

Jewellery Studies

The Journal of The Society of Jewellery Historians



2022/2
LESLIE SOUTHWICK

Published by the Society of Jewellery Historians



The Society of
**JEWELLERY
HISTORIANS**

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Editor: Susan La Niece

Jewellery Studies is the Journal of the Society of Jewellery Historians, and is the leading academic journal on the subject. Articles cover all aspects of jewellery from antiquity to the present day, and include related material from archives, technical data, gemmology and new discoveries on collections and designers. All papers published in **Jewellery Studies** are subject to peer review.

Jewellery Studies was published in hard copy form from 1977 to 2012, and has been an electronic publication since 2015.

Articles published from December 2020 (2020/3) are Open Access. A full list of all articles published and information on how to access them is available on the Society's website at: www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/js_online and [/js_printed](http://www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/js_printed)

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Jewellery Studies is designed by Doug Barned www.design-is.co.uk and published online in digital pdf format by The Society of Jewellery Historians.

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Thomas Gray of Sackville Street

Royal Retail Jeweller, Goldsmith and Sword-Cutler

KEYWORDS:

Thomas Gray/jeweller/London/18th century/George/Prince of Wales

https://www.societyofjewelleryhistorians.ac.uk/JSO_2022_2.pdf

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Front cover:

A superb Lesser George provided for George, Prince of Wales, by Thomas Gray of Sackville Street, December 1787-88. St George and the Dragon in gold, diamonds, rubies and emeralds, St George's shield made from one large diamond. 11.6 x 8.2 cm (whole object). Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (RCIN 441151)

Thomas Gray of Sackville Street

Royal Retail Jeweller, Goldsmith and Sword-Cutler

LESLIE SOUTHWICK

Thomas Gray of Sackville Street was arguably the most prominent specialist Westminster royal retail jeweller, toyman, sword-cutler, goldsmith and seller of 'Fancy Articles in Diamonds, precious Stones, Pearls, Gold, Silver, Steel, &c, bought and sold for Ready Money', of the late eighteenth - early nineteenth century.¹ Located at the very heart of London's West End at 42 and later 41 Sackville Street, North Side Piccadilly, Parish of St James's Church, Westminster (figs 1-4), and only yards from the prominent Palladian residence of the Earls of Burlington at Burlington House (where the Royal Academy was established from 1867), Gray's firm was comparable in importance to the royal warranted Asprey in London or Tiffany's in New York today.

The range of known products commissioned by individuals and organizations reveal that Gray was amongst the most prolific supplier of various patterns of civilian and courtly dress swords (figs 5-11), Garter badges (figs 12-13) fashionable jewellery, buckles (figs 14-15), buttons (fig. 16), bracelets (fig. 17), snuff-boxes, walking canes, chatelaines (figs 18-20), watch-cases (figs 21-23), etc. He supplied all forms of personal adornment and courtly 'smallware', most notably to George, Prince of Wales (fig. 24), at his residence at Carlton House, Pall Mall (fig. 25), in the late 1780s,² and to members of his family, friends and associates as well as to London society at large, for over three decades.

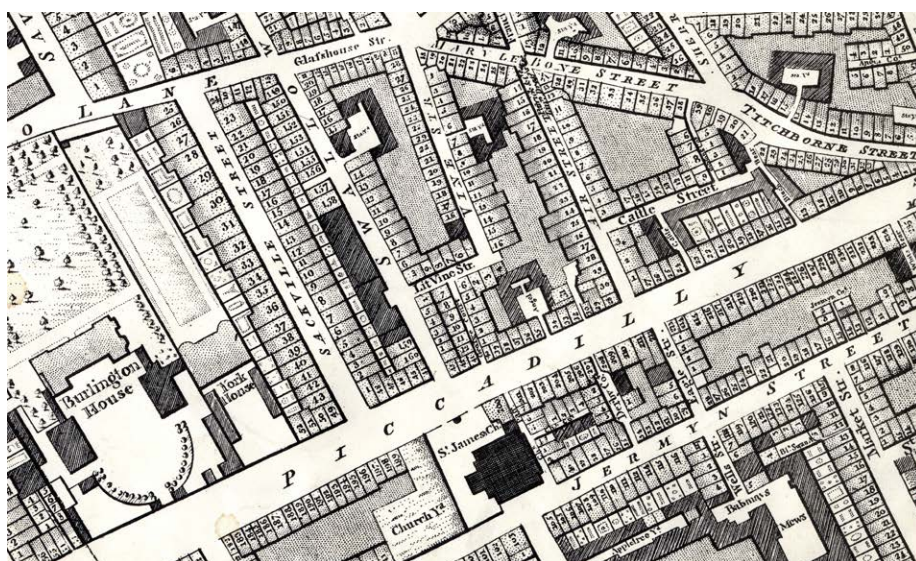


Fig. 1.
Sackville Street, off Piccadilly, Horwood's Map of London, 1792-99. By courtesy of Westminster Archives Centre

1 Swords, and indeed watches, by Thomas Gray or Gray & Constable are invariably signed 'Sackville Street'. However, there was another Thomas Gray (or indeed possibly the same man) who operated as a 'Jeweller & Goldsmith' and later as 'Jeweller & Watchmaker' from 25 Strand, Parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields, from 1780 until 1806: name crossed through in rate ledger commencing 9 July 1806 (Westminster Archives Centre (WAC), MS. F.628 f. D9). This might have been an earlier outlet for Gray, which was established before the more salubrious address in Sackville Street became vacant but the invoices and bill-heads known and recorded make reference only to Sackville Street as our subject's main address and not elsewhere.

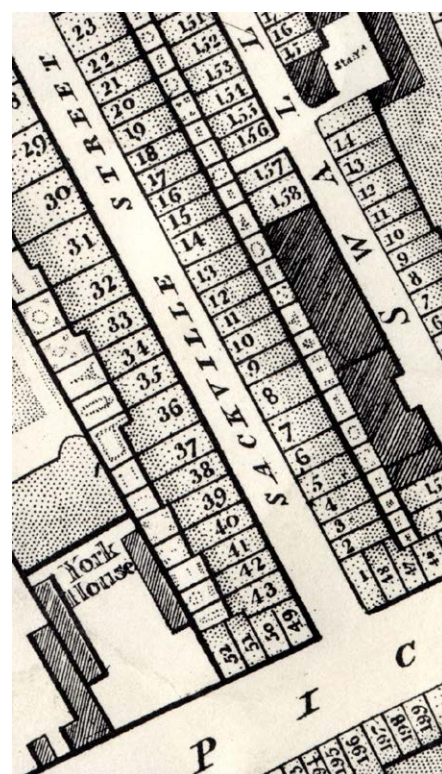


Fig. 2.
Detail of Sackville Street, Piccadilly, with numbered buildings, in fig.1

2 Carlton House in Pall Mall and Sackville Street off Piccadilly were less than a quarter of a mile apart, within easy walking distance of each other.



Fig. 3.
St James's Church, Piccadilly, today. Author's Image



Fig. 4.
Lower west side Sackville Street today, where No. 41 and 42 formerly stood. Author's Image

Moreover, Gray's firm was immortalized as the 'Gray's of Sackville Street' to whom the Miss Dashwoods went to negotiate an exchange of a few old fashioned jewels of their mother in Chapter XXXIII of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* and where they saw Mr Robert Ferrars ordering an ivory, gold, and pearl toothpick case. Gray's tradesman's sign read:

*Thomas Gray, WORKING GOLD-SMITH, makes and sells all sorts of Large and Small Plate, both wrought and plain, rings, things and all manner of Jewellers work. Also makes and mends watches*³

and a bill-head of 1799 (fig. 26) records him at his second address as ⁴

Thos. Gray
GOLDSMITH & JEWELLER
41 SACKVILLE STREET
*Sells every Article For Ready Money
on the most reasonable Terms, of the first
Workmanship & newest fashion, declining
Orders on Credit: Assuring their Customers that
care & attention shall be paid to all favour*
DIAMONDS, PEARLS, GOLD, PLATE & C EXCHANGED

The Life of Thomas Gray of Sackville Street (1749-1820)

Thomas Gray, the son of the royal jeweller and cutler, Robert Gray (II) (c.1713-1788) of 13 New Bond Street, Parish of St George, Hanover Square, and his first wife, Jane (née Skull), was born in London on 18 October 1749 and baptised in St George's Church, Hanover Square, on 17 November 1749 (fig. 27).⁵ His mother, Jane, died a short time later, after which his father married for a second time to a Miss Anne Norman at St Anne's Church, Soho, on 23 December 1754.⁶ This marriage lasted for thirty-four years until Robert died after fathering several children, several of whom later made their mark in various fields.⁷

Little is known about the early life and upbringing of Thomas, but he was clearly raised in the household of his father Robert and his step-mother Anne in New Bond Street, in the heart of fashionable Mayfair in London's West End and learned his trade by being taught and trained by his father in a notable establishment with a workshop attached, before striking out on his own in the 1780s.

There is no record of apprentice indentures, but this was a non-requirement in order to work in Westminster, unlike in the City of London; and he would have, as the eldest son, no doubt learned the skills by working under his father 'out of love and

³ Illustrated in the booklet of Collingwood the Jeweller (no date or page no.) p.2.

⁴ Royal Archives/GEO/MAIN/25694. This invoice is signed by Thomas Gray, but his partner's name 'Constable' on the header has been crossed through, revealing that the partnership ceased in this period.

⁵ WAC, Baptisms of Church of St George, Hanover Square, Vol. 2. (The mother's maiden name of Skull is taken from Ancestry/Wikitree). For an account of Robert Gray and his importance, see Southwick 2001, pp. 124-6.

⁶ WAC, Marriages of St Anne's Church, Soho, Westminster, 1754.

