THE FIRST FLEET PIANO
A Musician’s View

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Foreword

Whoever would have imagined that the chance meeting of a 19-year-old student and a venerable Sydney antiques dealer and keyboard instrument enthusiast in 1974 would lead nearly 40 years later to the writing of this book, undoubtedly destined to become the classic of its kind? And who better to produce this than a performer/scholar whose writing, particularly in the extensive Introduction, conveys the same passionate eloquence that illuminates his playing? The author has established an international reputation as a leading fortepianist, his playing informed by a deep knowledge of musical style—particularly that of the baroque and classical periods—and, as will be seen from the many pages of this book, by an extraordinary knowledge of keyboard construction. There is no doubt that this book represents a kind of homage to William Bradshaw, who, perhaps unwittingly, pointed the young student, Geoffrey Lancaster, in the direction of what was to become a brilliant career.

While the focus of the book is on the earliest pianos brought to Australia—and the influence these had on shaping our colonial musical culture—his account traces those ripples from seventeenth-century Europe that touched many shores and led to the creation of a high craft that shaped musical performance in almost all cultured societies. It was one of the civilising influences brought to a largely uncivilised colony in Australia. This book, richly illustrated with photographs, references and documentation, leads us into a world once alive with the construction of pianos along original lines, some more lasting than others, and which penetrated domestic music making as few other kinds of instruments could. The best of these are not simply ancient artefacts, but also truly beautiful musical instruments that should be heard today.

Many hundreds of them arrived in Australia during the nineteenth century and it is a matter of concern that most of the pianos that contributed to our early musical culture are fast disappearing as wealthy collectors from overseas snatch them up. If—as it seems—we cannot retain them, Geoffrey Lancaster’s brilliant book will at least furnish a precious record of what Australia once possessed.

David Tunley
Emeritus Professor of Music
The University of Western Australia
Acknowledgments

In 1728, the music theorist Roger North wrote: ‘I have ever found I did not well
know my owne thoughts, till I had wrote and reviewed them; and then for the
most part, mists fell away, and fondness and failings appeared in a clear light.’¹

I begin by thanking the Australian Research Council for the generous Discovery
Grant² that enabled me to write and review ‘my owne thoughts’.

Stewart Symonds, whose collection of pianos possesses an immense power to
inspire, has been endlessly generous with both his time and his knowledge.

Dr Philomena Brennan OAM shared her wisdom and perspicacity through
constructive criticism, unreserved kindness and continued encouragement.

Gavin Gostelow ‘brought together the strands of … unwieldy … draft[s] and
[tied them] … into a more elegant bow than I could ever have hoped’.³ I was
often the beneficiary of his insights during peripatetic dialogues through some
of Australia’s most wonderful keyboard instrument collections.

Sir Roger Vickers KCVO FRCS and Lady Joanna Vickers shared their comfortable
London house, a genteel oasis in the City.

Julian and Katy Bauer, Colin and Christine Edwards, Daphne James, Jay Johnson,
and Anthony and Jane Wood, with characteristically Liskeardian generosity of
spirit, offered valuable insights and quiet, abounding hospitality.

I am deeply grateful to my gentle, loving and kind friends John and Christine
Morhall, who unhesitatingly provided a serene haven in their elegant Singapore
home.

Dr Alan Turner, of the Royal College of Surgeons London, supplied information
associated with the eighteenth-century removal of bladder stones.

¹ J. Wilson (ed.), Roger North on Music: Being a Selection from his Essays Written during the Years
² See Australian Research Council Discovery Grant No. DP0773740, in ‘Listing by all State/Organisation
[PDF Format]’ in ’2006 for funding commencing in 2007’ in ‘Discovery Projects Funding Outcomes’ in
Gary Crockett, Curator of the Hyde Park Barracks Museum, gracefully cut through the institutional red tape that threatened to entangle the placement in Elizabeth Farm cottage (if only for a day) of the 1780/86? Beck square piano.4

Christopher Groenhout and Roy Williams allowed their photographs of the first-floor drawing room of William Bradshaw’s home to be included.

My deep appreciation goes to Paul Kenny, who willingly provided information drawn from William Bradshaw’s business records.

Robert Clarke, whose forthcoming PhD dissertation will undoubtedly become a seminal work in relation to the life of George Bouchier Worgan, ‘saved me from terrible error’5 by ‘trusting me with the secrets of his years of toil’.6

I extend my gratitude to Matthew Payne, Keeper of the Muniments at Westminster Abbey, for his caring assistance.

Dan Johansson, Curator of the Stockholm Music and Theatre Museum, Sweden, graciously helped me shed light on the First Fleet piano’s date of manufacture.

Stanley Hoogland, one of the world’s great fortepianists and a master teacher, kindly assisted in locating the whereabouts of a 1772 Beck square piano.

Alan Rubin, eminent antiques dealer, generously sent a photograph and provenance details of a 1773 Beck square piano.

Uwe Fischer of the Bachhaus, Eisenach, cordially sent photographs of the museum’s 1774 Beck square piano.

Graham Walker, erudite restorer and collector of early pianos, Dorset, UK, shared his extensive knowledge, and provided photographs both of the 1776 Beck square piano and of an instrument whose nameboard inscription tantalisingly identifies Frederick Beck and George Corrie as its makers.

James Wright, Associate Professor and Supervisor of Performance Studies at the School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music) at Carleton University, Ottawa, enthusiastically provided photographs of the university’s 1777 Beck square piano.

I am grateful to Thomas Strange both for his encouragement and for his photographs of his 1778 Beck square piano.

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4 See Footnote 15 in ‘Introduction’, this volume. See also Chapter 2.
6 Ibid., p. 275.
Elisabeth McGregor, Curator/Archivist of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, Massachusetts, graciously supplied photographs and provenance details of the Trust’s 1782/87? Beck square piano.

Thanks, too, to Inger Jakobsson-Wärn, Director and Curator of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, for generously sending photographs of the museum’s 1783 Beck square piano.

John R. Watson, Conservator of Instruments and Mechanical Arts and Associate Curator of Musical Instruments of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, furnished a photograph of the Foundation’s 1785 Beck square piano.

David Hackett and Andrew Snedden braved the devoted multitudes at Piano Auctions Limited in Conway Hall, Holborn, London, to take photographs and measurements of the ca 1790—serial number 2580—Beck square piano.

Malcolm Rose sent valuable data associated with and many photographs of one of the two extant Frederick Beck tangent action square pianos.

Brian Barrow liberally provided vital information, a friendly welcome and unhindered access to his Longman & Broderip square piano of 1785/86?, an instrument that raised more questions than it answered.

Phillip Barrow kindly offered invaluable advice within the context of a detailed and timely critique.

Elizabeth Ellis OAM, the enchantingly collegiate historian and Emeritus Curator of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, imparted helpful guidance with grace and subtlety.

José Gutierrez and Wolf Krueger shared their colourful reminiscences of life in mid-twentieth-century Sydney.

Michael Lea, Curator of the Powerhouse Museum’s musical instrument collection and ‘a gentleman of keen insight’, was characteristically amiable and helpful; his replies to my every query were exhaustive and authoritative.

I am indebted to Scott Carlin, Manager of House Museums at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, for his courteous assistance.

Lucy Coad and Andrew Lancaster furnished photographs of, and information concerning, one of the two extant Broadwood square pianos dating from 1783.

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7 Ibid., p. 277.
I extend my grateful thanks to the ever-generous Michael Cole, whose research combines passion with uncompromising rigour, and whose encyclopedic knowledge has a timeless quality that makes his insights required understanding for anyone who seeks to comprehend the complexities associated with the Classic era\(^9\) piano.

My sincere gratitude goes to Emeritus Professor David Tunley AM FAHA, who contributed a foreword that greatly enhances the value of the book for those who know him as the fine human being and great scholar that he is.

Deb and Steve Watkinson lovingly provided the writing space within which serenity was attained.

The redoubtable Susanne Hewitt, exemplar of Australian fortitude, whose love of the absurd and profound enriched research’s pilgrimage road, not only dispelled the obstructive mysteries enshrouding Spanish bus timetables, but also underwrote the exploration of Liskeard’s historic inns (for purely research purposes).

A final and vital acknowledgment goes to Jan Borrie, who copyedited the manuscript with sensitivity and a keen and learned eye.

Those mentioned above are now part of the First Fleet piano’s legacy, and the story is far from over.

To those who hindered rather than helped:

> [T]he high-quality products of the creative impulse … [can] be distinguished from the destructive one by … [their] propensity to increase the variety of the created world rather than reduce it. Builders of concentration camps [for example,] might be creators of a kind … but they were in business to subtract variety from the created world, not to add to it.\(^{10}\)

History shows that evil always overreaches itself. To those who (with shameless hypocrisy) contentedly manufacture prestige-creating, self-advancing opportunity in the interstices of institutionalised coercion and subjugation, and who are ‘willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves’,\(^{11}\) I ask: ‘what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?’\(^{12}\) ‘For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are

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9 See Footnote 2 in 'Introduction', this volume.
earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. 13 God will get to you shortly.

I have made every effort to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. I apologise for any errors or inadvertent omissions, and would be grateful to be notified of any corrections that should be incorporated into this book; I will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements at the first opportunity.

So often, when writing this book, I disappeared from the normal rhythms of daily life. That I did not vanish completely beyond a far horizon is due chiefly to Dr Andrew Lu OAM, to whom this book is dedicated.

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Descriptive Conventions

The Term ‘Piano’

During the eighteenth century, there was no commonly used term for the piano. Stewart Pollens identifies 20 different eighteenth-century titles for the piano:

Gravicembalo col piano e forte (Maffei, 1711), Arpicembalo col piano e forte (Medici inventory, 1700), gravecembalo à martelli (Italian dictionary, second half of the eighteenth century), Cimbal di piano e forte di martelletti (Giustini, 1732), cembalo à martellino (testament of Farinelli, 1782), clavecin à maillets (Marius, 1716), clavecin à marteau (F. E. Blanchet’s inventory), Pantalone (Schröter, 1717), Cymbal-Clavir (Ficker, 1731), Fortbien and Bienfort (Friederici, ca. 1745), cravo de martelos (Antunes, 1760), clavicordio de piano (testament of Maria Barbara of Braganza, 1753), clave piano (Madrid newspaper, 1777), Pantalon, Hämmer-pantalone, Hämmerwerke, Pandoret, and Claveçin Roial (the last five terms by Daniel Gottlob Türk, 1789), Banlony (J. C. Jeckel and C. Jeckel, Worms, ca. 1790).

