

A Festive Tale of a Skint Numismatist versus London Christmas Book Fair by Dr Alexey Shitvov (NSI-NB)

FOREWORD

A true numismatist can see a coin virtually anywhere, looking at the moon, or at the profile of their beloved ones, you name it. Antique books and ephemera are not my area of collector's interest, but I appreciate the opportunity for learning, as well as the bargain, that printed works may present for a discerning eye. Whilst visiting the Bloomsbury Christmas Book Fair at the Holiday Inn Hotel London in Coram Street on the morning of Saturday 4th December, in the serried ranks of antiquarian and collectable first-editions and autographed books I did not find much of the festive literature, although I spotted a couple of the 17th century works in Latin on ancient coins and medals, as well as an expensive and lavishly illustrated album of Russian folk costumes printed in 1806. Given that I had only a redonkulous £20 budget to spend, being already stricken on the previous night by a couple of bargains at the latest Roma Numismatics e-auction, I decided to look no further, but to browse through a box of assorted cuttings and handwritten letters on one dealer's stall. Bravely enduring the mouldy odour of water-damaged paper and old cigars, I was hoping to find something to remember the event for, a kind of a souvenir, hopefully, with a numismatic context. Four private letters appeared to be of interest, none on numismatic topics, although I could only afford buying three of them, at £5 each, keeping the last £5 for a café where I could possibly perch on a stool, relax, and have a close look at my new treasures.



LETTER NO.1

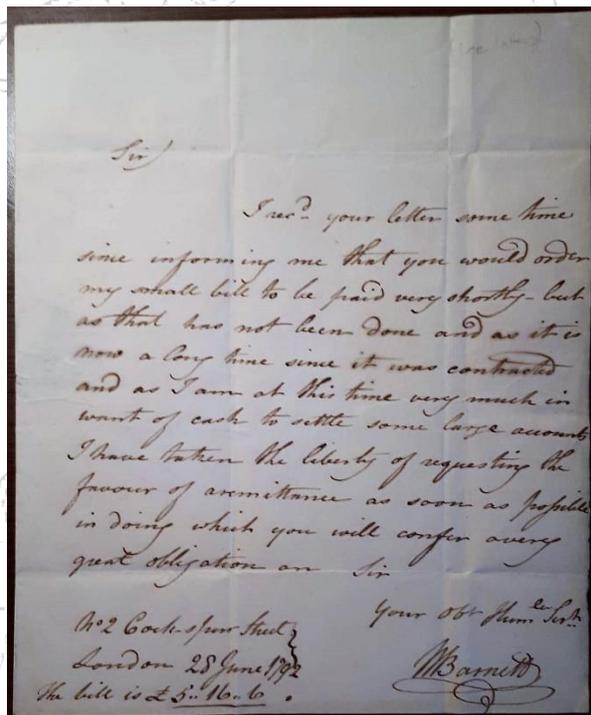
One of the letters appeared to be carrying an interesting message. It was written on 28th June 1792 by certain William Barnett of No. 2 Cockspur Street London requesting an overdue payment of a bill of £5.16.6 and addressed to William Lee, Esq., at Hartwell near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. Sadly, the red-wax seal was gone, leaving a crying blind spot on the paper. The content reads:

Sir,

I received your letter some time since informing me that you would order my small bill to be paid very shortly, but as that has not been done and as it is now a long time since it was contracted and as I am at this time very much in want of cash to settle some large accounts, I have taken the liberty of requesting the favour of a remittance as soon as possible in doing which you will confer a very great obligation on Sir.

No.2 Cockspur Street
London 28 June 1792
The bill is £5..16..6"

Your Obt. Humble. Sert.
William Barnett



Intrigued by the plea, as well as feeling sympathy towards the correspondent due to the lack of cash on my own, I looked up for his name on the Internet and was astounded to discover that the sender was actually a prominent British engraver of fine medals and prints whose beautiful works can be found in the collections of the British Museum. It seems the author had been struggling for quite some time by the moment of writing, desperately trying to settle his debts since his bankruptcy in 1789.

The addressee seems to be one of the Lees of Hartwell House (<https://www.hartwell-house.com/media/1677/history.pdf>). The eminent members of the family included: Sir Thomas Lee (d.1690) who took a leading part in the Restoration and was elevated to the Baronetage by Charles II in 1660; the Rt. Hon. Sir William Lee (1688-1754) who became Lord Chief Justice and served for a time as Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the Rt. Hon. Sir George Lee (1700-1758) a close friend and adviser to Frederick Prince of Wales whose widow he served as Treasurer and Receiver-General. The Lees were ancestors of General Robert E. Lee – the key figure of the American Civil War. The recipient was most likely Sir William Lee, 4th Baronet (1726-1799), who was the second son of Sir Thomas Lee from whom he inherited the Hartwell estate in 1749. His papers show him as a country squire whose principal interest was in the care of his estate. He was responsible for enlarging the mansion house and re-laying the gardens, and for rebuilding Hartwell parish church. In 1763, he married Lady Elizabeth Harcourt, only daughter of Simon, Earl Harcourt (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/22c968c1-b4bc-4ae9-b5c0-44042e94adfd>).