⁷ For example, one son, Robert, became Bishop of Bristol.

affection.⁸ A booklet on the firm of *Collingwood the Jeweller* (whose precursors can be traced back to Gray, see below) presents a probable apocryphal tale of Gray being an inn-keeper in Streatham, Surrey, who served excellent ale ‘and who attracted many customers, while his cock-fighting mains were famous, and were patronized by the sporting bucks of the day’.⁹ One of his clients was said to be the Prince of Wales, who, ‘discovering that Gray had a wide appreciation and knowledge of jewellery and gems in general’, suggested that he should open a shop in central London. The Prince also offered to patronize the premises once he had become established.¹⁰

Gray had probably met the Prince, as he was a known customer of his father’s; but he had gained his knowledge of gems, jewellery and cutlery from being the son of a prominent tradesman who served a long apprenticeship, one who had a workshop on site in New Bond Street and who provided a wide range of items for his rich and notable clients, including George, Prince of Wales, the

future king, and his brothers. A rare surviving invoice of Robert’s from the period reads (fig. 28):¹¹

No. 13 New Bond Street, London
To Robert Gray
Jeweller & Cutler

His Royal Highness
Prince of Wales

1784		£	S	D
Jany 17	a Silver star with gold enamell Garter	14	: 14	: 0
March 9	a Pair of patent plates & Chapes	0	8	: 0
	a sett of large Silver Buttons engrav’d wth different devices in the best manner }	32	: 11	: 0
	a Pair Patent plates & Chapes		8	: 0
	[Total]	£48	: 1	: 0



Fig. 5.
Cut-steel-hilted court sword by Matthew Boulton, Birmingham, signed *Thos Gray / Sackville / Strt.*, c.1790. By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York (acc. no. 26.145.307)



Fig. 6.
The signed top-locket of scabbard of fig. 5

8 This is a term used by a number of livery company indentures, when a candidate is the son or nephew or relative of a master. The training was given without payment because of the close family connection.

9 *Collingwood the Jeweller*. No date of publication and no dates are given in this booklet of when this might have happened.

10 Ibid

11 Royal Archives GEO/MAIN/25646.



Fig. 7.
Cut-steel-hilted court sword by Matthew Boulton, Birmingham, signed
'Thomas Gray of Sackville Street', c.1790. By courtesy of Peter Finer



Fig. 8.
Detail of pommel and upper hilt on fig. 7



Fig. 9.
The cut-steel shell nearer the blade of fig. 7



Fig. 10.
Cut-steel-hilted court small-sword signed Thomas Gray, c.1790.
By courtesy of Thomas Del Mar Ltd



Fig. 11.
Cut-steel-hilted court small-sword signed 'Thomas Gray 41 Sackville
Street', c.1800. By courtesy of Thomas Del Mar Ltd.

Gray first established at 42 Sackville Street in 1783

Thomas Gray opened his shop at 42 Sackville Street, north side Piccadilly, Parish of St James, Westminster, in the spring of 1783, aged 33 (figs 1-4). In the St James's Parish Poor Rate Collector's Book dated 3 May 1783, the premises are occupied by a 'George Beaufort' and in the observation column is the name 'Thos. Gray'.¹² A similar notation is found in the Watch Rate Book of 12 June 1783. These insertions show that Gray was in line to succeed to the property and certainly did so in this period, as his marriage record of August 1783 refers to him as 'Gent. of St James's Middlesex', the parish of his Sackville Street shop:



Fig. 12.

A superb Lesser George provided for George, Prince of Wales, by Thomas Gray of Sackville Street, December 1787-88. St George and the Dragon in gold, diamonds, rubies and emeralds, St George's shield made from one large diamond. 11.6 x 8.2 cm (whole object). Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (RCIN 441151)

12 WAC, St James's Parish Rate Books, 'Church Division'. By putting a name in the observation column in the rate-book on the same line as a resident, this meant that the new name was to succeed to the premises and invariably did so in the next ledger.



Fig. 13.

Reverse face of fig. 12

Thomas Gray Gent of the Parish of St James's Middlesex and Mary Musgrave of this Parish Spinster [were Married in the Church of St Peter and St Paul, South Petherton, Somerset (fig. 29)], by Licence this fifth Day of August in the Year One Thousand seven Hundred and eighty three. By me W. Knott Minister.

This Marriage was solemnized between us { Thomas Gray
{ Mary Musgrave'.¹³

Both parties signed the register and the marriage was witnessed by a Mary Hirkings and by the bride's father, Thomas Musgrave (died April 1784).¹⁴ (Gray's bride, Mary Gray, née Musgrave, had been born in South Petherton in 1758 and

13 Somerset Record Office, Taunton, D/P/pet.s.2/1/6, 'Marriages 1754-1806. Marriage Register Book for the Parish Church of South Petherton, The Year 1783, p. 9, No. 25'.

14 Thomas Musgrave was buried in St Peter and St Paul's Church, South Petherton on 27 April 1784 (Somerset Record Office D/P/pet/s.2/1/3/, Baptisms & Burials 1737-1812). His Will, PROB. 11/1118, incorrectly dated 'made 4 day of August 1743' (sic. 1783) was Proved 16 June 1784.



Fig. 14.
A cut-steel shoe buckle inset with neo-classical figured cameos of Wedgwood Jasperware, c.1785-95. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum (acc. no. M.2-1969)

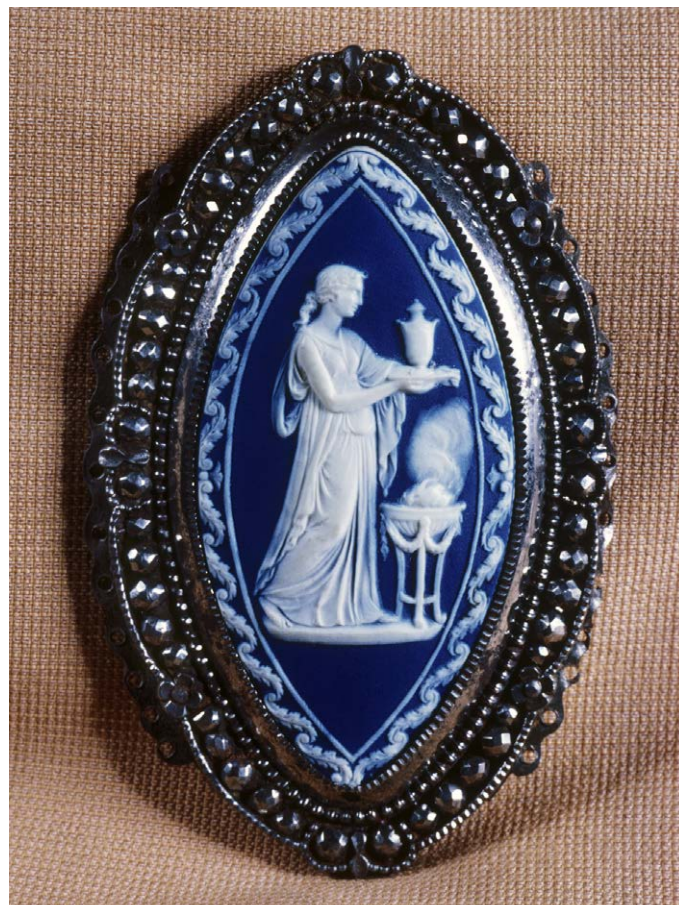


Fig. 15.
Cut-steel belt-clasp of the type Gray provided. Jasperware female making a sacrifice, Boulton and Wedgwood, c.1785-1800. By courtesy of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland (Inv. no. 481770)

baptised there on 27 February 1758).¹⁵

Thomas and Mary returned to live and work in the West End of London and five children were born to the couple all baptised in St James's Church, Piccadilly (fig. 3), just across the road from where the couple resided (cf. fig. 4). The children were:¹⁶

Thomas-Musgrave Gray (born 29 July 1784, baptised 28 October 1784);

Mary (born 12 December 1785, baptised 14 January 1786);

Robert (born 1 April 1787, baptised 2 May 1787);

John (born 18 December 1788, baptised 22 January 1789);

William (born 11 February 1793, baptised 12 March 1793, died 7 July 1808, aged 15).

Seventeen months after their marriage an Indenture was 'made the twenty-first day of January 1785', between 'Thomas Gray of the City of Westminster, Jeweller, and Mary his wife (late Mary Musgrave, only child of Thomas Musgrave, late of South Petherton in the County of Somerset, gentleman, deceased).'¹⁷ This document relates to a substantial property the couple inherited from Mary's father, Thomas Musgrave (described as



Fig. 16.
A cut-steel button inset with Wedgwood Jasperware Zodiac signs, c.1785-95. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum (acc. no. M.4-1969)

15 Somerset Record Office D/P/pet s.2/1/3 (Baptisms and Burials 1737-1812) under date (in Latin) '1758 Feb. 27 Maria Musgrave'.

16 WAC, St James Church Parish Register Vol. V.

17 Somerset Record Office DD/PLE Box 85



Fig. 17.

Child's gold bracelet with cut-steel and neo-classical Jasperware panels of the type sold by Thomas Gray, by Josiah Wedgwood, probably also mounted by Matthew Boulton, late 18th century. Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (RCIN 45900)
13.3 x 1.8 x 0.2 cm (whole object), stoneware, enamel, steel, gold

being an 'Apothecary'), following his death the year before.¹⁸ Also, a Sun Insurance Policy (No. 524384) dated 13 November 1786, records Thomas Gray 'Jeweller' at 42 Sackville Street and also insures a house he owned at South Petherton in Somerset (the one above).¹⁹

A bill in the British Museum (figs 30-31), dated 3 March 1787, from 'Thomas Gray No. 42 Sackville Street' to a W. Clayton mentions the sale of a 'Toothpick Case, Knife, 3 pr Scissor, pr Tweezers, Shuttle, Thymble, Bodkin, pr Plyers, Almanack, Pair of Vices',²⁰ and a bill-head of the same year records 'Thomas Gray ouvrier en Acier, Or, Argent etc. No. 42 Sackville Street' (Heal 1935: 30).