Moreover, in 1770, Franz Jacob Spath (Späth) (1714–86) named his new invention ‘Clavecin d’Amour’. In 1774 in New York, Johann Sheybli offered a ‘hammer spinet’ for sale ‘by which he … meant a … piano’. A contemporaneous title page for piano music composed by Joseph Antonin Steffan (1726–97) indicates

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3 In his day, Spath’s surname was usually written without an umlaut. It is probable, however, that ‘both ‘Spath’ and ‘Spåth’ were used during the eighteenth century’. G. P. di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, in The Galpin Society Journal, Vol. 61 (April) (London: The Galpin Society, 2008), p. 80, fn. 5. For the purposes of this study, ‘Spath’ will be used.
'Clavi Cembalo d’espressione'.6 Furthermore, ‘Johann Andreas Stein [1728–92] always described himself as a faiseur de clavecins, [maker of harpsichords] … whether he placed his signature label on a harpsichord or piano’.7

During the 1700s, the words ‘piano’ and ‘forte’ (and their variants) were quite interchangeable, and subject to many permutations. For example, the periodical L'Avant-coureur (The Forerunner), dated Monday, 6 April 1761, refers to the ‘clavessins a piano e forte’ of Gottfried Silbermann (1683–1753);8 Silbermann called his pianos ‘piano fort’ and ‘piano et forte’.9 In Strasbourg, Johann Heinrich Silbermann called his pianos ‘forté-piano’.10 In Zürich, Jean Caspar Maag (1744–1822) referred to his pianos as ‘forte piano’. Jacob Adlung (1699–1762), in his Musica Mechanica Organoe di, uses the term ‘piano forte’.11 Johann Adam Hiller (1728–1804), in his Wöchentliche Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend (Weekly News and Notes on Music), uses the terms ‘fortepiano’ and ‘pianoforte’ interchangeably on the same page when describing the pianos of Gottfried Silbermann and Johann Andreas Stein respectively.12 Certain solo keyboard works and concerti composed by Joseph Anton Steffan indicate on their title page ‘forte piano’, ‘forte e piano’ or ‘Cembalo di Forte Piano’.13 Sometime before 1774, a ‘cembalo a piano e forte’ made by the Neapolitan priest and organ maker Donato del Piano (fl. 1720–85) was sent as a gift to the Queen of Naples.14 ‘Spanish piano owners in 1780 refer to their “fuerte-piano”.’15 In Madrid, Francisco Fernández (1766–1852) and Francisco Flórez (d. 1824) called their instruments ‘fortes pianos’.16 In an advertisement published in the Public Advertiser of Monday, 21 January 1765, Friedrich Neubauer (d. 1774) calls his square piano17 a ‘pyano forte’. In the Public Advertiser of Friday, 1 March 1771, the Dutch-born London-based keyboard instrument maker Americus Backers (d. 1778) called his piano (with its distinctive ‘English’

13 See Brown, Joseph Haydn’s Keyboard Music, p. 143.
14 See di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 92.
16 See Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, p. 398.
17 See Footnote 15 in ‘Introduction’, this volume.
type of hammer mechanism) a ‘forte piano’. Making pianos that were identical to those of Backers, the Scottish-born Robert Stodart (1748–1831) described his instruments as ‘piano forte’. In an advertisement published in the New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury of Monday, 10 October 1774, Johann Sheybli claimed to make ‘fortepianoes’. An extant tuner’s notebook from the 1770s uses the terms ‘forte piano’ and ‘piano forte’ on successive pages when referring to the same instrument, and a few pages later adopts the shorter form ‘piano’. In 1780, Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–90) described his epoch-making invention as a ‘piano-forte’. Among the major Viennese builders, Joseph Dohnal [1759–1829] in c. 1795, and Conrad Graf [1782–1851] in c. 1820 referred to themselves as makers of the Fortepiano.

For the purposes of this study, the terms ‘fortepiano’ and ‘piano’ are used interchangeably to denote the eighteenth to early nineteenth-century wooden-framed touch-sensitive stringed keyboard instrument whose strings are sounded by pivoted hammers. The instrument’s frame may include gap spacers and/or iron tension bars.

The term ‘modern piano’ denotes the type of ‘grand’ or ‘upright’ instrument whose design, touch and sound characteristics were fundamentally established during the late 1880s (and have remained basically unchanged since), now commonly encountered in conservatoria, concert halls and homes.

Differences in the sound, touch and design of the piano’s many incarnations not only prove that the instrument’s history is not that ‘of the single-minded pursuit of an ideal form’, but also that ‘every piano is historical … no piano embodies the history of the instrument … [and] there is no such thing as the modern piano any more than there is such a thing as the early piano’.

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21 Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, p. 398. See also Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano, Vol. 2, p. 471.
23 Ibid., p. 325.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

Note Names

Note names are identified in the following way.\(^{24}\)

![Note Names Diagram]


Textual Conventions

In order to avoid use of the mannerism ‘sic’ within the context of quotations, misspellings, errors and eighteenth-century typographical idiosyncrasies remain intact (despite the possibility for the emergence of an alluring air of quaintness); insertions are signalled with square brackets.

When a nameboard inscription appears in the text as the conclusion of a sentence, the final full stop may not reflect the actual presence of a full stop in the original inscription.

Online References

In footnotes, links are provided in order to allow the viewing of source material online. Because the permanency of links cannot be ensured, this study contains sufficient bibliographic data to enable future readers to find a referenced source.

Material is repeated when there is benefit to be gained through reinforcement, reminder or by viewing it from a different perspective.

When needed, the reader may wish to consult the glossary (Appendix Q) at the end of the book.

Introduction

Discovery

In 1974, as an undergraduate music student, my life’s work as a player of fortепианов and advocate for ‘historically inspired performance practice’ began with the chance discovery of a large collection of fortепиано in the home of the eminent antiques dealer, keyboard instrument enthusiast and gentleman of Sydney William Frederick Bradshaw (1922–2009). Bradshaw was one of the most respected members of Australia’s antique dealers’ fraternity, and his knowledge of the developments that occurred in piano design and manufacture between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries was extensive. For the time, Bradshaw’s musical enthusiasms were prophetic: during the early 1970s in Australia, the notion of performing music composed during the Classic and early Romantic eras using instruments of the period was, for many members of the musical profession, virtually incomprehensible.

1 The term ‘historically inspired performance practice’ refers to the conventions of performance that appear to have been prevalent among knowledgeable performers prior to our time, including those customs that were so commonly understood that they were not noted, as well as aspects of performance that were too subtle to notate. See S. P. Rosenblum, Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. xvii. Historically inspired performance practice provides ‘a vital key to our understanding’ and interpretation of the ‘incomplete record represented by musical notation’, enabling a musical score to be read, understood and interpreted ‘in a richly contextualised way’. P. Walls, History, Imagination and the Performance of Music [Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003], pp. 10–11.

2 In a widely accepted and commonly encountered periodisation schema of Western music history, the ‘Classic’ era is defined as the period between ca 1750 and ca 1830. Classicism (a European phenomenon) possessed certain aesthetic characteristics: an ‘ideal of peace and serenity and … tendencies toward repression and formalism’. J. Barzun, Classic, Romantic, and Modern (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 58. The term ‘Classical’ is broader in its meaning, and is often used colloquially when referring to Western ‘art’ music.

3 During the 1970s, many professional musicians in Australia experienced the reinvigoration of Baroque keyboard music through historically inspired performances given on either replicas of or restored seventeenth and eighteenth-century harpsichords (in a widely accepted and commonly encountered periodisation schema of Western music history, the ‘Baroque’ era is defined as the period between ca 1600 and ca 1750). Some musicians dared to entertain similar expectations in relation to the Classic-era piano and its repertoire. It was an exhilarating time, filled with controversy and fervent self-defence. The late twentieth-century journey towards the concomitant use of historical keyboard instruments and historically inspired performance practice is perhaps best described by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860): ‘Every truth passes through three stages: First, it is [neglected or] ridiculed; Second, it is violently opposed; and Third, it is accepted as self-evident.’ H. von der Wagon Brecht (ed.), Quotable Arthur Schopenhauer: Kernels of Wisdom and Insights (Morrisville, NC: Lulu Enterprises, n.d. [2008?]), p. 104. See also M. Skowroneck, Harpsichord Construction: A Craftsman’s Workshop Experience and Insight (Bergkirchen, Germany: Edition Bochinsky, 2003), p. 265.
Behind the unassuming façade and narrow central double doors of Bradshaw’s antiques shop lay a musical paradise: an unbelievable number and variety of the piano’s varying historical incarnations cluttered rooms and filled hallways, spilling into the large freestanding uninsulated red brick garage and workshop at the rear of his terrace house at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra, Sydney. The cornucopia of pianos kept company with a profusion of the most exquisitely beautiful Regency and Empire clocks (made by the most celebrated clockmakers of London and Paris) that hourly filled the house with a cacophony of chiming bells. At the height of this collective rhapsody, sight was drawn to eighteenth and early nineteenth-century mirrors that reflected light shimmering through opulently curtained windows, a light infused with gentle warmth by a surfeit of ormolu and the sheen of more intricately inlaid French-polished Regency cabinetwork than convenience required.

In the first-floor drawing room (Plate 1), a grand piano by John Broadwood & Son dated 1802 (with its casework of cross-banded mahogany, boxwood stringing creating the effect of outlined panels along the sides of the instrument, satinwood decorating the keywell, and the wrest-plank veneered in maple) sat under the windows. For me, of all the wonderful instruments in Bradshaw’s collection that lured with their captivating call, this piano sounded out the

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5 Bradshaw’s shop had a ring-the-bell-before-entering system.
6 The garage had a metal roof, as well as a large metal roller door that opened to the lane at the rear of the building. In 1957, Bradshaw paid £2470 for 96 Queen Street, Woollahra (having moved from his shop at 12 Market Street, Sydney). After Bradshaw’s death in 2009, his shop was ‘tenanted to Jacardi, the children’s clothing store from Paris, following’ the property’s A$2.7 million sale. J. Chancellor, ‘Queen Street Eschews Antiques for Fashion’, BusinessDay, 10 May 2010. See also W. Oakman, ‘Man of Antiques Lived on Fruit Cake’, Sydney Morning Herald, 1 December 2009.
10 ‘Wood from shrubs or small trees of the species *Buxus sempervirens*.’ Ibid., p. 331.
11 ‘Wood of the closely related species *Chloroxylon swietenia* (East Indian satinwood) and *Zanthoxylum flavum* (West Indian satinwood; called *Fagara flavia* by some taxonomists).’ Ibid., p. 332. Broadwood probably used the West Indian species in this instrument.
12 ‘Wood from the trees of the genus *Acer* … The European species *Acer pseudoplatanus* is called “sycamore” in England.’ Ibid., p. 331.
ravishing beauty and expressivity of Classic-era keyboard repertoire more profoundly than any other. It was the first time I had heard such sounds, and the instrument changed my musical life.

Another piano by John Broadwood & Son (ca 1805) sat on out-swept legs in the centre of the room. This instrument functioned as a sofa table (the keyboard pulled out like a drawer), and was derived ‘from a design of 1803 by Thomas Sheraton’ (1751–1806) (Plate 1).

A beautiful square piano made in New York by Robert & William Nunns (1828)—veneered with mahogany, and with rosewood cross-banding, single brass and ebony stringing, its nameboard and the front curved corners of the case ornamented with gilt transfers—sat against the right-hand wall, near the far right-hand corner; the instrument’s trestle stand and stretcher (with carved acanthus leaves and claw feet) were designed by the leading American furniture maker Duncan Phyfe (1768–1854). Adjacent to this piano stood one of a pair of large, entrallingly beautiful Pierre-Philippe Thomire (1751–1843) candelabra, their magnificent pedestals’ relatively ‘sober and simple adornment’ vividly contrasting with the elaborate ‘detail and [refined] finishing of the candlesticks’ [branched] arms (Plate 1).

15 A ‘square’ piano is superficially similar to a clavichord, and comprises a fairly shallow rectangular box, open at the top (closed by a lid), with an inset keyboard towards the left at the front long-side of the instrument, a soundboard at the treble end, and horizontal strings running obliquely from the back of the instrument at the bass end to the front at the treble end (the bass strings being nearest to the player), the strings passing over up-striking hammers and the soundboard. See Clarke, ‘The English Piano’, pp. 254–5. Square pianos usually have dampers (unlike keyboard pantalons). ‘Only in recent years has there been a renaissance when these long-neglected instruments have been appreciated for their fine craftsmanship and the beautiful effects that they impart to’ Classic-era music. M. Cole, Square Pianos: A Brief History (Newly Revised April 2012).
16 ‘Wood from various species of the genus Dalbergia.’ Koster, Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, p. 332. The Nunns brothers probably used the Central or South American species in this instrument.
17 ‘The black wood of several species of the genus Diospyros.’ Ibid., p. 331.
By the window, near the tail of the 1802 Broadwood & Son grand piano, a single-action harp by Sébastien Érard (1752–1831) evoked refinement and celestial beauty (Plate 1). This superb instrument was originally purchased on Tuesday, 11 May 1813, from Érard in Paris by a Monsieur Durnets.