What was even more amazing is that Barnett's address in the Cockspur Street in London appeared to be right on my usual path to the university, so that for the two preceding months of my residence in London I had been walking by the very place where the desperate letter was written by a talent barely making a living.

Well, it has been 4 hours since I parted with the fiver for a piece of paper that has already brought about so much history and feelings, so, naturally, I wonder what else I will discover in time when it becomes clear what was the nature of the contract mentioned in the letter and what happened at the end with the great medallist whose works adorn the best collections and catalogues of the British medallic arts today. Here is an assortment of the information related to this letter and his author.

EXTRACT FROM EXETER WORKING PAPERS IN BOOK HISTORY

(<https://bookhistory.blogspot.com/2007/01/london-1775-1800-b.html>)

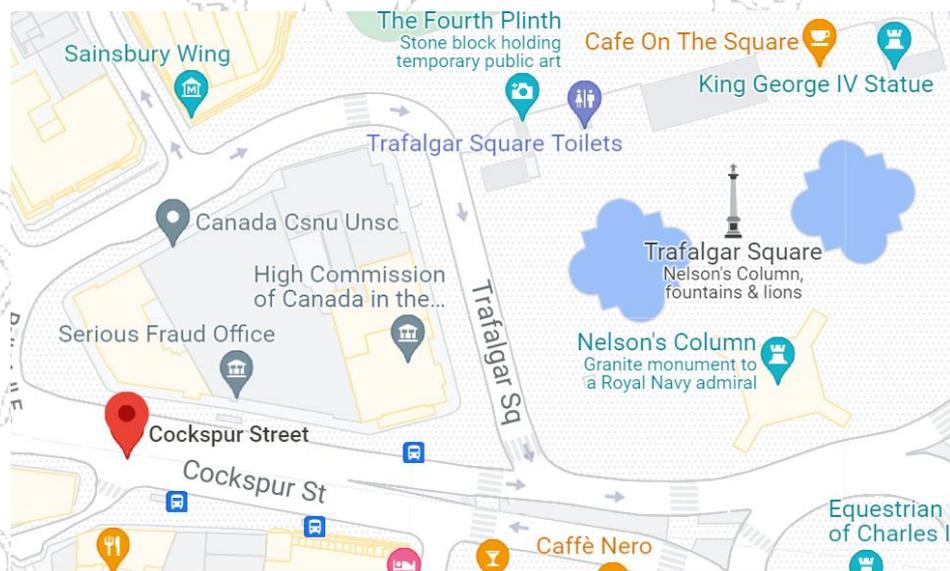
"BARNETT, William, engraver, Cockspur Street 1789; 2, Cockspur Street 1794B-1796K; 6, Haymarket 1797K. Bankrupt 7 July 1789, cert. 28 Nov. 1789, div. 23 Oct. 1790. Primarily seal engraver and medallist."

EXTRACT FROM THE BANKRUPTCY NOTE

(<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/13111/page/476/data.pdf>)

"Whereas a Commission of Bankrupt is awarded and issued forth against William Barnett, of Cockspur-street, in the County of Middlesex, Engraver, Dealer and Chapman, and he being declared a Bankrupt is hereby required to surrender himself to the Commissioners in the said Commission named, or the major Part of them, on the 9th and 21st Days of July instant, and- on the 15th Day of August next, at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon, on each Day, at Guildhall, London, and make a full Discovery and Disclosure of his Estate and Effects; when and where the Creditors are to come prepared to prove their Debts, and at the Second Sitting to chuse Assignees, and at the last Sitting the said Bankrupt is required to finish his Examination, and the Creditors are to attend to or dissent from the Allowance of his Certificate. All Persons indebted to the said Bankrupt, or that have any of .his Effects, are not to pay or deliver the fame but to whom the Commissioners shall appoint, but give Notice to Mr. Hine, No. 10, Bolt-court, Fleet-street." The Gazette, Printed by THOMAS HARRISON , in Warwick-Lane. 1789

LOCATION MAP OF BARNETT'S RESIDENCE IN LONDON



OBJECTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

BARNETT'S BIOGRAPHY (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG103786>)

No.2, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross, London

Medallist. Worked with B R Faulkner (q.v.). Trade card in Heal Collection (Heal,59.8) advertises "Barnett, Seal Engraver & Medalist to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales..."



