealthy Colchester clothier. Of Protestant refugee descent from Brabant, the Burkins were one of the town's leading families and active members of the Dutch church<sup>3</sup>.

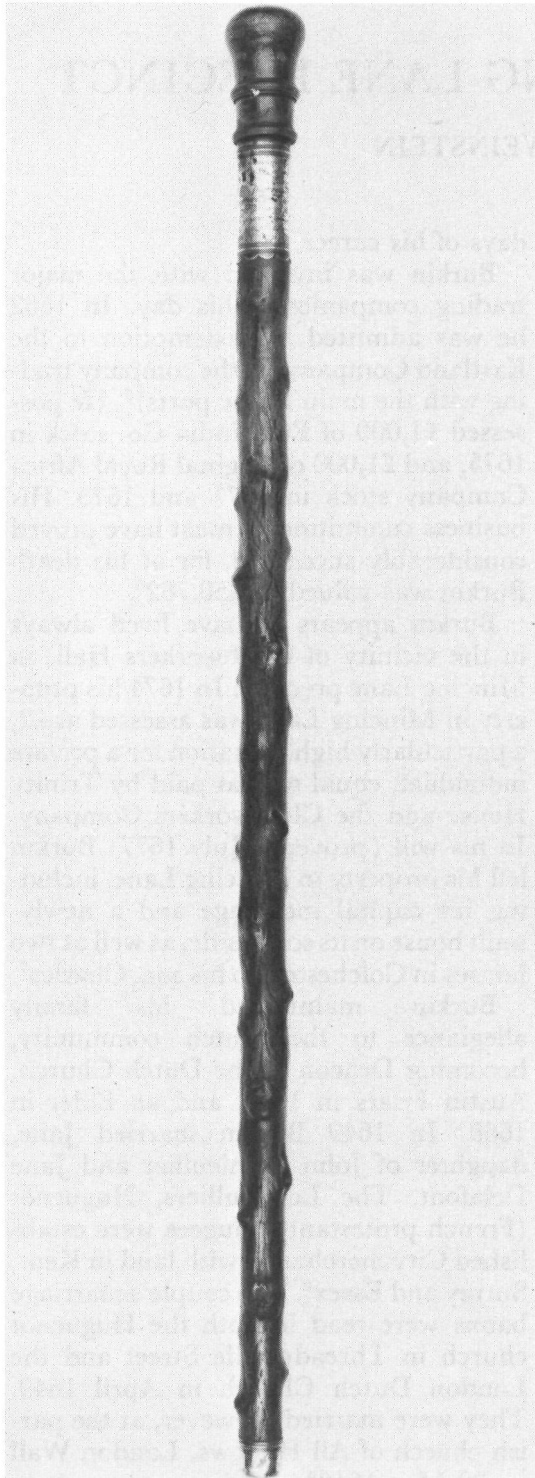
On 16th December 1639, at the age of 17 years, James junior was apprenticed to Edmond Snow, Clothworker of London for 7 years, becoming Free on 11th February 1650–51. The Clothworkers Company records indicate his ascent in their hierarchy, becoming second Senior Warden on 19th August 1668 and finally, Master on 20th August 1673 for the year 1673–74<sup>4</sup>. A considerable industry existed in the transport of bays and says (fine textured cloths) from Colchester to London. Perhaps Burkin was engaged in this aspect of the cloth trade in the early

days of his career.

Burkin was involved with the major trading companies of his day. In 1662 he was admitted by redemption to the Eastland Company (ie the company trading with the main Baltic ports)<sup>5</sup>. He possessed £1,000 of East India Co. stock in 1675, and £1,000 of original Royal Africa Company stock in 1671 and 1675. His business commitments must have proved considerably successful, for at his death Burkin was valued at £50,762<sup>6</sup>.

Burkin appears to have lived always in the vicinity of Clothworkers Hall, in Mincing Lane precinct. In 1674 his property in Mincing Lane was assessed at £2, a particularly high valuation for a private individual, equal to that paid by Trinity House and the Clothworkers Company. In his will (proved 5 July 1677) Burkin left his property in Mincing Lane, including his capital messuage and a newly-built house on its south side, as well as two houses in Colchester, to his son, Charles<sup>7</sup>.