In the back half of the drawing room, an upright grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons (1815)—the instrument’s front handsomely pleated with vivid silks—dominated the far wall. Bradshaw was particularly fond of this imposing instrument (Plate 2).

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20 This harp (serial number 273) is currently housed in the Stewart Symonds Collection, Ermington, Sydney, NSW.
21 See S. Érard, ‘Ledger 1806–1819 (no d’inv. D.2009.1.75)’, in Centre Sébastien Erard (1806–19). ‘Unfortunately’, Erard’s sales registers ‘rarely list a purchaser’s name if the harp is resold’ (as this particular instrument may have been). Email from Rosemary Hallo to the author, 17 May 2013. I am indebted to Ms Hallo for this information.
Plate 2 The first-floor drawing room in William Bradshaw’s home, view towards the entrance from the front left-hand corner of the room.

A square piano made in 1830 by the Rapperswil-based piano maker Heinrich Huni (1798–1866) nestled in the corner near the drawing room's entrance (Plates 2 and 3). This instrument had belonged to a Swedish family who fled to Australia during the horrors of the 1940s, and who returned to their home country after World War II (Bradshaw acquired the piano from the family at a Friday Lawsons auction in 1946). The piano was veneered in olivewood, and had four columnar legs with beautiful brass capitals. Each leg sat on an individual square block base. With its fallboard closed, the instrument functioned as an attractive side table. In the form of a Parianware sculpture, flanked by two glowing Argand lamps, Hebe, the goddess of youth, offered fragrant nectar and ambrosia to the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus from atop this piano (Plates 2–4 and 401).

23 The town of Rapperswil is located on the eastern shore of Lake Zurich, Switzerland.
24 During the twentieth century, the family-owned company of Lawsons was a leading Sydney auction house.
26 This piano (serial number 292) is listed in Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano, Vol. 2, p. 195.
27 Dame Nellie Melba (1861–1931) features prominently in the history of this sculpture. See Appendix I, Volume 2 of this publication.
Every object in Bradshaw’s extravagant drawing room had won its ‘right to be [there] ... through high quality and by being characteristic of the best of ... [its] age’.\textsuperscript{28} The room was indeed ‘a jewelled collectors’ cabinet’;\textsuperscript{29} more importantly, it was a peaceful haven for gracious living, and the soul of Bradshaw’s home.

In the downstairs shopfront room, an 1834 John Broadwood & Sons grand piano led me ever closer to the essence of the early Romantics. This instrument, prior to its recent purchase by Bradshaw, had resided in the Green Drawing Room of Warwick Castle, where, as one of two matching instruments, it had been used as a barrier to keep members of the visiting public away from a painting by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640).\textsuperscript{30} Its lustrous rosewood case, inlaid with brass scrolling leaves and flowers, and reeded lobed baluster legs with engine-turned gilt metal collars, were beyond compare. To this day, I have not encountered an English grand piano with casework more spectacularly beautiful than this refined and seductive instrument (Plates 5 and 6).\textsuperscript{31}

Unlike many who had become absorbed by the proliferating complexities of a shallower world, Bradshaw, in his passion-driven preservation of rare, gorgeous pianos, demonstrated one of the moral obligations of humanity: to protect the works of love.\textsuperscript{32}

On many a visit, I was required (at Bradshaw’s insistence) to sightread Carl Czerny’s (1791–1857) ‘Grand Mosaic ... Founded on Bellini’s Norma’,\textsuperscript{33} a set of variations on arias and choruses from Bellini’s opera ‘Norma’ (a particular favourite of Bradshaw’s). The fragile, yellowed early nineteenth-century first-edition score of this scintillating work was one of several enchanting treasures in Bradshaw’s eclectic collection of music and letters.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Williams and Lloyd, \textit{The Australian Room}, pp. 25–8.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{30} This information is derived from a conversation held on Thursday, 22 March 2012, between the author and Stewart Symonds.
\item \textsuperscript{31} On Friday, 25 June 2010, this Broadwood grand piano (serial number 13932) was offered for sale (within the context of the auctioning of the Owsten Collection) by one of the world’s leading auction houses, Bonhams 1793 Limited. The instrument was offered as Lot 3, and sold for A$22 200. The piano is listed in Clinkscale, \textit{Makers of the Piano}, Vol. 2, p. 55.
\item \textsuperscript{32} See R. West, \textit{Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia} (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 2001), p. 915.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Charles Czerny, \textit{Czerny’s Grand Mosaic for the Piano Forte Founded on Bellini’s Norma} (London: George Walker & Son, n.d.).
\item \textsuperscript{34} In the first-floor drawing room, two drawers fitted into the apron running beneath the piano by Robert & William Nunns (1828) (each drawer was adorned with a brass ring drop handle settling against a flower design brass patera) contained Bradshaw’s collection of early colonial sheet music. Every work in this valuable collection of dance music and popular songs was composed, printed and published in Sydney. Following Bradshaw’s death, the collection could not be found. It is known that when Bradshaw was alive, a regular visitor (a member, I am told, of the legal profession) would ascend the stairs with a briefcase, in order to use the facilities (which were on the first floor). With care not to make unjust accusation, I allow myself the indulgence of recounting this observation. Bradshaw’s collection of music and letters was enhanced by a portrait (in the form of a print) of the pianist-composer Franz Liszt (1811–86); Liszt himself had autographed this print with his full signature. The framed print was positioned high on the far wall of the first-floor drawing room, near the entrance doorway.
\end{itemize}
Plate 4 William Bradshaw’s Parianware statue of Hebe, the goddess of youth (detail).
Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 5 Grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons (London, 1834).
Source: Owsten Collection viewing, Overseas Passenger Terminal, Circular Quay, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Within a pervasive atmosphere of serenity and good taste, there ‘was always time for tea’ and rich, moist fruitcake.\(^3\) Tea was served from a sterling silver Matthew Boulton (1728–1809) teapot (Plate 7).\(^3\) Number 96 Queen Street, Woollahra, was truly Heaven.

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Once a week (unfailingly), Bradshaw would make a trip to the retail store David Jones in order to purchase a Big Sister tinned fruitcake. On one occasion (having undertaken his journey very late on a Friday afternoon), he was, upon arrival, informed by a member of David Jones’ staff that there were no fruitcakes left. A vociferous exchange ensued, after which Bradshaw triumphantly returned home from the esteemed store in a taxi with a large three-tier wedding cake (purchased for five guineas); this particular confection had functioned as the David Jones exemplar for varying styles of wedding cake decoration. Bradshaw’s friends were immediately invited to somewhat unceremoniously assist in consuming the oversized and eclectically decorated cake. During the weekend, Bradshaw and his mother undertook the gigantic task that had been left uncompleted by Bradshaw’s friends; Herculean feats were performed with the knife and fork, and by Monday the cake (including its columns) had gone. This information is derived from a conversation held on Thursday, 22 March 2012, between the author and Stewart Symonds. See also Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’.

36 See Oakman, ‘Man of Antiques Lived on Fruit Cake’.
During the years following these life-changing meetings with William Bradshaw, his name was regularly associated with reliable, substantiated and accurate information concerning the provenance of antiques—be it pianos or other artefacts; his knowledge was prodigious, and his insights were commonly respected. The day after Bradshaw’s death, the journalist Erik Jensen wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Thursday, 19 November 2009:

> He will be, forever, the man Neville Wran [Premier of New South Wales, 1976–86] chose to refurnish Elizabeth Bay House. 37 A dealer who sold to the Packers and the Fairfaxes. 38 Who sourced clocks for Paul Keating [Prime Minister of Australia, 1991–96, and] … whom [Keating] … described as ‘simply the most knowledgeable antique dealer Australia has known’. 39

Little did I know that this intelligent, cultured and distinguished man was to feature prominently in my life 39 years later, in connection with one of the

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37 Elizabeth Bay House is an imposing and elegant historic home that was built for the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, Alexander Macleay (1767–1848), between 1835 and 1839. It was built on 22 hectares of land at Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. The land was granted to Macleay in 1826 by Governor Ralph Darling (1772–1858). It is uncertain who designed the house. Recent research suggests that the colonial architect, builder and pioneer settler John Verge (1782–1861) was the principal designer.

38 The Packers and the Fairfaxes are two of Australia’s wealthiest families.

39 Jensen, ‘Clock Runs Out for Father of Sydney’s Antique Trade’.
most culturally significant⁴⁰ pianos in Australia: the First Fleet⁴¹ piano. As my erudition grew during those 39 years, my comprehension of the depth and wisdom of William Bradshaw’s knowledge and opinions intensified.

Until recently, as Professor of Music at The Australian National University School of Music, I taught fortepiano at the institution that (in its former guise as the Canberra School of Music—a community of enquirers infused with ‘a relentless spirit of creativity’⁴²—where ‘learning had no end in view except its own furtherance’)⁴³ prepared me so well for a fulfilling professional life. The memory of those transforming hours spent with Bradshaw’s pianos was conscripted into the service of a private dream. I was privileged to play the pianos in Australia’s largest public working collection of historical keyboard instruments, a collection I assembled at the university in the hope that the lives of students and music lovers might be transformed (as was mine) by the utter beauty of the sound of eighteenth and nineteenth-century keyboard instruments. My ardent hope is that these instruments will survive the stealth and prideful ignorance of any whose obsession with money and hunger for power undermines educative philosophy, integrity, decency, courtesy, ideas of the beautiful or deep truth. All too often it seems the oppressions of corporate governance have their origins in small minds and cruel hearts. The craving for worldly goals is a false substitute for true existential need, union with God,⁴⁴ and it comes as no surprise that music mystifies and intimidates those who ‘are so blind that they are … [unaware] that they … [live] in darkness’.⁴⁵

Investigation

It has long been thought that the first piano to be brought to Australia had been forever lost in a miasma of oblivion. This is not surprising. ‘The casualty rate of late 18th century square pianos is notoriously high. This is the result of a combination of changing fashion, advances in relation to sound, touch

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⁴¹ The ‘First Fleet’ is the name commonly given to the British convoy, comprising 11 ships, which sailed from Portsmouth, UK, on Sunday, 13 May 1787, to establish a colony at Botany Bay in Australia. On arriving at Botany Bay, the ‘area was deemed to be unsuitable for settlement so … [the fleet] moved north arriving at Port Jackson [later called Sydney] … on 26 January 1788’. C. Dunn and M. McCreadie, Australia’s First Fleet—1788, in IFHAA Shipping Pages: The Founders of a Nation (Last modified 20 March 2006).


⁴³ James, Cultural Amnesia, p. xxiv.


⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 112.
and design, and the space generally available in the home.’46 (For any musical instrument, the voyage from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries can be a perilous one; square pianos especially need the buoyancy of good fortune to survive.)47 As a consequence, researchers (in the absence of an actual instrument, and perhaps because of indifference) have not tracked the history of Australia’s first piano past its being owned by George Bouchier Worgan (1757–1838)—a London-born naval surgeon serving aboard the flagship of the First Fleet, the Sirius—and Worgan giving the instrument as a gift to Elizabeth Macarthur (1766–1850) in 1791. I am in agreement with the eminent music historian Thérèse Radic (b. 1935), who observes: ‘For the most part … [Australian] historians ignore music. They find space for literature and the visual arts … but they shy off any serious consideration of music as a central cultural manifestation. Music enters into our older histories at the margins.’48 Perhaps this is because of the unintentional influence of those musicologists who—having shamed themselves and their calling by a reluctance to engage with the wider academic community—have failed to assert that ‘theirs is not marginal material but rather that music is central to the human condition’.49 (‘In a world in which we struggle for understanding we cannot afford to overlook what music has to offer, and this means active engagement with it, not a fastidious and melancholy withdrawal.’)50 It may also be so because of a fear of the power of music—the power of meaning.