Description: Pewter medal. (whole) (whole) Uniformed, draped bust of Earl Howe left. (obverse) (obverse) Neptune in a marine car pointing with his right hand towards sinking ships, with his left he hands a trident to Britannia seated right. Fame, above inscribing an obelisk. (reverse) (reverse)

Designed by: Barnett

Production date: 1794

Material: pewter; **Diameter:** 57 mm

Inscriptions:

Obverse: RIC : COMES HOWE VICE ADMIRALLUS ANGLIAE &c. (Richard, Earl Howe, Vice-Admiral of England, etc.)

Reverse: NON NOBIS SED PATRIAE (Not for ourselves, but for our country), MDCCXCIII 1ST. JUNE in exergue.

Curator's comments: Brown 1980 states: "Richard, Earl Howe (1725-99) Admiral, entered the navy at fourteen and after a distinguished career and being raised to an earldom 1788, was appointed to the command of the Channel Fleet at the outbreak of war with France in 1793. In the following year he gained the famous victory of the 'Glorious First of June'. The engagement between 25 English and 26 French ships of the line lasted scarcely an hour. The English captured two ships of eighty guns and four seventy-fours, another seventy-four sinking immediately after possession. London was illuminated for three nights in honour of the victory. The names inscribed on the obelisk are those of the flag officers who took part in the battle: HOWE / GRAVES / BRIDPORT / BOWYER / CALDWELL / GARDNER / PASLEY. The subscription list for the medal was opened in July 1794 and names were entered at the following places: Mr Young, Goldsmith, Ludgate Street; Mr Hawkins, Watchmaker, West Passage, Royal Exchange; Mr Tinson, Goldsmith, Charing Cross and Mr Barnett (the engraver of the medal), Cockspur Street, London. The silver was priced at 1½ guineas each and the bronze at half a guinea each, the latter to be struck after the required number of silver specimens had been produced. No details are given for the pewter specimens and they are possibly of a slightly later date."

Link: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_M-5003



Description: Bronze medal. (whole) (whole) Laureate head of George III right. (obverse) (obverse) Two frigates viewed from astern. (reverse) (reverse)

Designed by: J Westwood (?)

Designed by: Barnett (?)

Production date: 1772

Material: bronze; **Diameter:** 42 mm

Inscriptions:

Obverse: GEORGE . III . KING . OF . GR . BRITAIN . FRANCE . AND . IRELAND ETC

Reverse: RESOLUTION ADVENTURE, SAILED . FROM . ENGLAND MARCH MDCCLXXII in exergue.

Curator's comments: Brown 1980 states: "The second voyage was intended to begin in March 1772 as indicated on the medal but encountered numerous delays and the expedition in fact set sail on 13th July; it was to last three years and eighteen days. During this time only four men were lost, one of them from sickness. Cook, promoted to Commander for the voyage, sailed in the 'Resolution' with a complement of 110 men. Captain Tobias Furneaux sailed in the 'Adventure' with a complement of 80 men. The intention of the voyage was to determine the existence of an antarctic continent and to explore the high southern latitudes. A quantity of mounted bronze or brass gilt specimens of this medal were taken on the voyage and were intended for presentation to the natives. The mount is comprised of a small, screw-threaded hole bored into the edge above head on the obverse and into this is screwed a pin with a moveable loop pierced through it horizontally. Mounted specimens are very rare and almost always in poor condition. Most have been found in New Zealand, presumably having been presented to Maoris at the time of the voyage. There are records extant for the striking of these medals and it would seem that two specimens were struck in gold, 106 in silver and 2,000 in bronze. The Admiralty paid Boulton for the bronze specimens and had them delivered to Cook. The two gold and 106 silver were sent, with invoices, to Joseph Banks who was to act as Botanist on the voyage and who was a man of considerable private means. Banks later withdrew from the voyage and one must suppose that the gold and silver medals were a purely private venture on his part. Probably he sold them or gave them to interested people. An example in gold is in the British Museum and this came from the collection of Banks' sister. The whereabouts of the other specimen is not known. Most of the bronze medals are unmounted and there must be some doubt as to whether these pieces were

actually taken on the voyage. Possibly they, too, were sold or given to interested parties. There is a uniface iron trial striking of the obverse in the Hunterian Coin Cabinet. Two reverse dies were used for the bronze medals. One, which was also used for the silver specimens, has the anchor in a horizontal position. The other die, used only for the bronze, shows the anchor in a vertical position. See Arthur Westwood. 'Matthew Boulton's 'Otaheite' Medal'. Birmingham Assay Office, 1926. In this publication it is suggested that the medal was engraved by John Westwood, the author having seen an obverse cliché signed WESTWOOD on the truncation of the bust. In these circumstances the letters B : F which normally appear in this position can be taken to mean BOULTON FECIT."