Burkin maintained his family allegiance to the Dutch community, becoming Deacon of the Dutch Church, Austin Friars in 1655, and an Elder in 1668. In 1649 Burkin married Jane, daughter of John Lethieullier and Jane Delafont. The Lethieulliers, Huguenot (French protestant) refugees were established City merchants, with land in Kent, Surrey and Essex<sup>8</sup>. The couple's marriage banns were read in both the Huguenot church in Threadneedle Street and the London Dutch Church in April 1649. They were married, however, at the parish church of All Hallows, London Wall on 22 May 1649<sup>9</sup>.



Plates 1 & 2 Fruitwood staff with silver inscribed mount, dated 1689. Museum of London L258.

James and Jane had nine children, the eldest of whom was baptized in the Dutch church, the remainder in the parish church of St Dunstons in the East, within Mincing Lane precinct<sup>10</sup>. Through this Lethieullier marriage, Burkin was connected with City merchant Huguenot families of repute, such as the Houblons (Founder-directors of the Bank of England) and the Ducanes. The network of marriage alliances included Abraham Johnson, merchant, also from Colchester. In addition, Burkin's daughter Elizabeth married into the Mingay family<sup>11</sup>. In the parish baptismal registers, Burkin is described as 'captain', his rank in the Artillery Company, which he joined on 21st February 1642–3, serving as Captain of Horse. In his will Burkin left £50 to the Artillery Company, if and when they should build their planned Armoury (and on its subsequent completion to the first storey)<sup>12</sup>.

Burkin continued his City career in traditional fashion as Common Councillor and Alderman. Such duties were undertaken later in life, from 1674–7 as Common Councillor for Tower Ward, but only 4th–6th June 1672 as Alderman for Bread Street, Burkin fining £420 for discharge from office<sup>13</sup>. It was his three years in this public capacity that his friend Richard Grew particularly wished to commemorate with the bequest of Burkin's staff to Mincing Lane precinct.

Burkin died on 4th July 1677 and was buried as requested in the chancel of St Dunstan in the East, under the same memorial slab as his wife (d. 1675). His monument is described as being of white marble, a draped and curved tablet, flanked by small male figures of soldiers and surmounted by a cornice, a broken pediment, with swag, two small figures of Death and a woman embracing on pedestal above pediment, flanked by cherubs holding a swag; on the apron a

cartouche-of-arms and military trophies in base<sup>14</sup>. His arms are described as argent, a fess azure, a label of 5 points gules. Crest: a crab erect or<sup>15</sup>.

The parish burial register confirms this 1677 date of burial (at variance with that of 1689 inscribed on the mace)<sup>16</sup>. Burkin desired that members of the Clothworkers and Artillery Companies should attend in procession at his funeral, also children from Christ's Hospital.

Although apparently assimilated into the Anglican Church, in his will Burkin remembered the poor of the Dutch churches with £100 to the poor of Austin Friars, £100 to the poor of the Dutch church, Colchester, and £10 to the Dutch church poor in Yarmouth. Trade links were also remembered with bequests to one Hatton, his cloth-drawer, Thomas Coxe his clothworker, and Thomas Washington his packer (who also leased one of his houses in Mincing Lane). In addition he left £100 to the Clothworkers Company to be "lent out from tyme to tyme to five young men Free of the said Company . . . without interest", with repayment of the principal after three years<sup>17</sup>.

James Burkin lived through one of the most tumultuous periods of London's history: Civil War, Restoration, Plague and Fire. Despite these hazards he pursued a vigorous career and raised a large family. Respected by his acquaintances, his friend Richard Grew has helped preserve his name for posterity.