Music ‘is not a plaything, but a necessity, and its essence, form, is not a decorative adjustment, but a cup into which life can be poured and lifted to the lips and be tasted’.51 As Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944) observed, art—especially music—‘remains silent to those who do not wish to listen to form’.52 After all:

[Music] is good for us. Period. It is good for the soul. It is good for human tolerance. It frees our minds. It reinforces our capacity to feel and understand.

51 West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, p. 55.
Music, and the devotion to beauty it represents, releases some of the most positive, noble and life-affirming feelings that humans are capable of.\(^{53}\)

Of all the pianos made during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, only 2 to 4 per cent have survived.\(^ {54}\) A plethora of these, representing a wide cross-section of the piano's varying developmental incarnations, can be found in Australia. The demand for piano-based music making within the contexts of Australian private and community life during the nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth centuries, Australia's nineteenth-century economic prosperity and the importation of culturally significant pianos by several antiques dealers and collectors have all ensured that our nation is a treasure-trove of pianos. These pianos constitute an important and irreplaceable part of Australia's movable cultural heritage.\(^ {55}\)

Some piano collectors (reflecting the enthusiasms of the amateur rather than the discrimination of the professional researcher) privately claim that a particular instrument in their collection is the first piano to have been brought to Australia. ('There is … an understandable desire among collectors to possess instruments that are unique in some respect. Most prized would be the only example of some interesting type, but, failing that, the oldest.'\(^ {56}\)) In one instance, a specific design element strongly reinforces the validity of the claim.

In a house in Ermington, Sydney, a piano made in 1780/86\(^ {57}\) by the London-based piano maker Frederick Beck (1738 – ca 1798)\(^ {58}\) sits unobtrusively in the entrance hallway. The instrument is a typical example of an English square piano of the era, except for two distinguishing features: uncharacteristically, the instrument has hinged cabriole legs, and these are incorporated into a campaign furniture-inspired stand\(^ {59}\)—unprecedented features in a piano of the time.

This instrument was once part of the vast collection of William Bradshaw, who not only sold the piano to its current owner, the reputable interior designer and


\(^{55}\) The whereabouts of these instruments today has not been charted comprehensively. Many of the rarest examples have survived in this country because they have been forgotten, and therefore remain in original condition.


\(^{57}\) See, 'Date', in Chapter 2, this volume.

\(^{58}\) The dates of Frederick Beck's birth and death are unknown (see 'Frederick Beck', in Chapter 2, this volume). The dates provided reflect those given in M. Cranmer, 'Beck, Frederick', in Oxford Music Online (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007–13).

\(^{59}\) See 'A Unique Stand' and 'Campaign Furniture', in Chapter 2, this volume. See also 'A Rival First Fleet Piano?', in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
fortepiano aficionado Stewart Symonds (b. 1937), but in so doing, informed him that the instrument had been brought to Botany Bay by surgeon George Bouchier Worgan on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*. Bradshaw recounted that the recurring mantra uttered by generations of mothers to their children in the family from whom he had purchased the instrument was ‘be careful … it came out with the First Fleet’. This book provides, for the first time, a comprehensive set of measurements and photographs of this particular piano.

Given the existence of these tantalising clues (the unique hinged legs, campaign-furniture-inspired stand and Bradshaw’s remarks), I entertained the possibility, upon examining the instrument, that I had encountered and could verify the existence of the First Fleet piano. Where subsequent paths of inquiry led me constitutes the substance of this book: at best the tome supports supposition that the 1780/86? Beck square piano is the instrument that George Worgan brought to Botany Bay in 1788. At the very least, it makes known that a rare and magnificent square piano made in 1780/86? by Frederick Beck exists in Australia.

This book represents the first time that aspects of the piano’s developmental history, as well as the instrument’s role in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century English society, have been used as a springboard from which is explored the history of the first piano to be brought to Australia. This book also seeks to encourage an understanding of what owning the first piano to be brought to Australia may have entailed.

As we grow older and see the ends of stories as well as their beginnings, we realize that to the people who take part in them it is almost of greater importance that they should be stories, that they should form a recognizable pattern, than that they should be happy or tragic.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the First Fleet piano was played and heard by individuals who were closely associated with a defining era in Australia’s history. Reflecting the truism that ‘nothing is insignificant in the history of a young community, and—above all—nothing

60 Symonds, a close friend of Bradshaw, was the executor of his estate.
61 Stewart Symonds reiterated this information within the context of many conversations held with the author.
62 See Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
63 The instrument is one of what may be only 32 extant pianos by Frederick Beck. See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
64 *West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 55.
seems impossible’.65 stories from their lives are told in the hope that light may be shed, however obliquely, on the circumstances within which the First Fleet piano contributed its unique enrichments to the quality of their daily life.

It is tempting to look back on Australia’s colonial history simply as ‘the actions of men and women [with whom] we cannot identify’ and whose ‘motives we do not really understand. It is emotionally easier and … more convenient to inquire no further.’66 The story of the First Fleet piano, however, is not a remote one. Rather, it is intimate, immensely rich, real and worthy of serious and sustained attention.

Tradition only whispers, for a short time, the name and abilities of a mere Performer, however exquisite the delight which his talents afforded to those who heard him; whereas … [ideas] once committed to paper and established, live … at least in libraries, as long as the language in which … [they are] written.67

My fervent hope is that this book (apart from acting as a catalyst for further research) will long encourage celebration of our nation’s cultural roots and colonial history, as the story of the foundation of Australia’s rich and intriguing pianistic past unfolds.

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Chapter 1

In his introduction to Federation: Australian Arts and Society 1901–2001, John McDonald writes: Australians reserve their highest admiration for sportsmen and women, followed by entertainers and actors. Political leaders appear well down the scale of public affection, and it is further still before one encounters any artists, musicians or writers. Piano makers and professional concert pianists are rarely mentioned, nor consistently celebrated.

Many Australians are unaware of the complex and pervasive pianistic history that makes up a large part of our nation’s musical heritage. Widespread ignorance often produces a devastating reality: old pianos are thrown onto the rubbish dump or converted into writing desks, dressing tables, bookcases or bars (a vandalism that thoughtlessly destroys a wealth of historical information). ‘In the land that is a nursery for hedonistic abandon, where nothing is taken more seriously than sport, and where spiritual pleasures are subsumed both by physical ones and the accumulation of material wealth’, awareness of, let alone concern for, the preservation of pianos that survive from those that were either brought into Australia between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries or manufactured in Australia by Australian piano makers appears to be the furthest thing from the interests of most people. The gulf between the past and the present has never been wider.

During the nineteenth century, however, many Australians (especially women) appear to have regarded the piano as an indispensable part of life; the isolation experienced by a considerable number of pioneers was often a catalyst for piano ownership. In his Hints for Intending Missionaries and Emigrants, the Reverend Henry Hanson Turton (1818–87) observes (somewhat typically for a nineteenth-century man of the cloth): ‘if your wife is anything of a performer … [a piano] will provide a valuable and cheerful companion in a foreign land.’ Other nineteenth-century Englishmen also urged emigrants to take a piano with them to foreign climes. In 1856, for example, Edward Brown Fitton (?–?), a landowner and magistrate in Canterbury, New Zealand, advises:

4 McDonald, ‘From Gallipoli to Homebush Bay’, p. 1.
5 Quoted in J. MacGibbon, Piano in the Parlour: When the Piano was New Zealand’s Home Entertainment Centre (Wellington: Ngaio Press, 2007), pp. 11–12.
If a lady were hesitating whether to pay the freight for her piano or a chest of drawers, I would decidedly recommend her to prefer the piano. It will afford more gratification and cheerfulness from the associations aroused by its music than can be supplied by more practically useful furniture, for which, after all, it is easy to get a substitute from any skilful colonial carpenter.

In 1861, Charles Hursthouse (1817–76), a colonist at New Plymouth, New Zealand, remarks: ‘I would advise any fair emigrant to take a piano with her as part of her battery of charms.’

Pianos have always been voices of culture and civility. Some symbolise the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century ideal of ‘accomplished’ femininity (English ‘women [virtuoso] pianists were rarely outshone by their male counterparts’); others represent pinnacles of human achievement in relation to design, manufacture and sound; some reflect the focus of middle-class hearth and home; whilst others reveal working-class aspirations.

The Australian musicologist Roger Covell (1967–) observed that the values and priorities of the middle class

rarely expressed themselves with more touching gallantry and tenacity than in the sacrifices and discomforts endured by countless families in order to bring this cumbersome symbol of higher values to their chosen home in small unstable ships and on grinding bullock drays.

Such ‘tenacity’, ‘sacrifices and discomforts’ are alluded to, for example, in the diary of Annabella Boswell (née Innes) (1826–1916), whose life was full of dancing to the playing of bagpipes … long horse rides and walks with picnics … bathing, dinner parties and gardening.

In March 1838, Annabella speaks of spending several months at ‘The White Rock, near Bathurst’, in New South Wales. She comments on the condition of the road leading to White Rock, by stating that ‘nothing could be worse than this road’. Given the notoriously bad condition of roads around Bathurst

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7 Quoted in MacGibbon, Piano in the Parlour, p. 12.
11 Ibid., p. iii.
12 Ibid., p. 21.
13 Ibid., p. 22.
during the 1830s, it is not surprising that Annabella also writes the following: ‘At this time we got a piano. A most laborious business it was conveying it.’\(^{14}\) (Annabella had put aside her guitar in favour of the piano, despite the fact that, as she wrote: ‘I am getting on very well with the guitar, and can play several long pieces, besides three pretty waltzes and the accompaniments for three songs.’\(^{15}\) I assure you I never look off the book now when I am playing.’\(^{16}\)

The owners of pianos were not the only ones to suffer because of the inconveniences associated with extreme conditions and piano moving. The instruments themselves sometimes had more than a hard time of it. Writing from Augusta in Western Australia on Wednesday, 7 November 1832, Georgiana Molloy (1805–43) mentioned that she had to rub oil into the case veneer of her piano ‘as the heat has rather warped it’.\(^{17}\) Sarah Harriet Selwyn (1809–1907), wife of George Augustus Selwyn (1809–78), the first Anglican bishop of New Zealand, complained, for example, that her ‘poor dear Piano … came, perforce in a wagon over such a road! It had a nest of ferns to soften its fate, but the keys are much loosened and the treble is in a bad state.’\(^{18}\) In 1845, the grazier John Everett (1816–1902)\(^{19}\) wrote: ‘Within the last few years many ladies have ventured to try the bush life, and none I think regret the experiment; on each side of us, and far beyond us, petticoats are to be found, and pianos … considerably out of tune. I don’t think drays and stony ranges improved musical instruments.’\(^{20}\)

In some instances, pianos were completely ruined during transport. In 1846, the pastoralist Stewart Marjoribanks Mowle (who ‘was dedicated to singing and

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\(^{15}\) In a letter written at ‘a boarding school in Bridge Street, Sydney … [on Saturday, 16 April 1836] to her uncle, Major Innes at Lake Innes, Port Macquarie’, Annabella states that she can ‘play the accompaniment to “Ye Banks and Braes”, “Ah Vousdirais”, “Rondo”, and a few other little airs’. P. Clarke and D. Spender (eds), Life Lines: Australian Women’s Letters and Diaries, 1788–1840 (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1992), pp. 177, 178. Clarke and Spender take the quotation from: A. A. C. D. Boswell, Early Recollections and Clearings, from an Old Journal or Some Recollections of My Early Days Written at Different Periods (No publisher, 1908), p. 19.

\(^{16}\) Quoted in Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 178.

\(^{17}\) Quoted in J. W. C. Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid: Leisure Times in Early Australia (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire/Reed, 1979), p. 199.


\(^{19}\) ‘John Everett arrived at Sydney in October 1838 in the Hope, and later squatted at Ollera (sweet water) fourteen miles (22 km) from Guyra, in the New England district’ of northern New South Wales. Alan V. Cane, ‘Everett, John (1816–1902)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University) [first published in hardcopy in Australian Dictionary of Biography (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1972), Vol. 4].

music’).