What is evident, however, is that Gray was a major specialist retailer in trade, who sold a wide range of rich goods. He did not personally make the items he sold (as might have been thought) and he never registered a specialist workman's silver maker's mark, nor a 'sponsor's mark', at Goldsmiths' Hall, at any time during his career. He did not, however, work alone. He ran a busy retail business with several 'shop-men' to serve customers, several apprentices to help with mercantile tasks and to learn the business, and skilled technicians on site in an attached workshop to undertake repairs and adjustments as required.²¹ And he also followed Daniel Defoe's dictum of the importance of an owner being present and seen on the premises and available to serve clients:

Customers love to see the masters face in the shop, and to go to a shop where they are sure to find him at home



Fig. 18.

A cut-steel chatelaine by Matthew Boulton mounted with a blue and a white Wedgwood Jasperware cameo of Apollo, c.1785-95. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum (acc. no. M.23:1-1969)

[...] Shops must have a master not left to a 'prentice-boy or two, and to an idle journeyman [...] Tis an old anglicism such a man drives a trade. Trade is like a hand-mill, it must always be turned about by a diligent hand of a master. Trade must not be entered into lightly but is a business for life and ought to be followed as one of the great businesses of life. (Defoe 1726: 60-1)

18 London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) Sun Insurance Policy, Ref: CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/341/524384.

(The term 'Apothecary' is recorded in this Sun policy).

19 Ibid.

20 British Museum, Heal Collection 67.176.

21 Gray had several shopmen working for him, such as Joseph Kitching (a former apprentice) and Joseph Lauriere, and no doubt one or two specialist artisans, such as Shepherd & Shepherd, to undertake alterations and repairs as required.

What is also evident from Gray's energy and business success, is that, after entering trade as an independent merchant in 1783, he (like his father Robert before him) cast his net across the specialist manufacturing trades in London and in England (particularly the West Midlands) as others had done, such as Wakelin & Parker, Nathaniel Jefferys (I), Dru Drury (II), Thomas Jefferys etc, in order to subcontract the finest and most original works of applied art to satisfy his most demanding clients,



Fig. 19.

A gold and enamel chatelaine with gold watch ornamented with pearls and diamonds, signed and numbered inside 'Thos Gray / Sackville Street / No. 2320'. 33.7 x 5.0 x 2.1 cm (whole object) Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (RCIN 10850) Acquired by Queen Mary



Fig. 20.

Gray's signature and address inside the watch in fig. 19

notably the Prince of Wales.²²

One major aspect of Gray's trading practices in this area of expertise (learned from his father) were his numerous orders of 'cut-steel-hilted swords' (and other 'cut-steel' objects of various design, quality and cost) from Matthew Boulton's Manufactory at Soho in Birmingham, Warwickshire (fig. 32), the finest maker of distinctive patterns of cut-steel dress swords for civilian and court use and other fashionable objects (figs 33-45 and figs 5-11).²³ From Boulton, a major link was established with Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) (fig. 46), 'Queen Charlotte's potter', a man who provided the blue and white 'Jasperware' cameos inset on eleven known surviving cut-steel hilted-swords (and other personal forms of quality ware, such as buttons, fobs, brooches, buckles, bracelets, etc., figs 14-18) by the partners and ordered by Gray. Both Boulton and Wedgwood had showrooms in London, to promote their wares (Southwick 2023).

Thomas Gray and George, Prince of Wales (later George IV)

In 1789, the Prince of Wales, who had clearly patronized Gray from the mid-1780s (and perhaps a little earlier), is recorded having given up his chief jeweller and supplier, Thomas Gray, in 1789, in favour of Nathaniel Jefferys (II) (Southwick, 2001: 148-50) because he considered Gray's items to be too expensive and that Gray had been pressing the Prince to pay his bills. Later the Prince was to have the same problem with Jefferys.

George, Prince of Wales (later The Prince Regent and George IV), was the most exacting of patrons and wanted the very best both for himself and for his close circle of relatives, friends, mistresses, courtiers and officials. Payment invoices in the Georgian Archives in the Royal Collection reveal that, for about three years from the last quarter of 1786 until Christmas 1789, Thomas Gray of Sackville Street was the most diligent supplier of everything and best that money could buy for the Prince, although there were several others close-by, such as Stephen Rice, 'Jeweller to the Prince of Wales', at 20 Pall Mall, who also provided the Prince with expensive, but selective, gifts and tokens in the late 1780s, but jewels and items that were not in the same range of Gray's portfolio of personally-desired 'small-ware'.²⁴ Surviving invoices also reveal that Gray does not appear to have been a provider of large pieces of plate to the Prince,

22 For Wakelin & Parker, see Clifford, 2004; and for Nathaniel Jefferys (I), Dru Drury (II) and Thomas Jefferys, see Southwick, 2001, pp. 93-95, 147-8 and 150-151.

23 Birmingham City Archives, Central Library, 'Matthew Boulton General Correspondence, 1758-1793' (all the names and the letters are indexed). Nathaniel Jefferys (I) (1710-1786), at 32 Strand, Cutler to George III and Goldsmith to Queen Charlotte, was on very good trading and personal terms both with Boulton and Wedgwood and sold their quality goods in London. For a discussion on this correspondence, see Southwick, 2009, pp. 225-250, particularly pp. 231-236, and see note 15, p. 245 for the letter references.

24 'Small-ware' were luxury items small in form, such as snuff-boxes, pendants, sword-hilts, cane-heads, buckles, buttons, badges, necklaces, etc, in contrast to 'Large-ware', such as testimonial and table silver plate.



Fig. 21.
A gold pocket watch embellished with blue enamel, pearls and diamonds, signed Thomas Gray, Sackville Street, c.1790.
By courtesy of Auktionen Dr. Crott, Mannheim



Fig. 22.
Reverse of fig. 21 showing the blue enamelling, pearls and diamonds



Fig. 23.
The reverse of gold pocket watch embellished with blue enamel, pearls and diamonds, signed Thomas Gray, Sackville Street, c.1790. By courtesy of Sotheby & Co

items that would have been commissioned from specialists in that line of quality ware, such as Jefferys & Jones in nearby Cockspur Street and later Rundell & Bridge at 32 Ludgate Hill (Southwick, 2001:150-1, Hartop 2005).²⁵

During the above three-year period, documents show that Gray was providing so many articles to the Prince and delivering them almost on a daily basis, that he did not send his invoices in for payment of each individual piece to Carlton House (as normal), but submitted them quarterly at 'Lady Day' (25 March), 'Midsummer' (24 June), 'Michaelmas' (29 September) and Christmas (25 December), all laid out on sheets in which each piece is clearly itemized, dated for when delivered, and costed (see the examples below).²⁶

The range of items Gray provided was impressive, items including many different patterns of swords, belt- and shoe-buckles, various buttons (of silver, ivory and jasperware), Garter and other knightly badges, gold watches, earrings and necklaces; but by far the most expensive pieces supplied by Gray (and by others, such as Nathaniel Jefferys II below) were those items embellished with various forms of gemstones - 'brilliants' (diamonds), rubies, emeralds, sapphires and pearls. The surviving invoices of the Prince of Wales reveal that between 1786 and 1789 he bought items from Thomas Gray amounting to the sum of £21,201-11s-2d, payments for which were not made when the quarterly invoices were first submitted.

The quality goods Gray provided to the Prince of Wales's Wardrobe included items for all occasions, to accompany male

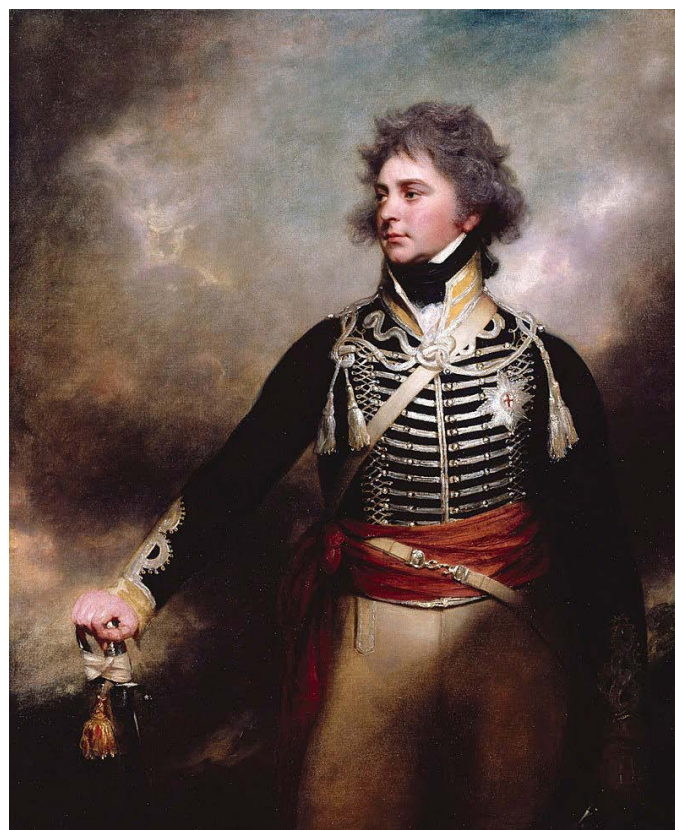


Fig. 24.
George, Prince of Wales (later The Prince Regent and George IV, 1762-1830), Colonel, 10th (Prince of Wales's Own) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons (Hussars), by Sir William Beechey, RA (1753-1839), c.1798.
By courtesy of the Royal Academy of Arts, London (No. 03/1380)

²⁵ Jefferys & Jones are also known to have ordered fine cut-steel swords from Matthew Boulton.