Link: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_SSB-224-4



Description: Bronze medal. (whole) (whole) Draped bust of the Prince of Wales, left. (obverse) (obverse) Standing figure of King Alfred giving bread to a pilgrim (St Cuthbert). (reverse) (reverse)

Designed by: Barnett

Production date: 1792

Inscriptions:

Obverse: GEORGIVS PRIN . GALL (George, Prince of Wales)

Reverse: CORONAM MUNIFICENTIA SUPERAT (Generosity is greater than a crown), MDCCXCII (1792) in exergue.

Curator's comments: Brown 1980 states: "The reverse depicts the story of King Alfred and St Cuthbert. At a time when Alfred was destitute, a pilgrim begged him for bread. The King had only one loaf and a little wine which he shared with the pilgrim. The night following, a figure in a Bishop's habit appeared to the King and charged him to love God, keep justice and be merciful to poor men and reverence priests. For from then on there would be an end to sorrow and care, and strong helpers would subdue his enemies. It was revealed to the King that St Cuthbert was the pilgrim to whom he had given bread."

Bibliography: Fiala, E. 'Münzen und Medaillen der Welfischen Lande', Prague, 1915, 749.

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_M-4995



Description: Bronze medal. (whole) (whole) Bare head of Sir Stapleton Cotton, Viscount Combermere, left. (obverse) (obverse) Victory standing holding a scroll inscribed with the names of the battles in the Peninsular War. (reverse) (reverse)

Designed by: Barnett (reverse), B R Faulkner (obverse)

Production date: 1821

Material: bronze; **Diameter:** 40 mm

Inscriptions:

Obverse: LIEUT. GENERAL LORD COMBERMERE G. C. B. K. T. S. K. S. F.

Reverse: Names of battles of the Peninsular War, inscribed on a scroll, 1821 in exergue.

Curator's comments: Brown 1980 states: "Sir Stapleton Cotton, first Baron and first Viscount Combermere (1773-1865), Field-Marshal. Educated at Westminster School and served in Flanders, 1793-4 and against Sultan Tipoo, 1799. Combermere commanded the allied cavalry in France during 1815-16 and in the following year was appointed Governor of Barbados. He was appointed Constable of the Tower in 1852 and promoted Field-Marshal in 1855. The obverse of this piece is signed FAULKNER F and the reverse B.F., this latter has been attributed to Barnett whose initials are unknown; he died in 1824."

Link: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_M-5782



Description: Gold medal. (whole) (whole) Laureate head of George III right. (obverse) (obverse) Two frigates viewed from astern. (reverse) (reverse)

Designed by: J Westwood (?), Barnett (?)

Production date: 1772

Material: gold; **Diameter:** 44 mm

Inscriptions:

Obverse: GEORGE . III . KING . OF . GR . BRITAIN . FRANCE . AND . IRELAND ETC

Reverse: RESOLUTION ADVENTURE, SAILED . FROM . ENGLAND MARCH MDCCLXXII in exergue.

Curator's comments: Brown 1980 states: "The second voyage was intended to begin in March 1772 as indicated on the medal but encountered numerous delays and the expedition in fact set sail on 13th July; it was to last three years and eighteen days. During this time only four men were lost, one of them from sickness. Cook, promoted to Commander for the voyage, sailed in the 'Resolution' with a complement of 110 men. Captain Tobias Furneaux sailed in the 'Adventure' with a complement of 80 men. The intention of the voyage was to determine the existence of an antarctic continent and to explore the high southern latitudes. A quantity of mounted bronze or brass gilt specimens of this medal were taken on the voyage and were intended for presentation to the natives. The mount is comprised of a small, screw-threaded hole bored into the edge above head on the obverse and into this is screwed a pin with a moveable loop pierced through it horizontally. Mounted specimens are very rare and almost always in poor condition. Most have been found in New Zealand, presumably having been presented to Maoris at the time of the voyage. There are records extant for the striking of these medals and it would seem that two specimens were struck in gold, 106 in silver and 2,000 in bronze. The Admiralty paid Boulton for the bronze specimens and had them delivered to Cook. The two gold and 106 silver were sent, with invoices, to Joseph Banks who was to act as Botanist on the voyage and who was a man of considerable private means. Banks later withdrew from the voyage and one must suppose that the gold and silver medals were a purely private venture on his part. Probably he sold them or gave them to interested people. An example in gold is in the British Museum and this came from the collection of Banks' sister. The whereabouts of the other specimen is not known. Most of the bronze medals are unmounted and there must be some doubt as to whether these pieces were