21 Cumes, *Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid*, p. 329. ‘Mowle had a difficult and materially unrewarding life but he continued with those things that gave him real pleasure, mostly riding and singing and going to good parties with good friends.’ Ibid., p. 243.


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… As H. A. Bruce commented in an address at the Swansea Musical Festival in 1864, the promotion of music amongst the working classes 'has induced them frequently to desert the public-house, and to seek for some higher and better occupation. And no occupation surely can be purer, or free from anything like dangerous influences, or more successful in its results than the … cultivation of music.'

In 1892, the poet, novelist and radical commentator Francis William Adams (1862–93) observed that urban tradesmen often owned 'a small, iron-framed, time-payment piano, on which his daughters, returning ... from the local "public school" ... discoursed popular airs with a powerful manual execution'.

In the same year, Francis Campbell Brewer, the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* between 1865 and 1877, wrote: 'The Australians are a very musical people, and in Sydney particularly ... it is not inappropriate to call Sydney the "City of Pianos".'

From the late eighteenth century, the love of, and desire for, the piano spread from England across the world with incredible speed, consistently meeting with approval in the highest intellectual quarters. The American philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) observed approvingly, 'Tis wonderful how soon a piano gets into a log-hut on the frontier', ratifying the instrument’s position as the symbol of respectability and sophistication. Emerson’s evocative prose paints a compelling picture:

[W]itnessthe mute all-hail  
The joyful traveller gives, when on the verge  
Of craggy Indian wilderness he hears  
From a log-cabin stream Beethoven’s notes  
On the piano, played with master’s hands.

During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the piano represented a cultural and social symbol such as no musical instrument had before.

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The First Piano to be Brought to Australia

History shows that the arrival of a piano with the First Fleet at Botany Bay was prophetic. Not only did the instrument highlight the importance and role of music in the lives of the first settlers, but it also served as a herald for notions of musical idealism and entertainment that inspired ensuing generations of Australian piano lovers.

The first piano to be brought to Australia was a small rectangular instrument, a so-called ‘square’ piano. Square pianos superficially resemble an ‘unfretted’ (‘fret-free’) clavichord. Like clavichords, square pianos appear as an oblong, fairly shallow box, open at the top (closed by a lid), with an inset keyboard at the front long-side of the instrument, a soundboard at the treble end, and horizontal strings running obliquely, above up-striking hammers, from the back of the instrument at the bass end to the front at the treble end (the bass strings being nearest to the player), the strings passing over the soundboard. Square pianos, like clavichords, are usually ‘double-strung’—that is, each note has two adjacent strings tuned to the same pitch.

Two extant instruments contend for the title ‘First Fleet piano’

1. a square piano made in 1780/86? by the London-based, German-born (?) piano maker Frederick Beck, inscribed Frederickus Beck Londini Fecit 1780 / No. 4 and 10 Broad Street Soho


Since there was only one piano on board the Sirius as the ship made its way to Botany Bay, there can only be one First Fleet piano. Claims that either of these two instruments is the First Fleet piano are based substantially on provenance details originating in hearsay. Given that hearsay inevitably comprises a constructed interpretation (whether conscious or not) and is never an artless recollection, there are both tension and interaction between the histories of

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30 See ‘Clavichord’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication. Clavichords built with the possibility for each of several adjacent key levers to strike a string-course (two or more adjacent strings tuned to the same pitch) at different places, each adjacent key lever producing a different note from its neighbour, are called ‘fretted’ clavichords. Clavichords in which each string-course is only ever struck by a single key lever are designated as ‘unfretted’ or ‘fret-free’. See B. Brauchli, The Clavichord (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.

31 See ‘Up-Striking Hammers’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.

32 This definition is based on one found in Clarke, ‘The English Piano’, pp. 254–5.

33 See Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.

34 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

the two instruments, and the provenance details associated with each raise so many unanswered (and perhaps unanswerable) questions that a conclusive identification of the First Fleet piano is thwarted.

With the importance of historical context in mind, however, and when placed within the framework of evidence based on hearsay, the unique hinged cabriole legs and campaign-furniture-inspired stand of the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano represent the strongest evidence supporting speculation that the instrument was brought to Botany Bay by George Bouchier Worgan in 1788. The author favours this speculation. Mindful that I am ‘answerable to the giver of all data for the accuracy of … [my] observations’ and that my ‘interpretations are vulnerable to error’,36 for the purposes of this study, the Beck square piano of 1780/86? will be referred to as: ‘George Worgan’s piano’; ‘George Worgan’s square piano’; ‘George Worgan’s Beck piano’; ‘George Worgan’s Beck square piano’; ‘George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano’; ‘George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano’; ‘Worgan’s piano’; ‘Worgan’s square piano’; ‘Worgan’s Beck piano’; ‘Worgan’s Beck square piano’; ‘Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano’; ‘Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano’; or ‘the First Fleet piano’.

Worgan’s square piano was one of many made in London towards the end of the eighteenth century within the context of a raging enthusiasm for such instruments, and exemplifies the redefinition of piano design that took place in London between the mid-1760s and 1780s. This redefinition comprised innovations made in relation to design, sound and touch, and was the result (in large part) of the influence of several London-based piano makers who had emigrated from Germany. These emigrants included Frederick Beck.

Frederick Beck’s pianos were the consequence of a long history of the piano in London. This history is outlined below.

The Piano in London

The First Pianos in London

The history of the piano in London is ‘like a great tree whose roots reach … back’ to the 1730s. During the eighteenth century, it bore ‘many fruits: some … mouldered where they fell, some … sprouted shoots of their own, and some … were picked and carried many miles away to feed the souls of … [music lovers] in far distant lands’.37

Two of the first pianos ever seen in England were what we would now refer to as ‘grand’ pianos. The term ‘grand’ was first coined in London by Robert Stodart in his 1777 patent for a ‘grand Piano-forte’. Stodart’s patent application describes his invention of a new sort of Instrument or of Grand Fortepiano with an Octave Swell and to produce various Tones together or separate and the … Instrument will be more durable and produce finer and more variable Tones than any yet made.

Stodart’s grand piano was an instrument with up-striking hammer action modified to incorporate the plucking action of a harpsichord. It is not known whether Stodart ever made one of these ‘grand’ combination pianos. Stodart’s earliest surviving grand piano without an added harpsichord action is dated 1781.

Documentary evidence dating from 1716 through to 1792 reveals that combined hammer and plucking-action keyboard instruments existed throughout most of the eighteenth century. ‘What may appear as a specialized’ development involving both aesthetic and design ‘issues is often only really comprehensible as the specific form of’ the resolution of ‘a larger problem’. The emergence of combined hammer and plucking-action keyboard instruments suggests that

1. there was a need for expressive instruments—that is, instruments capable of producing a variety of timbres and dynamics
2. there was a perceived congruity between an instrument that put a wide range of sounds at the command of a single player and the concept of ‘unity

41 See ‘Up-Striking Hammers’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
42 See M. Latcham, ‘The Apotheosis of Merlin’, in M. Latcham (ed.), Musique ancienne—instruments et imagination. Actes des Rencontres Internationales harmoniques, Lausanne 2004 (Berne: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 276–84. There are nine extant such combination instruments: 1) dated 1746, made by Giovanni Ferrini (d. 1758) (owner: Luigi-Ferdinando Tagliavini Collection, Bologna, Italy); 2) dated 1763, made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (owner: Giuliani Collection, Briosco, Italy); 3) undated, made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (attribution) (owner: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany, inv. no. MINE 105); 4) undated (before 1779), made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (attribution) (owner: Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin, Germany, inv. no. 2165); 5) undated, made by Johann Ludwig Hellen (attribution) (private ownership, France); 6) dated 1777, made by Johann Andreas Stein (attribution) (owner: Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona, Italy); 7) dated 1783, made by Johann Andreas Stein (owner: Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella, Naples, Italy); 8) dated 1777, made by Tadeus Tornel (owner: Museo Arqueológico, Murcia, Spain, inv. no. 2257); and 9) dated 1792, made by James Davies (owner: Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, USA, inv. no. 315, 718). See Latcham, ‘The Apotheosis of Merlin’, pp. 279–84.
in variety’—a paradigm contemporaneously regarded as a ‘microcosmic
reflection of a varied universe under the seeing eye of a single deity’ 44
3. ingenuity and inventiveness were valued.45

Although the first two grand pianos seen in England have not survived, it
is reasonable to assume that they would have looked much like Italian-style
harpsichords. They were probably modelled on the arpicembalo che fa il piano
e il forte (‘harp-harpsichord that has the soft and the loud’) of the Paduan-born
Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1731; 1732 according to the modern calendar).46

The term arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte was first used to describe a particular
keyboard instrument in an inventory, taken in Florence in 1700, of the musical
instruments owned by Cristofori’s employer, Grand Prince Ferdinando de’
Medici of Tuscany (1663–1713). (Ferdinando ‘was one of the great patrons in
musical history, reportedly a gifted musician, an excellent harpsichordist and a
singer of skill and charm’.)47 The inventory lists the instrument as arpicembalo
di Bartolomeo Cristofori, di nuova inventione, che fa il piano e il forte (‘harp-
harpsichord by Bartolomeo Cristofori, of new invention, which has the soft and
the loud’). The name ‘arpicembalo’, combining the words for ‘harp’ (arpa) and
‘harpsichord’ (cimbalo), gives an indication of how the character of the sound of
the newly invented instrument may initially have been perceived.

In the winter of 1688, Ferdinando travelled from his home (the Pitti Palace in
Florence) to attend the Carnival festivities in Venice. The prince, who had a
shaky marriage and a ‘roving eye … enjoyed himself thoroughly’. He probably
‘met Cristofori on his way back home’ during March or April 1688.48 The timing
was perfect. Antonio Bolgioni, Ferdinando’s resident harpsichord maker and
tuner, had died in February. As a consequence, the prince found himself in need
of someone not only to service his large collection of instruments in Florence,
but also to tune harpsichords for ‘the upcoming musical events at Pratolino, the
Prince’s summer residence’49 (within which context Ferdinando’s harpsichord
tuner received bonus payments).50 Although no evidence exists to support
the notion, it is possible that ‘while passing through Padua … [Ferdinando] heard about a talented 33-year-old local instrument builder and technician, Cristofori’.\textsuperscript{51} Some years later, Cristofori recounted that when Ferdinando first offered him employment at the Florentine court, ‘the prince was told that I did not wish to go … he replied that he would make me want to … Ferdinando … returned home with two things of significance … the future inventor of the piano and the venereal disease that would eventually claim his life’.\textsuperscript{52}

‘The earliest official mention of Cristofori’s presence at [Ferdinando’s] court is a record dated’ Friday, 30 April 1688.\textsuperscript{53} Following 10 years of part-time employment at the prince’s court, Cristofori was promoted to full-time status in 1698. This promotion may have been associated with a commission to build a piano; if so, Cristofori may have made his first arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte sometime during the very late 1690s.

The Medici musical inventory of 1700 contains detailed descriptions of 35 stringed keyboard instruments. These 35 instruments are conventional harpsichords, spinets and clavichords; it seems unlikely that any of these instruments would have inspired Cristofori to create his arpicembalo.\textsuperscript{54}

Grand Prince Ferdinando de’ Medici was a cultivated and enthusiastic patron of painting and the decorative arts … [He] also appreciated ivory carving and turning, as well as horology—over forty clocks are listed in an inventory made after his death [in 1713], including some with musical mechanisms. Ferdinando’s interest in complex mechanical devices of all kinds may have led him to support Cristofori’s experimentation with the piano.\textsuperscript{55}

By 1711, Cristofori had made three pianos: two were sold in Florence, and one had been given, in 1709, as a gift from Grand Prince Ferdinando to the greatest patron of the arts of his generation, Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740) in Rome.\textsuperscript{56} We know this from a detailed contemporaneous description of Cristofori’s arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte written by the poet, librettist and playwright Marchese Scipione Maffei (1675–1755). Maffei’s description, published in 1711 in

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 22.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Pollens, The Early Pianoforte, p. 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} See ibid., p. 49.
  \item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 49.
\end{itemize}
the *Giornale di Litterati d’Italia*, is the fruit of ‘the earliest known interview of a musical instrument maker’. In 1709, Maffei saw three of Cristofori’s ingenious new pianos. From Maffei’s description, it becomes clear that he had spent time with Cristofori looking at the new instruments (Cristofori must have taken the action out of the pianos in order to show Maffei how they worked).