²⁶ Royal Accounts GEO/ MAIN/25661-25680.



attire and for individual gifts to present to close friends and relatives. The list below, of fine and interesting pieces, has been extracted from Gray's main invoices at Windsor (bills submitted for payment from the mid-1780s). Not all of items can be identified as being in the Royal Collection today but those that possibly can be identified are illustrated. Gray described the following pieces in his invoices as:

- Oct. 18, 1786, A Fine Steel Sword [for the] Duke of Cumberland, £52-10s-00d
- Jany 2, 1787, A Steel Sword with Colour'd beads, £11-11s-0d
- Jany. 4, 1787, A Sett of Wedgwood buttons, £31-10s-00d (fig.16)
- Febry 13, 1787, A colour'd Beaded Sword, £10. 10s-0d
- Febry. 13, 1787, A Blue Sword £7-17s-0d
- Aug. 15, 1787, A large gilt Regimental Sword, £6-16s-6d
- Nov. 17, 1787, An Inlaid Damasquined Sword, £14-14s-0d
- Decr. 12, 1787, A Sword, £84-0s-0d (cf. fig. 47)
- Decr. 24, 1787, A brilliant George, £480-00s-00d (figs 12-13)
- Jan. 23, 1788, A large Watch set round with brilliants, £425-00s-00d
- Jan. 23, 1788, A large Repeater set round with Pearls, £230-00s-00d (cf. figs 21-23)
- Jan. 29, 1788, A Gold Sword, £63-00s-00d

Fig. 25.

Carlton House, Pall Mall, Westminster, owned by George, Prince of Wales (later The Prince Regent and George IV) from 1783 until 1826, when the Prince decided to abandon the building and have it demolished in 1827. By courtesy of the Westminster Archives Centre, London

- Febry 1, 1788, An Inlaid Sword, £45-00s-00d
- Febry 8, 1788, A Sword & Knot, £42-00s-00d
- Febry 16, 1788, A very fine Sword Knot, £18-18s-00d
- April 28, 1788, A gold enamel'd Sword, £98-10s-00d
- June 4, 1788 A very fine single Brilliant set for a Stud, £2,800-00s-00d
- June 4, 1788 Remaking the Diamond Badge with the Order of the Garter, diamond Knot, & spring rings (the George excepted) & furnishing 20½ Carats of Brilliants, and 172 Roses, £420-00s-00d (figs 12-13).²⁷
- June 4, 1788, Remaking the Diamond Star with Ruby Cross Gold Back &c & furnishing 38¾ 1/16 carats of Brilliants, 175 Roses, and 17 Rubies, £498-16s-00d
- June 4, 1788, Remaking the Diamond Epaulette & furnishing 32 1/16, Carats of brilliants & 6 Roses, £372-00s-00d

²⁷ This appears to be a remaking of the George of 'Decr. 24.1787' above

- June 4, 1788, Remaking the Diamond Knee Garter & furnishing 47½, 1/16 Carats of brilliants & 42 Roses, £520-00s-00d
- Aug. 14, 1788 A diamond Shirtbuckle with 12 large Brilliants £150-00s-00d
- Aug. 14, 1788, A Ring of HRH the Duke of York set round with Brilliants, £37-16s
- Aug. 18, 1788, A pair of Diamond & Pearl Bracelets £84-00s-00d
- Decr. 1, 1788, A very rich steel beaded Sword, £189-00s-00d (figs 48-51)
- Jany 10, 1789, A rich Steel Sword, £105-00s-00d (cf. fig. 52)
- March 25, 1789, A set of Jewels compleat, £3,250-00s-00d
- March 25, 1789, A set of fine pearl & enameld buttons, £581-12s-00d²⁸



Fig. 27.
St George's Church, Hanover Square, today. Author's Image

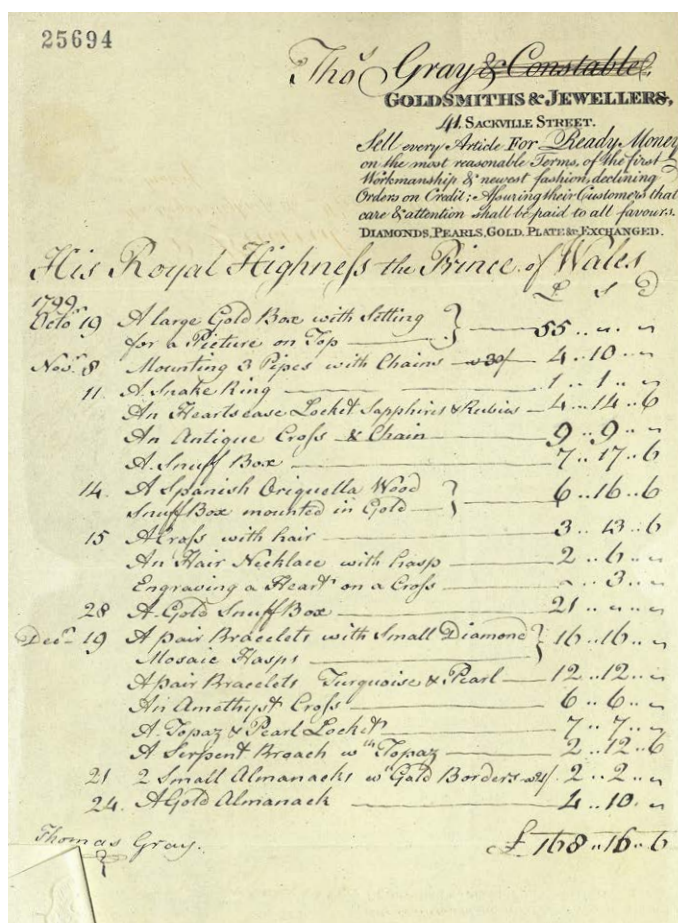


Fig. 26.
Invoice of Thomas Gray, 41 Sackville Street, for items provided to George, Prince of Wales, from 19 October to 24 December 1799 (the name 'Constable' has been crossed through revealing that the partnership of Gray & Constable ceased in this period). Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (GEO/MAIN/25694)

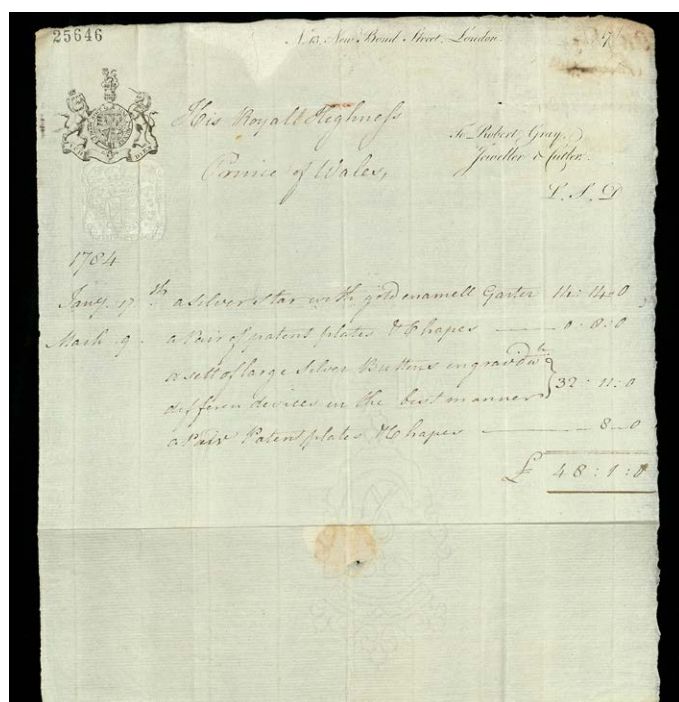


Fig. 28.
Invoice of Robert Gray, 13 New Bond Street, for items provided to George, Prince of Wales, from 17 January-9 March 1784. Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III (GEO/MAIN/25646)

²⁸ Extracted from Gray's very long invoice covering a three-year period: Royal Archives/GEO/MAIN/25664-25680.



Fig. 29.
St Peter and St Paul's Church, South Petherton, Somerset, today.
By courtesy of the Somerset Record Office, Taunton, Somerset

The Debts of George, Prince of Wales

The Prince of Wales's enjoyed commissioning and purchasing fine things, but he was often reluctant to pay for them once received. By 1787, his debts had amounted to the astronomical sum of £639,890 of which some £500,000 was in bonds or IOU's bearing interest (Blackmore 1968, 10-11). In 1787, in an effort to regulate the situation, the House of Commons voted the sum of £161,000 for payment of his creditors and an additional £60,000 for the completion of Carlton House; and the Prince promised that he would never incur debts in the future (Miller 1986: 586-92). In our area of interest, arrears due on account on 11 May 1787 included money owed to Nathaniel Jefferys (II) £1,203, 'Gray the Jeweller' £12,849, 'Shrapnell the Jeweller' £380, 'Egg Gunmaker' £548 and 'John Bland, Sword Cutler', £222, (Aspinall, 1963). High sums were also owed to prominent painters and portraitists, such as the widow of the painter, Thomas Gainsborough (died 1788) (£1,228-10s-0d), Sir Joshua Reynolds, the miniaturist, Richard Cosway, and the picture frame-maker, Thomas Allwood (Miller 1986: 586).



Fig. 30.
A bill, dated 3 March 1787, from 'Thomas Gray No. 42 Sackville Street' to a W. Clayton mentions the sale of a 'Toothpick Case, Knife, 3 pr Scissor, pr Tweezers, Shuttle, Thymble, Bodkin, pr Plyers, Almanack, Pair of Vices' © British Museum, Heal Collection 67.176
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_Heal-67-176

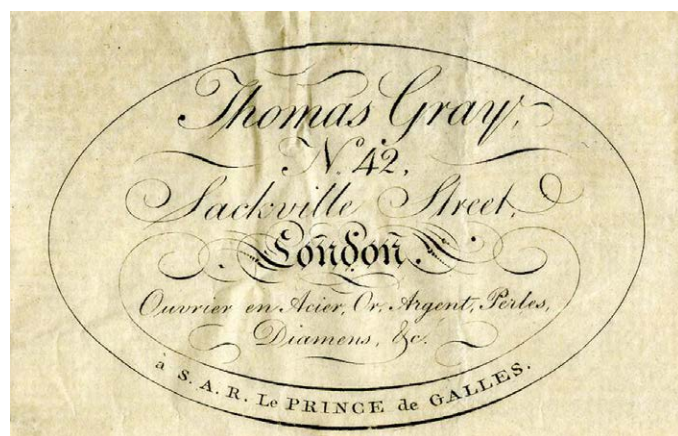


Fig. 31.
Detail of header of fig. 30



Fig. 32.
Matthew Boulton (1728-1809) by Lemuel Francis Abbott,
c.1798-1801. By courtesy of the Birmingham Museum
and Art Gallery, Birmingham, Warwickshire
(BMAG, 1908 P20)

The Prince of Wales did not, of course, keep his word. In 1795, eight years after the first scandal, his debts accumulated since the attempted settlement made in 1787 had risen to £630,000. On this occasion the management of the Prince's financial affairs was entrusted to a Parliamentary Body of Commissioners, which included the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Master of the Rolls, the Master of the King's Household and the Surveyor of Crown Lands (Miller 1986: 586). Their solution was that those to whom the Prince owed money should submit statements of their claims and receive a bond for the repayment, in regular instalments over a period of time, of what was due to them with interest (Aspinall 1963). These claimants included, notably the gunmaker, Durs Egg (owed £1,837), the craftsman considered by the Prince to be the best gunmaker working in London; and also the late John Knubley (another royal gunmaker and sword-cutter), whose estate in 1795 was still owed a total of £373-0s-0d (Blackmore 1968: 10-11, Southwick 2021: 402-6).