actually taken on the voyage. Possibly they, too, were sold or given to interested parties. There is a uniface iron trial striking of the obverse in the Hunterian Coin Cabinet. Two reverse dies were used for the bronze medals. One, which was also used for the silver specimens, has the anchor in a horizontal position. The other die, used only for the bronze, shows the anchor in a vertical position. See Arthur Westwood. 'Matthew Boulton's 'Otaheite' Medal'. Birmingham Assay Office, 1926. In this publication it is suggested that the medal was engraved by John Westwood, the author having seen an obverse cliché signed WESTWOOD on the truncation of the bust. In these circumstances the letters B : F which normally appear in this position can be taken to mean BOULTON FECIT."

Link: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_G3-EM-55



RIGHT: Trade card of Barnett, ~1800, engraver at No.2, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross, London, showing the text at centre with the Prince of Wales's feathers at top and a garland below (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_Heal-59-8).

LEFT: DRAFT Trade card of Clagget, lottery officer, by Barnett, ~1810.

LETTER NO. 2

The second letter of the three I purchased was written by B. Wynne Hemans from Whitehall on 4th May 1803 and addressed to Mons^r Pierre Gualy, a la Canne, Departement du Tarn. The content reads:

Whitehall 4 May 103

Sir

I have this day received yours enclosing a letter to the Secretary at War, which I have sealed and delivered at the war Office. The letter you allude to from your Brother must have miscarried as it never came to my hands.

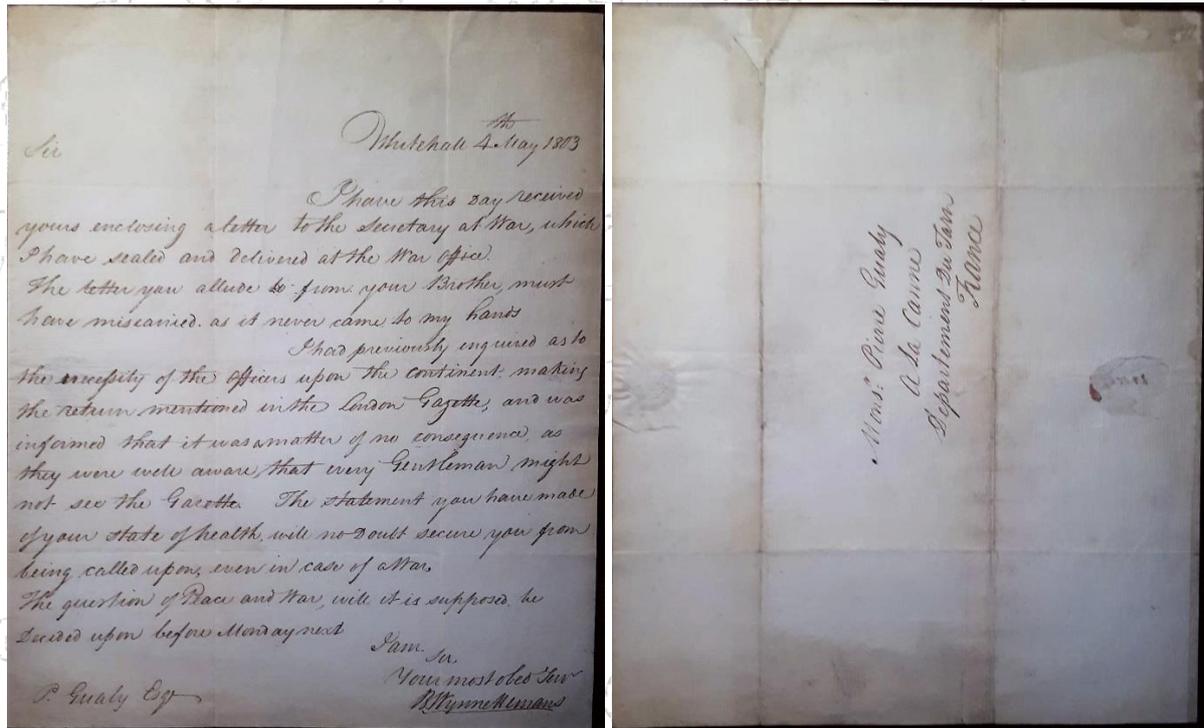
I had previously enquired as to the necessity of the Officers upon the Continent making the return mentioned in the London Gazette, and was informed that it was a matter of no consequence as they

were well aware that every Gentleman might not see the Gazette. The statement you have made of your state of health will no doubt secure you from being called upon, even in case of a war.