It is from Maffei’s published description that we get the name now commonly used in association with Cristofori’s pianos: *gravicembalo col piano e forte* (‘large harpsichord with soft and loud’).

Except for their [hammer] actions … [Cristofori’s] pianos were generally quite similar to harpsichords.

… This is not to deny Cristofori’s several brilliant innovations, such as the inverted wrest plank and the doubling of the bent side to separate the functions of holding the hitch pins and the soundboard … The shape of the cases of his pianos, their scaling, and the structure of their soundboards are, however, quite similar to those of Cristofori’s harpsichords.

It is not known how precisely the first two grand pianos seen in England replicated Cristofori’s design.

**Samuel Crisp’s Piano, Made by Father Wood**

During the 1730s or early 1740s, the cultivated littérateur Samuel Crisp (1707–83), ‘a man of learning and a man of exquisite taste in all the arts’, returned from Italy to England with a piano.

Samuel Crisp was

a scholar of the highest order; a critic of the clearest acumen; possessing, with equal delicacy of discrimination, a taste for literature and for the arts; and personally excelling as a dilettante both in music and painting.

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58 Pollens, *The Early Pianoforte*, p. 56.


60 C. Burney, ‘Harpsichord’, in A. Rees (ed.), *The Cyclopædia, or Universal Directory of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, 39 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1819), Vol. 18, n.p. Burney’s entries were completed in ca 1803. ‘The relevant volume of the *Cyclopædia* did not come out until 1811 and the whole encyclopaedia was given the official publication date of 1819 (the year in which the last volume was completed).’ Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 7.
He was the author of ... [an unsuccessful] tragedy called *Virginia*, and several poetical effusions in the magazines of the day. He ... took up his residence at Hampton; where he fitted up a small house with paintings, prints, sculpture, and musical instruments, arranged with the most classical elegance.\textsuperscript{61}

According to the English music historian Dr Charles Burney (1726–1814), Crisp’s piano ‘remained unique in this country for several years’.\textsuperscript{62} Burney recounts that the instrument was made in Rome by an expatriate English monk, Father Wood, who was a friend of Samuel Crisp.\textsuperscript{63} Nothing is known of Father Wood, and unfortunately ‘there is no record of anyone called Wood’ being enrolled at the esteemed English College in Rome ‘in the period 1700–1740’.\textsuperscript{64} Father Wood’s piano may have been modelled on Cristofori’s instruments; perhaps in Rome, Father Wood had seen and/or heard the Cristofori piano that had been given as a gift by Grand Prince Ferdinando de’ Medici to Cardinal Ottoboni.

It was not unknown for clerics to make keyboard instruments. For example, in 1702, the Lazarist priest Theodoric Pedrini (1671–1746) was sent to China to be a court musician to Emperor K’ang Hsi (1654–1722); as well as teaching music to members of the imperial family, he made harpsichords and organs.\textsuperscript{65} From Peking (Beijing), Pedrini wrote to Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci (1651–1726), the Secretary of State to Pope Clement XI (1649–1721) and Pope Benedict XIII (1649–1730):

Nobody was ever more liked by the Emperor than me ... so that he started to praise me, and went on for many years with several presents, calling me to his presence several times, and taking me to high esteem ... [The emperor] also used to write music notes, and ... we often played together the same harpsichord, each with one hand.\textsuperscript{66}

It is not known whether Father Wood made any other pianos apart from the one that Samuel Crisp brought from Italy to London.

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\textsuperscript{61} E. F. Rimbault, *The Pianoforte, Its Origins, Progress & Construction: With Some Account of Instruments of the Same Class which Preceded it Viz. the Clavichord, the Virginal, the Spinet, the Harpsichord, etc.* (London: Robert Cocks & Co., 1860), pp. 130–1, fn. Rimbault rewrote Charles Burney’s account of Samuel Crisp and his piano without acknowledging Burney as his source. See Burney, ‘Harpsichord’. ‘Rimbault ascribes the story to “tradition”’ (Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 7).

\textsuperscript{62} Burney, ‘Harpsichord’.

\textsuperscript{63} See ibid. Burney does not provide a date for the importation into England of Samuel Crisp’s Father Wood piano.


Chapter 1

Fulke Greville Purchases Samuel Crisp’s Piano

Possibly during the mid-1740s, the wealthy aristocrat, Member of Parliament, High Sheriff of Wiltshire and man of fashion Fulke Greville (1717–1806) purchased Samuel Crisp’s piano ‘for the enormous sum of 100 guineas’.

The instrument’s price was approximately twice the cost of a good harpsichord; this is not surprising, given the uniqueness in England of Crisp’s piano.

Greville was generally looked upon as the finest gentleman about town. He excelled ... in all the fashionable exercises, riding, fencing, hunting, shooting at a mark, dancing, tennis, &c. and worked every day at every one of them with a fury for pre-eminence not equalled, perhaps, in ardour for superiority in personal accomplishments since the days of the chivalrous Lord Herbert of Cherbury [1583–1648]. He travelled in a style that was even princely; not only from his equipages, out-riders, horses, and liveries, but from constantly having two of his attendants skilled in playing the French horn; and these were always stationed to recreate him with marches and warlike movements on the outside of the windows, when he took any repast.

Fulke Greville housed Crisp’s piano at his country mansion, Wilbury House, near Newton Toney, in Wiltshire.

In 1746, Greville asked the harpsichord maker Jacob Kirckman (1710–92) to find him a music teacher and companion ‘who had a mind and cultivation, as well as finger and ear’. Kirckman recommended someone who was to become one of eighteenth-century England’s most important music historians, Charles Burney. In 1747, the 21-year-old Burney was employed as Greville’s music-master-in-residence, subsequently living in Greville’s Wilbury House between 1748 and 1749.

That Wilbury House was located in the countryside may have been irksome for Charles Burney, who (it appears) preferred city living. In 1744 (three years before starting his employment under Fulke Greville), Burney (at 18 years of age) had been brought to London as an apprentice to the leading English composer...
Thomas Arne (1710–78). Burney ‘soon embedded himself in the musical life of the capital as Arne’s copyist, occasional composer, and free-lance violinist and harpsichordist, while keeping detailed notes on concerts and performers, which formed the basis of the later chapters of his General History’. Samuel Crisp (who became a close friend of Burney) described London as ‘the centre of riches, luxury, taste, pride, extravagance—all that ingenuity is to fatten upon’. It appears that Burney found London, with all its stimulations and failings, enticing. Although he was a Shropshire lad (having been born in Shrewsbury), ‘late in life, Burney decried [William] Wordsworth’s [1770–1850] paeans to rural solitude as inimical to civil society. The countryside held no romance for Burney.’

Burney’s favourite poet was Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi (1698–1782), commonly known by his pseudonym, Metastasio. Metastasio held sentiments similar to Burney’s concerning the countryside. In a letter dated Wednesday, 30 November 1768, written to the castrato singer Carlo Maria Broschi (1705–82), whose stage name was Farinelli, Metastasio advised the famous singer to avoid the autumnal exhalations, and the poisonous vapours of a great part of … [the] country … the air of paved cities is much less impregnated with this poison, not only from the exhalations of the earth being impeded, but from the numerous and constant fires, as well as the motions of the inhabitants, which agitate and correct the air.

(Burney and Metastasio were not alone in their dislike of the natural environment. For example, the French painter François Boucher (1703–70) complained that nature was ‘too green, and badly lit’; the biologist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–88), was determined to mould nature according to his personal taste: ‘Brute Nature is hideous and dying; I, and I alone, can render her pleasant and living.’)

Although Charles Burney may appear to today’s champions of ideological correctness as being both ‘ecologically challenged … [and] shockingly insensitive to eternal aesthetic values’, he did manage to cast aside any negative feelings that may have emerged as the result of his employment within a rural context at

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74 Quoted in V. Patten, Chawton House Library and Early Women’s Writing—Women Writers: Frances Burney (1752–1840).
76 Burney translated and published the treasure-trove of letters written by Metastasio to his close friend Carlo Maria Broschi (1705–82), the famous castrato singer, commonly known by his stage name, Farinelli.
77 Quoted in Heartz, Music in European Capitals, p. xxii.
78 Quoted in ibid., p. xxii.
79 Quoted in ibid., p. xxii.
80 Ibid., p. xxii.
Wilbury House. In his memoirs, Burney reveals not only that he subsequently enjoyed the advantage of moving in the best circles of society, but also that he was able to spend many hours practising on Fulke Greville’s piano.

It appears that Greville’s piano had several pronounced weaknesses, as well as strengths. Burney observed that ‘the touch was very imperfect, and the mechanism clumsy; so that nothing but slow movements … could be executed on it’. Burney’s description makes it clear that Greville’s piano was not an exact version of Cristofori’s, whose pianos contain an action that is subtle, precise, reliable and efficient.

Although ‘nothing but slow movements could be executed on it’, Burney remarks that the tone of Greville’s piano ‘was … superior to that produced by quills’—that is, by a harpsichord. The salient tonal beauty of Greville’s piano created a context within which slow movements ‘and other solemn and pathetic strains when executed with taste and feeling by a master … accustomed to the touch, excited equal wonder and delight in the hearers’.

### Rutgerus Plenius Copies Fulke Greville’s Piano

Fulke Greville’s piano became celebrated. As a consequence, in ca 1747,

Rutgerus (or Roger) Plenius (originally Pleunis) (1696–1774), a harpsichord maker from the Low Countries who was resident [in 1736] at South Audley Street, Grosvenor Square ['ye King’s Arms being over ye Door'] proposed to make an improved version [of Greville’s piano], and was given permission to copy the [instrument].

After playing Plenius’ copy, Burney stated that ‘the touch was better, but the tone very much inferior’. Plenius asked Burney to give a public demonstration of his piano copy, but Burney declined on the grounds that he ‘had other employ’. 

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82 Burney, ‘Harpischord’.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
wch I liked better than that of a shew-man’. Burney’s uncharacteristically sardonic response lacks kindness and grace. Demonstrating keyboard instruments, however, was nothing new to Burney, who ‘had been closely connected with the Kirckman workshop. From a small preserved fragment of Burney’s intended autobiography it is known that as a young man he demonstrated their harpsichords to potential clients’—an activity that, it appears, he found odious.

Plenius was ‘unable to generate sufficient interest in his instruments’, and ‘failing to rescue his finances by running a raffle’, he ‘was declared bankrupt in 1756, at which point his stock’, including his piano copy, was ‘sold … at auction’. From this moment, the fate of Plenius’ piano copy (described at auction as a ‘Piano piece’) is shrouded in mystery. (Two ‘Forte Pianos’, presumably made by Plenius, were in Plenius’ workshop in 1756. ‘So London musicians and connoisseurs had opportunity to buy pianofortes during the 1750s though no record of their use in concerts has been found.’)

After Plenius’ bankrupting in 1756, his eldest son, Johann (John) Christian (1720–75), continued in the harpsichord-making business (in 1737, John was apprenticed to his father, and, having successfully completed his training, later worked as a journeyman).

In 1763, Thomas Mortimer’s (1730–1810) *The Universal Director* lists Plenius (without a Christian name) as ‘Harpsichord-maker. Catherine Street, Strand.’ This maker is one of the sons of Roger Plenius (possibly his son John).