Thomas Gray was apparently uninvolved in the second scandal and had wisely learned not to supply fine expensive items to the Prince after 1789 (see below). The next patronized London jeweller to supply the Prince with high quality jewellery and costly swords was Nathaniel Jefferys (II) (1758-1810) of 70 Piccadilly. On 16 February 1791, he invoiced the Prince for 'Making a Sword Hilt, sword & Tassels with fringe entirely of Brilliants

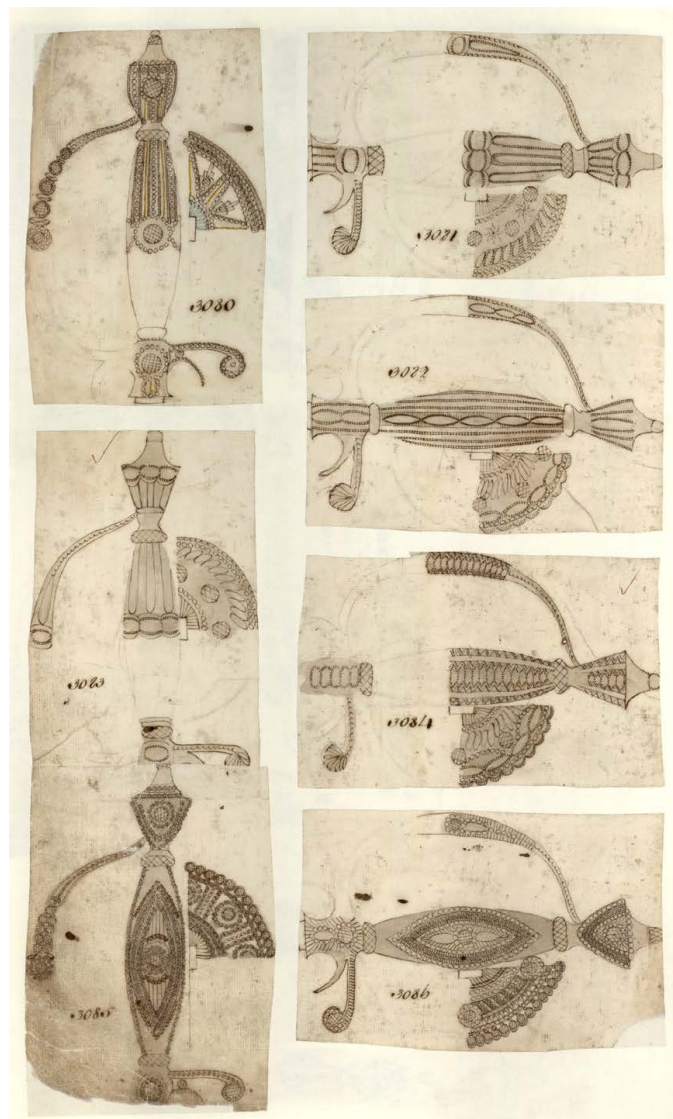


Fig. 33.
Cut-steel hilt designs from The Boulton & Watt Pattern Book
(MS.3782/21/11). By courtesy of the Birmingham Archives, Heritage
and Photography Service, Central Library, Birmingham, Warwickshire

[totalling] £500'; and three years later, in November 1794, for 'supplying jewels for the Princess of Wales on her marriage to Prince George, amounting to £54,685-0s-0d'.²⁹ Following a Parliamentary Commission the Prince agreed to pay him back by instalments (as he had to do with all the others), but Jefferys later became Bankrupt, a scandal that involved the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger.

To complete this episode of repayments of massive debts to many individual tradesmen of the Prince of Wales, it is worth including here the Prince's legal written obligation to repay our subject, Thomas Gray of Sackville Street, in regular twice-yearly instalments over four years. In October 1789, Gray's unpaid invoices amounted to £21,201-11s-2d³⁰ but by December

29 National Archives HO73/20 pt.1.

30 Royal Accounts GEO/MAIN/25652.

1789 only a total of £3,049-7s-7d had seemingly been repaid before the next episode began: on 22 December 1789, a total of £18,152-3s-7d remained outstanding (asterisks have been added by the author to show when a new half-yearly payment amount began):³¹

No. 60 Carlton House 22d December 1789

I do hereby authorize and command you by and out of the Monies to be from Time to Time received for my Use and Service to pay Mr Thomas Gray or his *Order the Sum of eighteen thousand one hundred fifty two Pounds three shillings and seven pence in the Manner and Proportions following that is to say the *Sum of two thousand four hundred and two Pounds three Shillings and seven Pence Part thereof on the twenty fourth Day of June which will be in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one. *The further Sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty Pounds other Part thereof on the twenty fifth Day of December in the said Year One thousand seven hundred and ninety-one. *The further Sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty Pounds other Part thereof on the twenty fourth Day of June which will be in the year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and ninety-two. *The further Sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds other Part thereof on the twenty-fifth Day of December in the said Year one thousand seven hundred and ninety two. *The further Sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty Pounds other Part thereof on the twenty fourth Day of June which will be in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and ninety three and the *further Sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty Pounds other Part thereof on the twenty fifth Day of December in the said Year One thousand seven hundred and ninety three. And it is my Will and Pleasure that such Payments shall be regularly and punctually made to the said Thomas Gray or his Order without any Deduction whatsoever on the respective Days aforesaid notwithstanding any further Order which may hereafter be issued for the Application of Monies on my Account and for so doing this is you sufficient Warrant Given under my Hand on the Day and Year and at the Place above mentioned

George PW

To Arthur Robinson Esq.
My Sub Treasurer

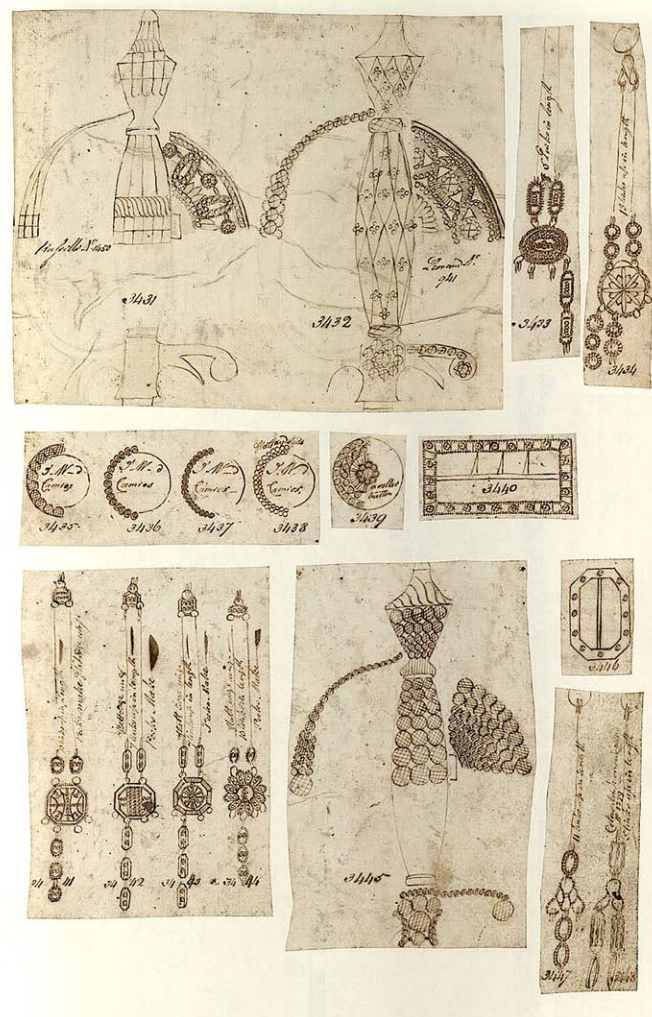


Fig. 34.
Designs of cut-steel hiltes, Wedgwood 'Jasperware' buttons, buckles, chatelaines, etc, from The Boulton & Watt Pattern Book (MS.3782/21/11). By courtesy of the Birmingham Archives, Heritage and Photography Service, Central Library, Birmingham, Warwickshire

31 Royal Accounts GEO/ADD17/64/No. 60, p. 98.



Fig. 35.
Extremely fine cut-steel-hilted court small-sword by Matthew Boulton mounted with blue and white neo-classical Wedgwood Jasperware cameos of the type Thomas Gray provided, c.1790. By courtesy of the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama, The Dwight and Lucille Beeson Wedgwood Collection (Inv. No. 1991-788)



Fig. 36.
Inside view of hilt on fig. 35



Fig. 37.
Inside of shell before the hand on fig. 35



Fig. 38.
Exceptional cut-steel-hilted
small-sword with blue and
white neo-classical Wedgwood
Jasperware cameos of
the type Gray provided,
c.1790. By courtesy of the
Worcester Art Museum,
Worcester, Massachusetts
(acc. no. 2014.49.1)



Fig. 39.
Inside view of hilt on fig. 38



Fig. 40.
Above the shell of fig. 38



Fig. 41.
Superb cut-steel-hilted court small-sword inset with blue and white neo-classical Wedgwood Jasperware scenes of the type Gray provided, c.1790. Gift of Stephen V. Grancsay, 1942, by courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (acc. no. 42.50.46)



Fig. 42.
Inside view of hilt on fig. 41



Fig. 43. (Left)
Above the shell of fig. 41

Fig. 44. (Above)
Below the shell of fig. 41

Thomas Gray from the late 1780s until retirement in 1817

In 1789, following the death of his father, Robert Gray on 14 December 1788, Thomas placed an advertisement in *The Times* of 10 April, which read:

MR THOMAS GRAY, Jeweller, Goldsmith, &c of Sackville Street, thinks it is necessary at this juncture, to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and his Customers in general, that he still continues to carry on his business in Sackville Street, not having had any connection with his late father's Shop in Bond Street, since he left it [in 1783].