## NOTES

1. L258; lent by the late D. Donald, Esq. Displayed at the Art Treasures Exhibition, 1928 (no. 593).
2. L. Jewitt and W. H. St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Corporate Towns of England and Wales*. Vol. II (1895) 150.
3. The Burkins were one of the leading Colchester cloth families, natives of Brabant, who had remained active members of the Dutch church. James Burkin (senior) contributed £400 out of £6,000 levied on the Dutch community in Colchester by Fairfax in 1648, for the purpose of raising his siege on the City. This sum (£400) was the third largest assessed on an individual in the community. The Colchester bay and say trade never recovered from the devastation caused by the siege. (See W. J. C. Moens, *Registers of the Dutch Church Colchester*, Huguenot Society Quarto Series Vol. 12 (1905) XXXIII–XXXV; also *The Victoria County History of Essex*, Vol. 2 (1907) 396. Also *London Visitation Pedigrees*, 1664, Harleian Society, vol. 92 (1940).

4. Clothworkers Company Apprenticeship Records. I am indebted to David Wickham, Archivist to the Company for this information.
5. R. W. K. Hinton, *The Eastland Trade and the Common Weal* (1959). Appendix C4.
5. Will, proved 5 July 1677. PRO. PROB 11/354/70. CLRO Common Sergeant's Book IV, 131b.
7. CLRO Assessments 12th September 1674 (Ref. 46.18). Burkin is the only individual in the parish of St Dunstons in the East assessed at this amount, except for three men who also owned quays, cranes and warehouses. The south side of his capital messuage (bequeathed to his son Charles) was a newly-erected house on land owned in part by the freeholder Mr Richard Browne, and part by Dr Nicholas Barebones. To his son James he left the house on the north side of the capital messuage, in occupation of Thomas Washington (his Packer). Washington, his wife Sarah and son Zebechiah were still residents in the parish in 1695, D. V. Glass, *London Inhabitants within the Walls, 1695*, (London Record Society 1966). Some premises within the precinct, rebuilt after the Fire of 1666, were as yet unoccupied, with many merchants and traders refusing to return but preferring to live in the suburbs. This increased the individual financial assessments the citizens had to pay. (See also 'A Posting Book for Receipts of Money for staking out of Foundations in the Ruins of the City of London at 6/8d each'; in Mills and Oliver Survey (London Topographical Record 1967) 49).
8. Le Neve's *Pedigrees of the Knights* . . . Harleian Society, Vol. 8 (1873) 294.
9. a) 'Jacques Burkin, filz Jacques, natif de Colchester, et Jeanne le Thullier, natife de Londres. Avril 29. [1649]. Marie aux anglois'. *Registers of the French Church, Threadneedle St., London*, Huguenot Society Quarto Series, Vol. 13, 1899, also b) '29 Apl 1649. Jacobus Burken, bachelor of Colchester and Jeane Le Theileur, spinster of London'. *Register of the Dutch Church Colchester*, Huguenot Society Quarto Series, Vol. 12 (1905). c) Marriage 22 May 1649. *Registers of the Births, Marriages and Burials 1588-1675 All Hallows London Wall*, 1889.
10. *Registers of St Dunstons in the East, 1653-1691*, Harleian Society vols. 85 and 86 (1954-5).
11. J. R. Woodhead, *The Rulers of London 1660-1689* (London and Middlesex Archaeological Society), 1965, 41.
12. *Loc cit* in note 6; G. A. Raikes, *The History of the Honourable Artillery Company* (1878). Armoury House was completed in 1735.
13. A. B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, I, (1908), 77. A period of continuing friction between the Courts of Aldermen and Common Council, with the Common Sergeant, Judge Jeffreys being temporarily suspended from office. R. R. Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, Vol. II (1894) 446-455. Richard Grew has not as yet been identified.
14. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), London, Vol. IV, *The City* (1929) 184.
15. LVP 1664 (op cit in note 3), but see also *Sewers Monumental Inscriptions*, Vol. 2 (00), 398, for a different description of the family arms.
16. Possibly confusion with the burial of another James Burkin on 10th November 1687; probably Burkin son (born 1651).
17. *Loc cit* in note 6.

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