The question of Peace and War, will it is supposed, be Decided upon before Monday next.

P. Gualy Esq.

I am
Sir
Your most obed Serv
B Wynne Hemans



Well, even in the absence of any reference to coins, medals, or even Irish connections, it was still worthy of research, so that I called unto the Internet for help once again, even though my coffee bill exceeded the set budget of £5. Online ancestry databases promptly provided the following details on my enquiry:

- <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D260367>
Will of Bewley Wynne Hemans, of the War office of London, 19 November 1833, Ref. PROB 11/1823/471
- <https://www.geni.com/people/Bowley-Or-Hemans/6000000165562750212>
Bowley or Bewley Wynne Hemans, Birthdate: December 01, 1770, Birthplace: St John The Evangelist Friday Street, London, England, Death: November 10, 1833 (62), Brighton, Sussex, England, Immediate Family: Son of John Hemans and Alcey Hemans; Husband of Charlotte Hannah Hemans; Brother of Sophia Hemans, John Hemans, Maria Sophia Hemans, Diana Hemans, Lucy Hemans, William Henry Hemans, and Alfred Hemans.
- www.myheritage.com contains a record of Selina Elizabeth Hemans (born Bazin), b. 1783, m. Bewley Wynne Hemans 1824, d. 1825 (42); Bewley was born 01/12/1770 in Allhallows, Kent.

- *List of the Chiefs, Officers, Court of Assistants, etc. etc. etc. of the Hon. Artillery Company for the Year 1827*, London contains a record of Captain and Adjutant Bewley Wynne Hemans, Esq., appointed captain on 19/09/1804.
- *The History of the Honourable Artillery Company of the City of London*, by Anthony Highmore, pp. 492/3, contains the following record: “*Mr. Bewley Wynne Hemans having voluntarily acted as sergeant major for some time past, was recommended by the military committee, in April, to fill that station for the remainder of the year, to which the court appointed him, and a sergeant’s guard was reestablished every night for the security of the Company’s property.*”

Now, some details of the sender have been retrieved, illustrating a military carrier with the Artillery Company of London. Eventually, my attention turned to the recipient and a quick online search provided the following details. It appeared that the Gualys were a Protestant family of Rouergue. In 1685, by the Edict of Fontainebleau Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes of 1598 and ordered the destruction of Huguenot churches, as well as the closing of Protestant schools. Peter Gualy, son of the Sieur de la Gineste, fled into England at the Revocation, with his wife and three children — Paul, Francis, and Margaret. Paul entered the English army and died a major-general. Francis also entered the army, and eventually settled at Dublin, where his descendants still live. It is quite possible that Pierre Gualy, Esq., was a descendant of Peter Gualy, also taking into account that La Canne is just an hour drive from Château Gineste in Lisle-sur-Tarn, France.

The date of the letter, 4th May 1803, and the notion of the war apparently point to the Napoleonic Wars, with the date of 18th May 1803 often taken as the declaration of war by Britain. Britain terminated the Treaty of Amiens of 1802, signed with France on 25th March 1802 at the end of the French Revolutionary Wars, and declared war on France in May 1803. Amongst the reasons were Napoleon's changes to the international system in Western Europe, especially in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. In the course of the Napoleonic Wars, seven international coalitions were formed, and the map of Europe had changed dramatically by the time of signing the Second Treaty of Paris on 20th November 1815, which officially marked the end of the wars. This letter from Whitehall may be not a major artefact of the epoch, but it is undoubtedly an eyewitness of what was to become the most definite change of the European history in the 19th century, yet once and over again ascertaining that “the only thing that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.”

At this point, I had to cease my coffee-driven investigation due to the lack of information at hand and, instead, turned my attention to the third purchased artefact, which was actually a set of three short letters.

LETTER TRIO NO. 3

The three letters apparently came from a file of correspondence to Cox and Greenwood, Army Agents. The earliest letter was dated unclearly and rather in haste, while the other two were dated by 30th June and 22nd July 1793, respectively; all sent from Weymouth. The contents read as follows.

Weymouth Nov. (?) 11 92(?)

My dear Greenwood,

I have a letter from Mr Jones before me, saying he has placed £230 in Mr. Lawrie's hands, but it also states that Mr. L writes him word, that a Lieutenancy is now from their scarcity not purchasable under £250. This advance of price is rather unfortunate for my young cousin as his father has done his utmost to get together the £230 hoping that the purchase might be completed, & really it is a great Exertion for a County Parson to make for fourth so. However I shall still advise him to add the other £20 if it is not to be purchased without it, entreating you at the same time to have the goodness to get it as cheap as you can for the young man.