Two years later, in 1791, Gray acquired No. 41 Sackville Street in addition to 42 (figs 2 and 4). No. 41 was the larger of the two premises and from this date Gray's business address



Fig. 46.
Portrait miniature of Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795) by George Stubbs (1724-1806), c.1780. By courtesy of the Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston, Staffordshire

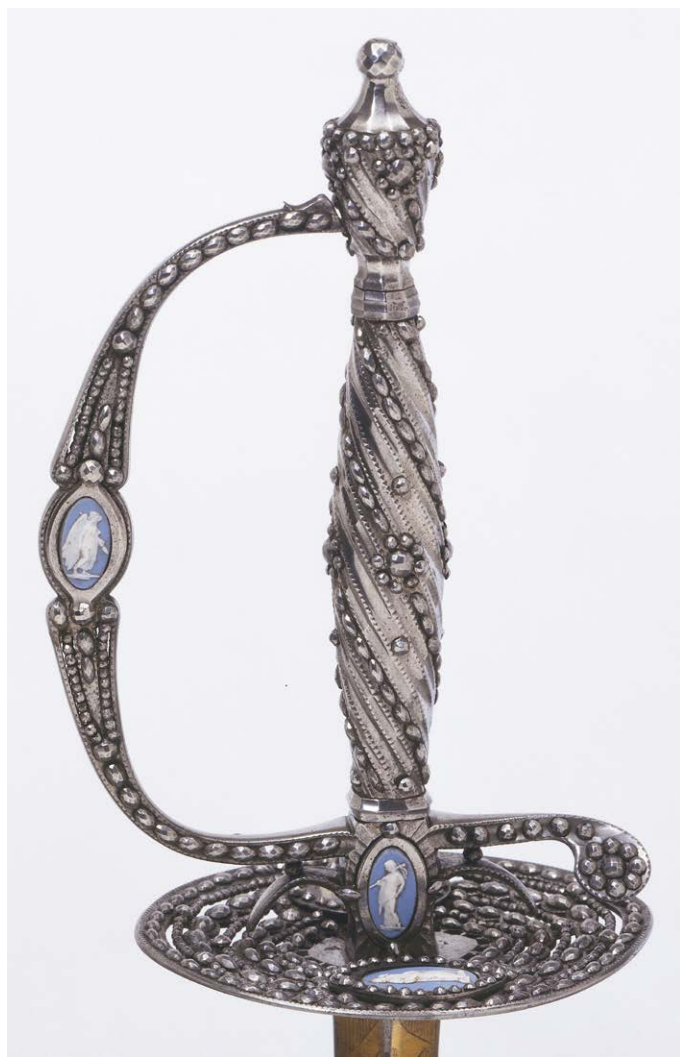


Fig. 45.
Cut-steel-hilted court small-sword inset with blue and white neo-classical Wedgwood Jasperware cameos of the type Gray provided, c.1790. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum London (M.1725-1888)

became No. 41 Sackville Street (although he still owned No. 42). A Sun Insurance Policy (No. 682104) made on 1 October 1798 records 'Thomas Gray No. 41 & 42 Sackville Street, Goldsmith, on his Dwelling House being two Houses....' (Incidentally, the Miss Dashwoods in *Sense and Sensibility* go upstairs to a public waiting room at Gray's in order to discuss their transaction).³²

In c.1794, the partnership of Thomas Gray & William Constable was established. William Constable, Gray's partner, was the 'son of Cornel Constable, late of Stratham [Streatham] in the County of Surrey, Yeoman, dec'd', who was indentured to 'Henry Young of Fleet Street, London, Goldsmith Citizen' on 7 July 1768 (7 years, fee £30) (Southwick 2001:127). He was made free of the Goldsmiths' Company by service on 4 October 1775, giving his address as 'Goldsmith New Bond Street, Westminster'. He became a Liveryman of the Goldsmiths' Company in October 1801. *Lowndes Directory* for 1794 lists 'Gray & Constable, jewellers, of 41 Sackville Street Piccadilly'. In the poor rate books, No. 42 is still occupied by Thomas Gray alone, no doubt as a family residence; while alongside the entry for No. 41 is the first mention of 'Gray & Constable'. Thus, No. 41 became the business premises of the new partnership.

A year or so after the union began and a little time after the Revolutionary War with France was declared on 2 February 1793,

³² LMA. Sun Insurance Policy Ref: CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/413/682104.

the newly-established charity to reward distinguished service and outstanding naval sacrifice - 'The Committee of Merchants for encouraging the Capture of French Privateers, Armed Vessels &c',³³ commissioned a fine gold and enamel military-hilted dress sword of 100 guinea value from Gray & Constable to present to Captain the Hon. Alexander Forrester Cochrane, RN (1758-1832)



Fig. 47.
Steel-hilted court small-sword of George, Prince of Wales, signed
Thos. Gray, Sackville Str., c.1787-89. Royal Collection Trust /
© His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (RCIN 61295)

of HMS Thetis, for engaging and capturing enemy vessels off the eastern coast of North America on 17 May 1795 and taking his prizes into the British naval base at Halifax, Nova Scotia (figs 53-55).³⁴ And, a year later, on 23 June 1796, the same 'Committee of Merchants' generously commissioned a second gold dress sword, a small-sword, from Gray & Constable to award Vice Admiral Robert Brice Kingsmill (1730-1805) C-in-C HM Ships and Vessels on the Coast of Ireland for his 'active and vigilant exertions on the Capture of French Cruizers & in the protection of the Commerce of Great Britain'.³⁵ Both of these fine swords were commissioned by the Committee from 'Gray & Constable / Sackville Street, / London', but they did not make the swords. The partnership knew where to look when a fine token of honour was required. They subcontracted the work of designing and fashioning the two swords (as other prominent merchants had done) from James Morisset (1738-1815), the leading London goldsmith, enameller and jeweller of 22 Denmark Street, St Giles-in-the-Fields, and both are struck with his maker's mark.³⁶

The partnership of Gray & Constable lasted for five years and was dissolved on 5 December 1799 and 'the business will in future be carried on by them in their separate accounts' (*The London Gazette* 1799: 1259). The day after the dissolution, on 6 December 1799, Thomas Gray re-established himself as a single-owned business, although he had various craftsmen and employees working for him (it was not a one-man practice).³⁷ A rare bill from this period, covering the three months from 19 October to 24 December 1799, exists in the Royal Archives (fig. 26) and amounts in total to £168-16s-6d signed 'Thomas Gray'. This invoice includes 'A large Gold Box with Setting for a Picture on Top £55-00-00'; 'An Antique Cross & Chain £9-9-0'; 'A Snuff Box £7-17-6'; 'A Gold Snuff Box £21-00-00'; 'A Pair of Bracelets with Small Diamonds & Mosaic Hasps £16-16-00', etc.³⁸

Following the end of their partnership, Constable moved a short distance away from Gray in the same street and remained there for five years. A sale of Constable's effects was held at Messrs Phillips in 1804 (Norman 1980:346) and he is last recorded in the Poor Rate Book for 18 April 1804-April 1805.³⁹ *Holden's Triennial Directory* for 1802, 3, 4, records 'Thomas Gray and son, jewellers, 41 Sackville-street', while the *Kent Directories* for the same period simply mention, 'Thomas Gray jeweller, etc'.

Another rare bill in the Royal Archives, dated 'March 2 to April 1, 1805' exists signed 'Thos. Gray', one containing five

34 This fine sword was generously donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, to mark the 150th year of its establishment in 2020.

See Blair, 1972, p. 46, no. 10; Southwick, 1997, p. 324, No. 9, Fig. 7; and also Southwick, 2020, pp. 7-67. No. 19, p. 23.

35 See Southwick, 1997, p. 324, No. 10; and Southwick, 2020, No. 20, p. 24.

36 For James Morisset and his swords and other items he made, see Southwick, 1997 and 2020; and Blair, 1972.

37 Such as Joseph Kitching and Joseph Lauriere, and no doubt one or two specialist artisans, such as Shepherd & Shepherd, to undertake alterations and repairs as required.

38 Royal Accounts GEO/MAIN/25694. This invoice is signed by Thomas Gray, but his partner's name 'Constable' on the header has been crossed through, revealing that the partnership ceased in this period.

39 WAC, MS. D.125, f. B22

33 For this charity and the swords it awarded, see Wood, 2007, pp. 171-206.



Fig. 48.