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89 Klima et al., *The Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney 1726–1796*, p. 73.
91 Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, p. 44.
93 Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, p. 44.
94 Ibid., p. 45.
95 See *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 11 December 1756, No. 4755, p. 3.
97 See ibid., fn 9, 20.
98 T. Mortimer, *The Universal Director; Or, the Nobleman and Gentleman’s True Guide to the Masters and Professors of the Liberal and Polite Arts and Sciences; And of the Mechanic Arts, Manufactures, and Trades, Established in London and Westminster, and their Environs* [London: J. Coote, 1763] [Canberra: National Library of Australia. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale Cengage Learning*].
99 Ibid., p. 52. See *The Public Advertiser*, 23 August 1763, No. 8981. See also ‘Catherine St.’, in *A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster*, Map Section: northernmost extent Lambs Conduit Fields and southernmost extent Lambeth.
100 Plenius’ son Rutgerus Plenius (1729–?) ‘is known to have been working with his father and brother John in the 1740s’. ‘Roger Plenius (1696–1774)’, in Debenham and Cole, ‘Pioneer Piano Makers in London’, Appendix 4. Another of Plenius’ sons, Joseph (?–?), made harpsichords at 89 High Holborn, London, between 1785 and 1790. See ibid.
A letter written at Mount Vernon, USA, by George Washington (1732–99) to John Didsbury, ‘a boot maker in London who had made shoes for Washington in the 1750s’, dated Monday, 12 October 1761, contains a request for

1 Very good Spinit, to be made by Mr. Plinius, Harpsicord Maker in South Audley Street Grosvenor Square.

Note it is beg’d as a favour, that Mr. [Robert] Cary [the shipper] would bespeak this Instrument as for himself or a friend, and not let it be known that it is intended for Exportation. Send a good assortment of spare Strings to it.

It appears that Washington, in 1761, did not know that Roger Plenius had been declared bankrupt five years before. ‘Clearly Plenius’ fame as a maker had reached far and wide, despite his personal financial difficulties.’

It is reasonable to assume that after his bankruptcy, Plenius remained unwilling to pursue his pioneering efforts in relation to the piano. Plenius died on 4 January 1774, at the home of his son (John?). Four days later, on Saturday, 8 January 1774, The General Evening Post reported his death: ‘On Tuesday, at his son’s house in Catherine-street in the Strand, Mr. Rutgerus Plenius, by birth a German, and supposed to be the greatest harpsichord-maker in England.’

William Mason’s Piano, Made by Friedrich Neubauer(?)

On Friday, 27 June 1755, the poet, musician and cleric Reverend William Mason (1725–97), biographer of his friend the poet Thomas Gray (1716–71), the ‘author of the famous Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’, wrote: ‘I

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104 The General Evening Post, 8 January 1774, No. 6281, p. 3.
105 W. Mason, The Poems of Gray. To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by William Mason (York: A. Ward, 1775).
bought at Hamburg such a pianoforte, and so cheap! It is a harpsichord too of two unisons, and the jacks serve as mutes when the pianoforte stop is played.’107 (Apparently, ‘two sets of 8’ strings108 were both plucked and struck’.)109

The only instrument maker in Hamburg known to have made combination instruments of the type described by Mason was Friedrich (Frederick) Neubauer. Neubauer made a wide variety of keyboard instruments. In the Privilegierte Hamburgische Anzeigen of Monday, 2 September 1754, Neubauer advertised that he sold harpsichords, unfretted clavichords (FF–f3), pantelongs (pianos)110 and a ‘new invented Clavicimbel de Amour’ (an upright pantalon), which had ‘taken much diligence, research and care’ to create.111

Four years later (by mid-1758), Neubauer was resident in London. (In the summer of 1758, at St James’s Church, Piccadilly, Neubauer’s daughter, Charlotte, married the harpsichord and piano maker Abraham Kirckman. Neubauer’s signature appears in the marriage register. As there is no evidence for a shotgun wedding, it is reasonable to assume that Neubauer immigrated to London, at the latest, in 1757.)112 As a London-based instrument maker, Neubauer advertised the same types of keyboard instruments that he had made in Hamburg, replacing the name pantelong with ‘piano forte’.113 In 1763, an entry in Mortimer’s Directory reveals that Neubauer made pianos. This entry is the earliest known advertisement in which pianos are offered for sale in London.114

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108 In stringed keyboard instruments, the term 8’ (8-foot) is used to describe a set of strings, each string of which sounds at a normal point of pitch reference. For example, at a pitch standard of a1 = 430 Hertz, the string for the note a1 (the note nine semitones above middle-C) sounds at 430 Hertz. (‘Hz is the International Standard symbol for Hertz, the unit of frequency, defined as the number of cycles per second of a periodic phenomenon … Sound is a travelling wave which is an oscillation of pressure. Humans perceive frequency of sound waves as pitch.’ Each note [sounding pitch] in music ‘corresponds to a particular frequency which can be measured in Hertz’. ‘Hertz’, in Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia (n.d.). An 8’ set of strings sounds an octave lower than a 4’ (4-foot) set of strings. See ‘8’ (8-foot)’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
110 See ‘Zumpt’s Small Piano-Forte’, below.
113 See ‘2. Origins to 1750’.
According to an advertisement published in the *Public Advertiser* of Monday, 21 January 1765, Neubauer established his workshop ‘in Litchfield Street, St Anne’s Soho’, at the sign of ‘the Hand & Tuning Hammer’ (Soho was an especially attractive area for many immigrants at this time; there was a strong French protestant settlement in Litchfield Street throughout the eighteenth century). In this advertisement, Neubauer used the term ‘pyano forte’ to describe one of the types of keyboard instrument that he offered for sale:

F. Neubauer, harpsichord-maker from Compton Street, now in Litchfield Street, St Anne’s Soho, at the Hand & Tuning Hammer, makes, sells and repairs all sorts of Harpsichords, Pyano Fortes, Lyrichords, Clavir d’amours, Clavychords &c. Harpsichords from 200L (£200) down to 20L (£20), and all sorts of musical Instruments, according to the value of the Workmanship and the Fineness of Tone, at reasonable Prices. Lovers of Music will be surprised to find so many Improvements, and so well finished, which he makes no Doubt will please the Nobility and Gentry, with his extraordinary Workmanship, and likewise every Lover of the common Way will also find them very reasonable.

Neubauer’s pyano fortess may have been square pianos; then again, they may have been ‘grand’ instruments ‘in the Italian-derived style, like those previously built by Plenius’.

As far as is known, the following three instruments represent the most noticeable pianos seen in England from the 1730s and early 1740s up to 1760:

1. Fulke Greville’s piano (by Father Wood), purchased from Samuel Crisp
2. Rutgerus Plenius’ copy of Greville’s piano
3. William Mason’s piano (by Friedrich Neubauer?).

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122 ‘Frederick Neubauer (ca. 1705?–74)’, in Debenham and Cole, ‘Pioneer Piano Makers in London’.
Georg Friedrich Händel Plays a Piano

In London, Georg Friedrich Händel (1685–1759) played a piano on two separate occasions: 1) on Monday, 16 May 1740; and 2) 16 years later, on Saturday, 29 May 1756. Each occasion is described in a contemporaneous document.

1) The first account of Händel playing a piano is given in a letter dated Tuesday, 17 May 1740, written by Thomas Harris (1712–85) to his elder brother James124 (1709–80). Thomas Harris was a lawyer who had been called to the Bar at Lincoln’s Inn, was a Master in Chancery, music lover and one of Händel’s inner circle of friends. He witnessed Händel’s will and the first three codicils; in the fourth and final codicil, Harris was named as the beneficiary of the not inconsiderable sum of £300. ‘No other English composer of the eighteenth century, as a result of his professional activity, attained the dizzy heights of wealth enjoyed by Handel. It was … Handel as impresario, not as composer, who scaled the cliff and guarded his crock of gold.’125

Harris’ correspondence reveals an intense interest in Händel’s welfare and musical endeavours. Harris reports that his friend Georg Friedrich Händel ‘was in good spiritts yesterday and played finely on the Piano-forte’.126 No further information regarding this piano has come to light. Unfortunately, ‘we don’t know Handel’s reaction to this new instrument … but he apparently didn’t go out of his way to play it more frequently’.127 Sixteen years ensued before Händel again played a piano.

2) The second account of Händel playing a piano is found in a diary entry dated Saturday, 29 May 1756, written by George William Harris (1717–69) (Plate 8).128 Harris records that he attended a dinner party at the house of Charles Jennens (ca 1700–73),129 after which Händel played on Jennens’ ‘piano forte’. George Harris’ diary entry reads: ‘May 29th 56 Dined at Mr. Jennings’s, ormond street. W[i]t[w]h Mastr. Handel [and] Hetherington. Handel quite Blind, but pretty cheerfull, and after Dinner play’d finely on Mr. J’s Piano forte.’130

124 James Harris was a brilliant littérateur, who created an oratorio-style libretto from John Milton’s (1608–74) poems L’Allegro and Il Penseroso. The libretto was further developed by Charles Jennens (Handel’s librettist for ‘Messiah’). Charles Burney held James Harris in high regard as a writer on music.
126 Hampshire Record Office, inv. no. 9M73/G307/2.
128 George William Harris was the younger brother of the lawyer and friend of Handel Thomas Harris.
129 Charles Jennens was not only a patron of the arts, but also Handel’s librettist for ‘Messiah’.
130 This document is housed in the Hampshire Record Office: Malmesbury papers, 9M73/G57.
Plate 8 Diary entry dated 29 May 1756, written by George William Harris (1717–69).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Hampshire Record Office. Malmesbury papers, 9M73/G57. Photo by the author.

Apparently, Händel’s blindness was not a hindrance to either the energy or the quality of his playing. Five years before, on Sunday, 14 March 1751, the MP Sir Edward Turner (1719–66) observed: ‘Noble Handel hath lost an eye, but I have the Rapture to say St. Cecilia makes no complaint of any Defect of his Fingers.’

During the eighteenth century, loss of sight was not an uncommon condition for the aged. That ‘blindness seems to have been a condition that elicited either pity or revulsion … is confirmed by Burney when he says that Handel was embarrassed by his blindness; this embarrassment was no doubt caused in the supremely independent Handel by his perceived “weakness”, which required a childlike dependence on others’.

There is a remote possibility that when Händel played the piano after the dinner party at Jennens’ house on 29 May 1756, he used the piano copy that had been made by Rutgerus Plenius almost a decade before. Plenius was declared bankrupt in early 1756. His stock-in-trade would probably have been auctioned between February and mid-May 1756. George Harris’ diary entry indicates that

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131 Quoted in van Til, *George Frideric Handel*, p. 279.
132 Ibid., p. 286.
a piano was located in Jennens’ home by 29 May 1756. It is possible that when Händel played Jennens’ piano, the instrument had been acquired only about two weeks earlier at the auction of Plenius’ stock.

Records suggest that in 1756, there were only two pianos in London. Jennens’ piano was one of these. After dinner, on 29 May 1756, Händel can only have played either of the following.

1. Fulke Greville’s piano (by Father Wood), which Greville had purchased from Samuel Crisp, and which Händel had played 16 years before, on 16 May 1740.

2. Rutgerus Plenius’ copy of Greville’s piano, possibly purchased by Jennens at the recent auction of Plenius’ stock.

‘Despite the fact these early pianos were seen and enjoyed by a significant group of musical enthusiasts who were well connected with the aristocracy and with the London theatres’, it seems no English professional musicians were convinced to transfer their allegiances from the harpsichord to the piano.

**The Twelve Apostles**

Adlam, Clinkscale, Cranmer, Dale, Erlich, Good, Harding, Henkel, Hollis, James, National Museums Liverpool, Ord-Hume, Palmieri, Pollard.