From a scrupulousness of right doing the young man is dispatch'd to Ireland when I had got a promise of further leave of absence from the Ld. Lieutenant. This has vex'd me a little as it will be a further expense to him which he can very little afford. Believe me with all thanks for the trouble you take in this business.

*Your sincerely
Saml. Isted*

Weymouth June 30 1793

Dear Greenwood

I recollect that my last letter must have appear'd very stupid, but as I am ignorant of Army Regulations with regard tom the sale of Commissions you must excuse a County Squire though he is a little thick.

You said that my Kinsman could purchase a Lieutcy in a Vol. Company for £210 and perhaps for 100 or 150 more at most could exchange into the line again out of the Break. In this case I suppose his Ensigncy is given up as he rec'd it, but give me leave to if he would be able to sell his Lieutcy at the full price if anything should occur to make it eligible for him to sell at all

*Believe me your obliged friend
S. Isted*

Weymouth July 22 1793

I was in hopes to have heard from you before this, stating my cousin George Jones of the 55th a Lieutenant in some Volunteer Company, as your former Letters seem to think that such a purchase was easily obtained. Perhaps my last did not reach you. It only said that the money would be forthcoming for the Purchase whenever required, therefore not to bother you further. I remain Dear Greenwood

*Yours sincerely
Saml. Isted*

My dear Greenwood Weymouth June 11th

I have a letter from Mr. Jones before me, saying he has placed £250 in Mr. Lawrence's hands, but it also states that Mr. L. writes him word, a lightning is now from their scarcity not purchasable under £250. This advance of price is rather unfortunate for my young cousin as his father had done his utmost to get together the £250 hoping that the purchase might be completed, & really it is a great objection for a Country House to make for a fourth son. However I

shall still advise him to add the other £20 if it is not to be purchased without it, entreating you at the same time to have the goodness to get it as cheap as you can for the young man.

From a scrupulousness of right doing the young man is dispatched to Ireland when I had got a promise of further leave of absence from the Lieutenant. This has vexed me a little as it will be a further expence to him which he can very ill afford. Believe me with all thanks for the trouble you take in this business Dear Greenwood Yours sincerely Samuel Isted

Am^d - Weymouth June 30. 1793

Dear Greenwood

I recollect that my last letter must have appeared very stupid, but as I am ignorant of some Regulations with regard to sale of Commissions you must excuse a Countryman though he is a little thick.

You said that my Kinsman could purchase a Lieut. in a Regt. Company for £210 and perhaps for 100 or 150 more it would exchange into the line again out of the Break. In this case I suppose his money is given up as he rec^d. it, but give me leave to if he would be able to sell his Lieut. at the full price, in any thing that occurs to make it eligible for him to sell at all. Believe me your obliged Friend Samuel Isted

Am^d Weymouth July 22. 1793

My dear Greenwood

I was in hopes to have heard from you before this, stating my cousin George Jones of G. Regt. a Lieutenant in some Volunteer Company, as your former letters seem to wish that such a purchase was easily obtained. Perhaps my last did not reach you. It only said that the money would be forthcoming for the purchase whenever required; therefore rest to bother you further I remain Dear Greenwood Yours sincerely Samuel Isted

Although a peek on the Internet did not reveal Samuel Isted, Esq., of Weymouth, it brought forth the name of Samuel Isted, Esq., of Ecton, Northamptonshire. It might have been the same person, given that at the time Weymouth, a seaside town in Dorset overlooking the English Channel, was a popular tourist destination for the county gentry. King George III's brother, the Duke of Gloucester, built a grand residence and passed the mild winter there in 1780, while the King himself made Weymouth his summer holiday residence on fourteen occasions between 1789 and 1805. Other information supporting the above conjecture was found in the genealogy of Samuel Isted of Ecton. Samuel was son of Ambrose Isted (1718-1781), and the latter was brother of Sarah (Isted) Sturges (1705-1758). Sarah's daughter, Sarah (Sturges) Jones (~1742-1801), was wife of Edward Jones, rector of Loddington.

Although it is unknown whether Edward and Sarah Jones had children, young George Jones mentioned in the correspondence could just have been their son.