The finest and 'very rich steel beaded' Court Sword made for George, Prince of Wales, by Matthew Boulton, Birmingham, provided and signed *Thos Gray / Sackville / Strt*, delivered 1 December 1788. Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (RCIN 61315)

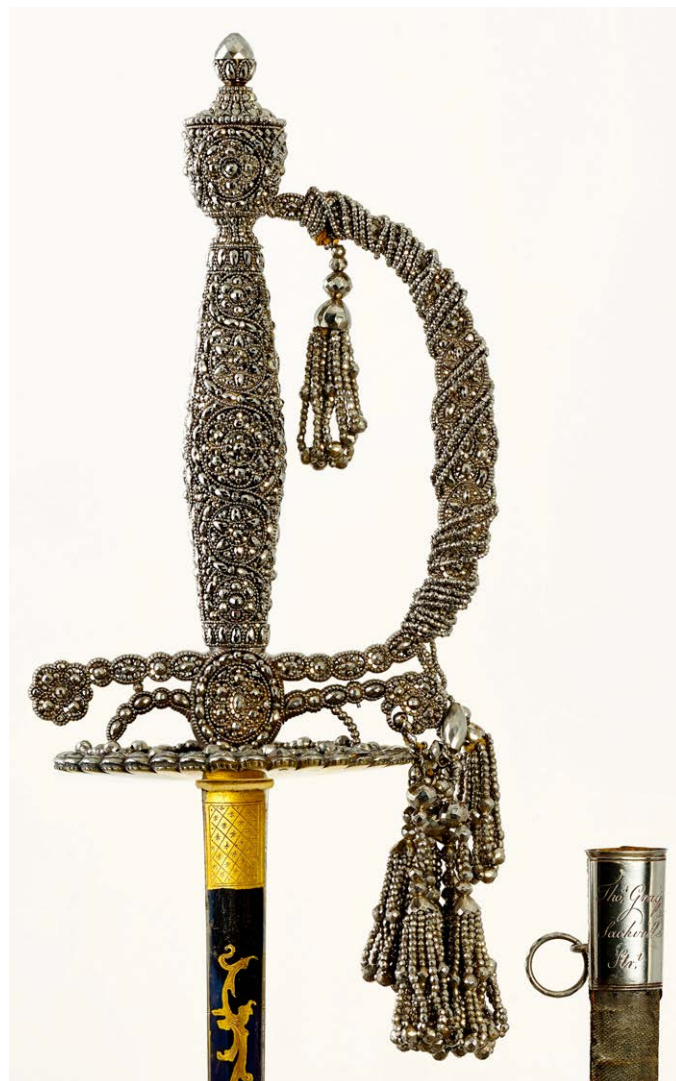


Fig. 49.

Inside view of fig. 48 with signed top-locket



Fig. 50. (Above)

The hilt in fig. 48 from above



Fig. 51. (Right)

The hilt in fig. 48 from below, with brightly-polished plain shell



Fig. 52.
Cut-steel-hilted court sword of George, Prince of Wales, by
Matthew Boulton of Birmingham, signed *Thos. Gray, Sackville Str.*,
c.1789. Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022
(RCIN 61287)

deliveries to the Wardrobe of the Prince of Wales, which cost in total £58-18s-0d, and included 'A Tortoiseshell Snuff Box with Secret, £16-16s-0d', 'A fine Cane with Engine turn'd Gold Head, £11-11s-0d', 'A Large Chased Gold Snuff Box, £29-8s-0d' etc (fig. 56).⁴⁰ The last known sword acquired by the Prince of Wales from Gray was recorded on 10 November 1810, when a modest mourning sword was bought for Princess Amelia's funeral for £3-13s-6d (Norman 1980: 390).

Gray's move to a Private Family Residence at Earls Court in 1807

In 1807, Gray's business premises in the West End of Town continued to operate from 41 Sackville Street, but he (like other tradesmen who had become successful) moved with his family to a private residence away from Central London to 'South Row West, Earls Court, Parish of St Mary Abbots, Kensington' (fig. 57), an area in what was then a countryside aspect of Kensington in the west of the capital. The Kensington Parish Poor Rate Book for 1806-7 has Thomas Gray listed under two properties at 'Earls Court, Hardwick Rents'.⁴¹ At the side of his name is the notation '¼ E ¾', revealing that the properties were empty for three-quarters of the rate year, but occupied for the last quarter (that is from Christmas to Lady Day 1807).⁴² The next rate book, dated 16 May 1807, has Gray firmly in place, and it is clear that the family took up residence at this new address at the beginning of 1807. This is confirmed by a Sun Insurance Policy (No. 802217), dated 7 April 1807, which records 'Thomas Gray of 41 Sackville Street Jeweller' insuring his other property at '2 Earls Court, Kensington'.⁴³ The following year's rate ledger, dated 22 July 1808, shows the location to have been renamed 'South Row West' and that one of Gray's properties had a 'wall'd garden'⁴⁴ (Many years later, on 20 June 1884, South Row West was renamed Hogarth Place, which still exists today, but no longer situated in a countryside area).⁴⁵

A late Sun Insurance Policy, dated 8 October 1812, records Gray at 41 & 42 Sackville Street, Goldsmith' insuring his central properties.⁴⁶ Two years later, Gray submitted his last known invoice for payment to the Prince of Wales, a bill covering deliveries from 28 January - 14 March 1814, which does not include swords or jewelled items, reads:⁴⁷

<i>Jany 28</i>	<i>6 large Satin Wallets at 31/6d</i>	<i>£9 : 9s : 0d</i>
<i>March 5</i>	<i>A Cane with black Ivory</i>	
	<i>Crutch head and a Silk String:</i>	<i>£2 : 15s : 0d</i>
<i>March 7</i>	<i>An Ebony Stick with a</i>	
	<i>Dresddon Crutch Head</i>	<i>£4 : 10s : 0d</i>
<i>March 14</i>	<i>A black Ebony Inkstand with</i>	
	<i>gilt Furniture Cut Glass Inks,</i>	
	<i>& a gilt bell</i>	<i>£29 : 8s : 0d</i>
	<i>[Total]</i>	<i>£46 : 2s : 0d</i>

41 Local History Library, Kensington Central Library, Parish Rate Book for 1806-7 for the Parish of St Mary Abbots, Kensington, 'Earls Court', p. 74.

42 Ibid.

43 LMA. Ref: CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/440/802217.

44 Kensington Parish Poor Rate Book, 'Earls Court', 22 July 1808, pp. 75-76.

45 Kensington Local History Library, Street Re-Numbering Orders, 162-187, MS.63/1514(1) Metropolitan Board of Works, Extract 172, Plan 3307, pp. 32-33, 'renaming order dated 20 June 1884'.

46 LMA, Sun Policy Ref: CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/459/873764.

47 Royal Accounts GEO/MAIN/29140-29140.

40 Royal Accounts GEO/MAIN/25768.



Fig. 53.
Superb gold and enamel 100 guinea sword of honour of Capt. Alexander Forrester Cochrane, RN, signed *Gray & Constable, Sackville Street, London*, Assayed London 1796-97, maker's mark of James Morisset. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (acc. no. L.2020.12.2a,b). Images by courtesy of Peter Finer

and lastly, a non-royal bill for a 'red Cornelian (*sic*) & Standard Gold Seal' dated 'Dec. 15. 1815', also records Gray selling 'Fancy Articles, In Diamonds, precious Stones, Pearls, Gold, Silver, Steel &c. bought and sold for Ready Money'.⁴⁸

Gray's retirement from Trade in 1817 and his Death in 1820

Thomas Gray retired from trade in 1817, aged probably 67, two years after Wellington's great victory at Waterloo. From 1799 until 1817, he is recorded in the St James's Parish Poor Rate books as being at, and owning, 41 and 42 Sackville Street, Piccadilly, but in the rate book for 1817, the name 'Thomas Gray' at No. 41 has

⁴⁸ British Museum, Heal Collection 67.178. This title is also used on the earlier Royal Account of 1805, GEO/MAIN/25768, illustrated in fig. 56.



Fig. 54.
From above the shells nearer the hand on sword fig. 53

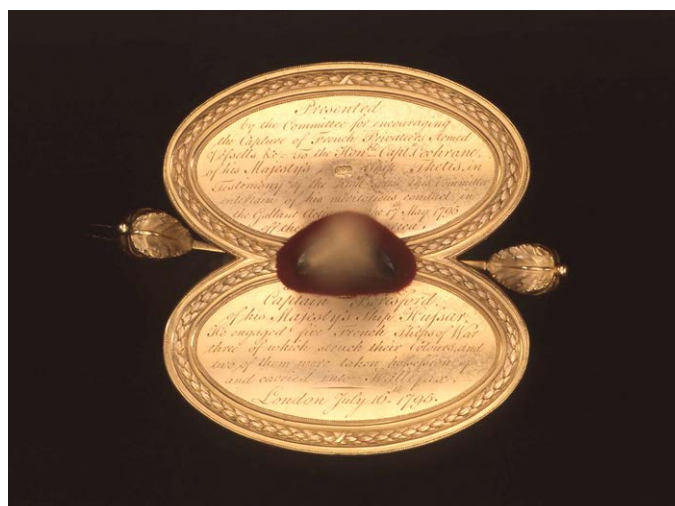


Fig. 55.
Engraved inscription of presentation on shells nearer the blade on fig. 53

written alongside it the name 'Delafons & Son', thus showing that that firm of jewellers had taken over the larger retail premises of Thomas Gray, although they did not purchase it.⁴⁹ It is also from 1817, that Gray is no longer listed in trade directories as being in Sackville Street, although the Gray family retained No. 41 until the mid-1820s.⁵⁰ In 1817, Delafons are recorded there instead.

Further evidence, confirming that Gray had retired in this year, is shown by a number of his former employees establishing their own businesses at prime sites nearby in the West End of town near Piccadilly. For example, Shepherd & Shepherd, 'late Mr Gray Sackville Street', were established in Frith Street,

⁴⁹ WAC, MS. D.138, 'Church Division'. Interestingly, the Delafons worked at Blackfriars in the City before moving to Sackville Street and were freemen of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

⁵⁰ Thomas's half-brother, William Gray, took out a Sun Insurance policy on 41 Sackville Street on 10 November 1826.

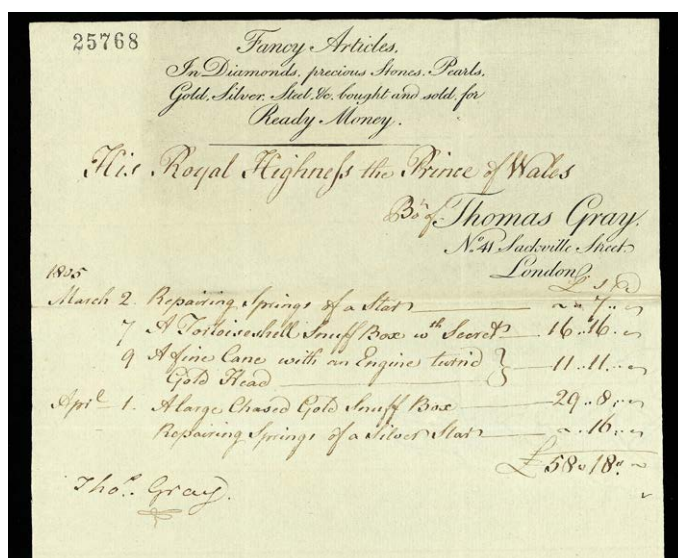


Fig. 56.

Invoice of Thomas Gray, 41 Sackville Street, to HRH Prince of Wales, for 4 items supplied from 2 March – 1 April 1805, amounting to £58-18s-, signed *Thos. Gray*. Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2022 (GEO/MAIN/25768)



Fig. 57.

Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet designed by Prince Albert, 1840-42, commissioned from Joseph Kitching, a former employee of Thomas Gray, who, at this date, was in partnership with Richard Abud at 46 Conduit Street, Mayfair. By courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum (M20:1,2-2017)

Soho, from 1817 (Culme 1987: 89-90); Joseph Kitching (the forerunner of the royal jewellers, Collingwood & Co), also 'late Mr Gray's', began trading as a (retail) jeweller at 14 Dover Street, off Piccadilly north side, on 2 May 1817 (fig. 57), taking out a Sun Insurance Policy (No. 931637) on 25 June 1817;⁵¹ and Joseph Lauriere established himself as a 'jeweller and toymen' at 13 St James's Street in the same year.⁵² As these men had all worked for Thomas Gray as 'shopmen' or artisans and were all trained by and active in business with him, they clearly founded and established their own notable operations in 1817 (in conjunction with valuable patronage and contacts from their having worked originally for Gray), precisely because their former employer had closed his.

On 3 August 1816, a year before he retired, Gray drew up his extensive and detailed Will, a last testament, which reveals (through his large and various portfolio of property holdings in London, the West Country and elsewhere) of Gray's great success in business during an eventful period of British history.⁵³ It makes reference to his properties in London (the two in Sackville Street, Nos. 41 and 42, and his private residence at Earl's Court above) and his estate in Somerset (inherited from his marriage to his wife, Mary 'Musgrave'). He also refers to 'My dear wife Mary', 'My [half-] brother William Gray of Bond Street Jeweller [1764-1846]' (both of whom were his executors), his sons, Thomas-Musgrave Gray, Robert Gray, John Gray, his [half-] brother the Rev Robert Gray [later Bishop of Bristol], his sister Mary Gray, his 'Mother in Law Ann Gray' [step-mother died 1817], his godson, Nathaniel Huett of Sackville Street, and several others.

Thomas Gray, retired royal London retail jeweller, goldsmith and sword-cutler, 'Abode' Earl's Court, died 'age years 72 (*sic*)' in autumn 1820 and was buried at St Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington (fig. 58), on 4 October 1820, a ceremony performed by the Rev. Henry Taylor.⁵⁴ Six days later, 'The last Will and Testament of Thomas Gray of Sackville Street, Piccadilly, and of Earls Court in the Parish of Kensington Jeweller' was proved in London on 10 October 1820.⁵⁵

Thomas's widow, Mary, died on 10 April 1824, aged 66, and

51 LMA Sun Insurance Policy: CLC/B/192/F/001/ No. 931637. Joseph Kitching (c.1783-1861) was apprenticed to his uncle William Constable above and worked at Gray's premises in Sackville Street, later becoming a royal retail jeweller and goldsmith following Gray's retirement in 1817. From 1824-1853 he was in partnership with Richard Abud (c.1793-1873) first at Dover Street and later at 46 Conduit Street from 1831-1853, after which Kitching retired (cf. fig. 57).

52 WAC Rate book for St James's Street. Joseph Lauriere (c.1767-1831), of Huguenot descent, supplied jewellery to the Prince Regent's Wardrobe from 30 June 1817 (see GEO/MAIN/25921).

53 National Archives PROB 11/1635/107, proved 10 October 1820.

54 Bishops Transcripts of the Burial Register of the Parish of Kensington in the County of Middlesex in the year 1820, GLRO DL/T/47/25, 'Burial Register of St Mary Abbott, Kensington', p. 123, entry No. 1997. The actual dates of Gray's life, as found by the author, show that Gray died aged 70, just weeks before his 71st birthday.

55 See note 53.



Fig. 58. Photograph of old St Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington, before 1869, after which this building was demolished and the church redesigned and rebuilt. By courtesy of the Kensington Local History Library

was buried with her husband and their son William⁵⁶ in St Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington, on 17 April 1824.⁵⁷ Following her death, various items of Gray's stock were sold at Christie's in King Street, St James's, on 16 March 1825, and a year later;

The Superb Assemblage of
Jewels, Brilliants, Pearl &c, of
Messrs. Delafons of Sackville St.

Catalogue of the genuine, superb and valuable Jewels, Jewellery & Bijouterie of the most Modern Class Plate &c. The entire property of & principally Manufactured by Order of Messrs. Delafons. The distinguished reputation of this establishment for superior taste & solidity of Execution in the manufacture of every object by the late Mr Gray, has been preserved, if not increased by the Firm of Delafons & Co. Assemblage, Sold by Phillips in London on Monday 29 May 1826 and six following days.⁵⁸

Delafons & Son were active in 41 Sackville Street from 1817 until 1833, the year that Philip Delafons left the premises.⁵⁹ Six weeks after this sale, a second Indenture on the former 'Musgrave' property in Somerset (originally inherited by Thomas and Mary in 1784 above), was drawn up on 6 July 1826 and made out to the couple's three surviving sons.⁶⁰

Indenture dated 6 July 1826

Thomas Musgrave Gray of Earls Ct in the Parish of Kensington in the County of Middlesex, Esquire, The Reverend Robert Gray of Sunderland near the sea in the County of Durham, Clerk, and John Gray of Hammersmith in the said County of Middlesex Esquire, which said Thomas Musgrave Gray is the oldest son and heir at law and which said Thomas Musgrave Gray, Robert Gray and John Gray are the only Children of Thomas Gray late of Sackville Street Piccadilly in the said County of Middlesex and of Earl's Court aforesaid Jeweller deceased and of Mary Gray his wife – his widow – also deceased formerly Mary Musgrave Spinster ...

56 William Gray, son of Thomas and Mary, born 11 February 1793, baptised St James's Church, Piccadilly, 12 March 1793, died 'Years 15' at Earls Court, buried at St Mary Abbot's Church on 13 July 1808. (Kensington Burial Book, MS 63/9657, 1797-1818, Ref: E/5/376).

57 GLRO, Ref: DL/T/47/27, 'St Mary Abbott's Church Burials, p. 25, No. 385'.

58 Phillips Sale, London, 29 May 1826, and six days following.

59 It was these particular sale catalogues showing the amount of loose stones and jewellery, which Delafons had inherited from 'Mr Gray', that persuaded the late AVB Norman to suggest, mistakenly, that Gray had actually made the cut-steel swords and other goods he sold. Norman's suggestions were made before the present author discovered the major link between Thomas Gray, his father Robert Gray, Nathaniel Jefferys (I) and Thomas Jefferys' firms with Matthew Boulton's manufacturing works in Birmingham, the place where many of the finest objects were made on commission. See note 24 above.

60 Somerset Record Office DD/PLE/BX85. The Rev. Robert Gray mentioned in the Indenture died in 1838 and 'On the fifth day of Administration of the Goods Chattels and Credits of the Rev. Robert Gray late of Sunnyside House in the Borough of Sunderland in the County of Durham Rector of the Parish of Sunderland aforesaid Clerk deceased was granted to Mary Gray Widow the Relict being first sworn by Commission duly to administer'.

Conclusion

Thomas Gray of Sackville Street was a prominent Westminster tradesman with national and international contacts, who sold a wide range of items to the rich and privileged in society, items among the finest artefacts of their time. Many of the most notable and costliest items provided by Gray were made for his first and most exacting patron, George, Prince of Wales (later George IV) (fig. 24), particularly when Gray was in great favour at the Prince's establishment at Carlton House, Pall Mall, in the 1780s. Like his father before him, Gray was astute and active. He attended his shop, dealt with customers and drove his high-quality trade to succeed. Also, he married an heiress, who bore him five children and provided him with a happy and contented family life. His notable business and high-valued premises in the West End of London at Sackville Street, off Piccadilly (together with family property holdings at Earl's Court in Kensington and South Petherton in Somerset, and elsewhere), all provided him with a successful career and a comfortable living during the most exhilarating period of late Georgian history.

Acknowledgements

I should especially like to thank His Majesty King Charles III and the Royal Collection Trust for permission to publish items in the Royal Collection; Ms Kathryn Jones, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts, Royal Collection Trust; Ms Karen Lawson, Picture Library Manager and Daniel Partridge, Digital Imager, Royal Collection Trust; Simon Metcalf, The King's Armourer; Dr. Anne Forschler-Tarrasch, Curator of Decorative Arts, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama, USA; Stuart Pyhrr, Curator Emeritus, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Peter Finer; Ms Isabel Hernandez, Local Studies & Archives, Kensington Central

Library, London; Ms Patricia Wilson, St Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington; The Archivists of the Georgian Papers in the Royal Archives, Windsor; The Archivists and Staff of The Twickenham Local History Library; The Somerset Record Office, Taunton, Somerset; The Westminster Archives Centre; The Birmingham Archives, Heritage and Photography Service, Central Library, Birmingham, Warwickshire; The London Metropolitan Archives; The National Archives, Kew; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Abbreviations

GLRO	Greater London Record Office
ICOMAM	International Committee of Museums and Collections of Arms and Military History
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
WAC	Westminster Archives Centre

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