Assuming that Samuel Isted of Ecton is the right person, the WikiTree database reports (<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Isted-136>): “Samuel was born about 1750 being christened that year at Ecton, Northamptonshire, the son of Ambrose Isted and Anne Bucke. He passed away in 1827 and was buried at Ecton on 18 August. Samuel attended Oxford University, matriculating in November 1768. In 1795 at St George, Hanover Square, he married Barbara, daughter of Thomas Percy and Ann Gutteridge. Samuel signed his will on 22 July at Ecton, making Barbara his executrix. She proved the will on 1 December 1827 at London. In the will he mentions his son Ambrose.”

The literary personality of Thomas Percy, ordained Bishop of Dromore (Co. Down, Ireland) in 1785, is noteworthy, particularly in respect to his greatest work *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), the first of the great ballad collections, which was the one work most responsible for the ballad revival in English poetry that was a significant part of the Romantic movement. His other works include *Hau Kiou Chooan, or The Pleasing History*, published in 1761, which appeared to be the first full publication in English of a Chinese novel, and *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*, published in 1763, which Thomas Percy translated and “improved” from the Icelandic, amongst other notable publications.

Going even further down the family tree, John Burke’s *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank; but Uninvested with Heritable Honours*, reports: “Isted of Ecton came from Eysted, a large maritime town in the province of Schonen, in the kingdom of Sweden, and settled at Framfield, in Sussex, probably in the time of Edward III. where they enjoyed a considerable estate, some part of which continued in the family till 1718, when it was sold by Thomas Isted, esq. of Ecton.”



LEFT: Samuel Isted, Esq. (1750-1827), pastel by Sir Thomas Lawrence, dated 4 March 1786 (www.pastellists.com). RIGHT: A George III silver basket and stand, Wakelin and Garrard, London, 1795, with the arms of Isted impaling Percy, for Samuel Isted (1750-1827) of Ecton, Co. Northampton, and his wife Barbara (<https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6268015>).

Although attribution of the authorship of the letters to Samuel Isted of Ecton can be debated, the identity of George Jones can be traced in the Army records. The Dublin Gazette of Saturday June 1 to Tuesday June 4 1793 reports (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/community.29814786>): “55th

Regiment of Foot, Mr. George Jones to be Ensign, vice Warde, promoted in in Independent Company". A List of the Officers of the Army and Marines: With an Index : a Succession of Colonels : and a List of the Officers of the Army and Marines on Half-pay : Also with an Index, Great Britain. War Office, A. B. King, no.72, Dame-Street, 1798, 650 pages, contains a record of Lieutenant George Jones, the Eighteenth (Royal Irish) Regiment of Foot, rank in the Regiment on 23 Oct. 1793, in the Army on 6 Aug 1793, along with First Lieutenant George Jones of the Marine Forces, ranked on 24 Apr. 1795. It is yet unclear whether the two Georges were the same person, since Isted's letters can be interpreted in favour of both. Assuming Jones' affiliation with the 18th Royal Irish Regiment of Foot, it is nevertheless instructive to take a brief outlook on the history of the regiment.

The regiment was formed by the Earl of Granard in 1684, the final year of Charles II's reign, from several companies of musketeers and pikemen garrisoned in Ireland, as a reward for supporting the Stuarts in Scotland during the British Civil Wars (1639-51) and working for Charles's restoration. During the Williamite-Jacobite War in Ireland the regiment split and the companies loyal to William were placed on the English establishment in 1689. The regiment mainly remained in Britain and Ireland, with brief expeditions in Flanders and elsewhere, until 1767, when it was deployed to North America. It was still there on the outbreak of the American War of Independence (1775-83), when it suffered heavy casualties. The few survivors had to be drafted to other regiments, whilst the officers returned to Britain to re-recruit. It spent the early 1780s garrisoning the Channel Islands and Gibraltar against America's French and Spanish allies. It was in action from the start of the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802), serving at the siege of Toulon in 1793, garrisoning Corsica in 1794, and serving as marines in the Mediterranean in 1797.



EPILOGUE

Well, having exhausted the battery of my smart-phone whilst catching sidelong glances of the café staff and visitors at an idle man by an empty cup smiling subdolosly to himself in the far corner of otherwise bright and lively place, I had to cease my research at-the-fingertip and to re-emerge from the voices of history into the noises of the daily realm. Although the above mishmash of facts and speculations still requires a proper investigation and work with primary sources, I hope what was supposed to be presented as a narrative will not displease the eye of the reader, but rather make them marvel on how much memories a random piece of paper could bring about if one ventures to spend time and small effort on thinking, dreaming, and surfing the Internet. As the final remark, I wish to note that one who seeks will find, eventually, and my search for relevance of the three old letters to numismatics or Irish relations has proved success, I trust. A good souvenir to remember the London Book Fair for, indeed!