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144 ‘English Square Piano … Instrument by Frederick Beck, Outer Case Attributed to Christopher Fuhrloh’, in *Lady Lever Art Gallery: A Beautiful Building Housing One of the UK’s Finest Collections of Fine and Decorative Art* (n.d.).
Schott, Swan, Wainwright and Williams (to mention but a few) all speak of a group of 12 pioneering German piano makers ‘who emigrated to London from Saxony around 1760 when trade was at a standstill owing to the Seven Years’ War [1756–63]. This … group of piano makers are frequently referred to as the ‘Twelve Apostles’.

The story of the ‘Twelve Apostles’ is apocryphal, and was first mentioned in 1860 by Edward F. Rimbault (1816–76). Rimbault states:

> At length, about the year 1760, many ingenious German mechanics left their country and came to England in search of employment as pianoforte-makers; this gave the instrument its first impetus. A party of twelve travelled hither in one company, and obtained, from this circumstance, the appellation of the ‘twelve apostles’.

Many subsequent writers, including an alarming number publishing on the Internet (none of whom provides any evidence in support of their fanciful assertions), reiterate Rimbault’s fiction. Furthermore, those who subscribe to Rimbault’s fallacy, and who go so far as to name those comprising the twelve apostles, fail to agree on exactly who the twelve apostles were.

During the 1760s, not just 12, but many German musical instrument makers emigrated from Germany to London. A treaty ending the Seven Years’ War was signed in Paris in 1763. The war ‘and its aftermath [not only] caused stringent economies, affecting industries of all kinds … [but also] emigration to less hazardous environments … a temptation succumbed to by many’.

Documentary evidence suggests (and in some instances proves) that of the London piano makers who were commercially active prior to 1800, the following were born in Germany (although this is not initially obvious if they anglicised their names upon their arrival in London)

1. James Ball (1770–1833; fl. ca 1787–1819)
2. Gabriel Gottlieb Buntebart (b. 1726; fl. 1768–95)
3. George Fröschle (Froeschle) (fl. 1776–1800)

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152 Handel had died recently (on Saturday, 14 April 1759).
4. Christopher Ganer (fl. 1774–1809)
5. John Geib (1744–1813; fl. ca 1777–97)
6. Ludewig Augustus Leukfeld (fl. 1790s)
7. Friedrich (Frederick) Neubauer (fl. 1757 – ca 1765)
8. Johannes (John) Pohlmann (Pohlman) (fl. 1767–93)
9. Frederick and Christian Schön (Schoene) (fl. ca 1780s)
10. John Henry Schrader (fl. ca 1768–1802)

No unequivocal evidence supports the commonly encountered claim that Adam Beyer (1729?–1804; fl. 1768–1801) (despite the sound of his surname) and Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756–98) were born in Germany.

London acted as a magnet for immigrant craftsmen because

1. of its wealth
2. it was located in a country that had not recently endured a war
3. it was free of restrictive guilds
4. unlike many European cities, no permission or licence was needed to set up in trade.

By 1750, London held over one fifth of the total population of Britain and was at least ten times bigger than the largest of provincial towns. It was the national centre of fashion and patronage, of luxury production and consumption. It provided the greatest access to cultural information from abroad, [and] was the hub of a growing press network as well as printing and publishing.

Even as early as 1713, for those with an entrepreneurial spirit, London ‘offered opportunities rarely found in comparable countries and cities in mainland Europe’. The German music theorist, composer and Händel’s friend Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) wrote: ‘In these times, whoever wishes to be eminent in music goes to England. In Italy and France there is something to be heard and learned; in England something to be earned.’

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157 See ibid., p. 80. The area around Zumpe’s birthplace (Fürth, near Nuremberg) ‘was not … one of those most directly affected by the Seven Years’ War, ‘but had been gradually declining in prosperity since the sixteenth century. Thus … it seems most likely that Zumpe left home to seek his fortune abroad as a young journeyman carpenter, perhaps in the late 1740s when he would have been in his early 20s.’ Koster, Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, p. 118, fn. 7.
158 Concerning Frederick Beck’s place of birth, see ‘Frederick Beck’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
159 See M. Cole, ‘Maker’s File: Adam Beyer’ [n.d.].
161 Ibid., p. 38.
162 J. Mattheson, Das neu-eröffnete Orchestra [The newly founded Orchestra] (Hamburg: Benjamin Schiller, 1713). Quoted in ibid., p. 38.
The German musicologist Eva Badura-Skoda (2004) suggests that the title ‘Twelve Apostles’ may have originated with Burkat Shudi’s (1702–73) youngest daughter, Barbara (1749–76). Burkat Shudi (also Burkhart, Burkhardt, Schudi, Tschudi, Tshudi) was a Swiss harpsichord maker who came to London in 1718. He dominated the harpsichord market there between the 1740s and the 1760s. Shudi’s instruments were highly praised and greatly sought after (he was ‘as famed in London as [Pascal] Taskin [1723–93] was in Paris’). In 1775, Charles Burney remarked: ‘I must observe, that the Germans work much better out of their country, than they do in it, if we may judge by the harpsichords of … Shudi.’ Shudi’s illustrious clientele included Frederick the Great, for whom he made five harpsichords; the first of these was given as a gift in 1744.

The [1744] instrument … [has not] survived, but it was probably shown to Johann Sebastian Bach [1685–1750] on his visit to the King in 1747. Shudi’s gesture was ultimately rewarded by an order in 1765 from Frederick the Great for no less than four harpsichords, one of which [production number 496] … [before it] was shipped off to its royal destination … was played by the nine-year-old Mozart and his sister Nannerl (then fourteen), who visited Shudi’s shop whilst in London with their father.

Concerning King Frederick’s relationship with music prior to his accession to the throne, Charles Burney informs us:

It was by stealth, that this prince indulged his passion for music, during the life of his father, the late king, who had forbid him, not only to study and practise music, but to hear it … it was the late queen mother, who at this time encouraged the prince in his favourite amusement, and who engaged musicians for his service; but so necessary was secrecy in all these negociations, that if the king his father had discovered that he was disobeyed, all these sons of Apollo would have incurred the danger of being hanged. The prince frequently took occasion, to meet his musicians a hunting, and had his concerts either in a forest or cavern.

166 See Kottick, A History of the Harpsichord, p. 360.
168 See Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 383.
In 1769, Barbara Shudi married John Broadwood (1732–1812), who at the time was employed as foreman by her father. ‘Barbara’s marriage to her father’s foreman was a normal practice in Georgian London since the business would then remain a family concern, ensuring its continuance, together with the maintenance of the family, after the death of the original master.’ A year after Broadwood’s marriage to Barbara Shudi, he became a partner in his father-in-law’s business, and the firm’s name was changed to Shudi and Broadwood. John Broadwood eventually became one of the most successful piano makers in history; when Broadwood died, he left a personal estate of £125 000 (‘in modern terms, the fortune of a multi-millionaire’), as well as ‘a business worth much more, employing over a hundred men, and substantial London properties’. (The Broadwood firm continued until 1970, making it the world’s ‘longest continuously running firm of instrument-makers’.)

Oral tradition among members of the Broadwood family reported that German immigrants usually received the help and hospitality of the Shudi family. One can imagine the joy with which German immigrants arriving in London met other Germans working in the same trade, who were willing to help them settle in this new environment.

It is possible that Barbara Broadwood, daughter of the Swiss-Deutsch-speaking Burkat Shudi, was still fluent in German [during the 1760s], and therefore could have been a great help in linguistic matters to most of the German immigrants, including [the inventor of the square piano, Johann Christoph] Zumpe, who worked for her father. She could have been the originator of the nickname ‘Twelve Apostles’ when she visited or hosted a gathering of the German musical instrument builders and there happened to be 12 of them around.

One of the German émigré instrument makers who arrived in London during the 1760s subsequently invented a new type of piano that catalysed a redefinition of the role of the piano in society. This instrument maker was Johann Christoph Zumpe.

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173 Chanan, Musica Practica, p. 201.
174 M. Goold, Mr Langshaw’s Square Piano (London: Corvo Books, 2008), p. 249. ‘In 1945, in one of the last acts of defiance from Hitler’s regime, a series of V2 rockets was launched towards England. The very last of these flying bombs fell on London on Palm Sunday, 25 March, making a direct hit on Whitefield’s Chapel in Tottenham Court Road. It destroyed the building and the burial ground. The graves of Burkat Shudi, and John and Barbara Broadwood were obliterated.’ Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 114.
175 Cobbe, Composer Instruments, p. 25.
177 Zumpe invented the square piano (in its English incarnation) in London, in ca early 1766.
Johann Christoph Zumpe

Zumpe’s ‘Small Piano-Forte’

‘The critical event that changed perceptions in relation to the piano [in England] was the invention by the German-born craftsman Johann Christoph Zumpe (Johannes Zumpe, John Zumpe, or John Zumpe) of a small rectangular instrument that has since become known as the “square piano”’.

During the late eighteenth century, the square piano was commonly referred to as the ‘small piano-forte’. In *The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* of Thursday, 10 February 1780, Zumpe described himself as ‘the inventor of the Small Piano-Forte and Maker to her Majesty and the Royal Family’ (note that Zumpe’s ‘claim to be the maker of choice for the royal family’ is placed after his ‘claim to have invented the small piano’).

What or Who Inspired Zumpe to Invent His ‘Small Piano-Forte’?

If we look for evidence of any surviving square piano from Germany that might have served as a prototype for Zumpe, or indeed for any surviving piano that is obviously derived from some shared ancestor, the search proves entirely vain. The only known German pianos that resemble Zumpe’s are very obviously derived from him and made after he produced his first ‘small piano-forte’ ... ca. early 1766.

Zumpe may have been inspired by any one of the several varieties of touch-sensitive keyboard instruments that emerged in northern Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century, or those that appeared in London during the early to mid-1760s.

Krämer’s *Tafelklavier*

Günther (2006) observes that around 1760, Zumpe (who at the time was an apprentice to the Swiss harpsichord maker Burkat Shudi in London) returned to his birthplace (Fürth, approximately 8 kilometres from Nuremberg) to visit...
relatives. ‘On his return to London, Zumpe brought back with him the idea of the Tafelklavier (‘table keyboard instrument’). He may even have brought back a Tafelklavier made by Georg Ludwig Krämer [fl. ca 1760].’

A tafelklavier is a rectangular-shaped transversely strung hammer-action keyboard instrument, similar in outward form to a clavichord. In Germany, a large number of makers developed a plethora of variations on the instrument’s design. Some tafelklaviere had bare wooden hammers, whilst others had leather-covered hammers; some had two sets of hammers:

One set was usually of bare wood [or some other hard material] while the second set of hammers, brought into play by a handstop, was tipped with soft leather to produce a dulcet tone. The player selected one or the other set according to the tonal requirements of the Affect of the music.

Some tafelklaviere had dampers, whilst others did not. Some had tone-colour altering devices; one such device, for example, comprises a mechanism that interposes a strip of woven cloth between the hammerhead and the string (now commonly referred to as a ‘moderator’), producing a characteristically ‘dark’, ‘distant’ and ‘ethereal’ sound. The action of some tafelklaviere had an escapement (an escapement provides the player with comfortable, reliable and subtle control over dynamics). Although no extant tafelklavier is dated from before 1767, advertisements for such instruments appeared from the 1740s. Despite the wide range of design and sound represented by the tafelklavier, no specific or consistent tradition emerged.

When compared with the number of extant late eighteenth-century English square pianos, relatively few early eighteenth-century German tafelklaviere have survived. It seems that in Germany during the first half and middle of the eighteenth century, the tafelklavier did not reach the same levels of popularity or production as did the square piano in late eighteenth-century England.

In 1781, ca 20 years after Zumpe’s encounter with Krämer’s tafelklavier, the German music theorist Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749–1818) remarked: ‘Ein berühmter und geschickter Orgelbauer und Instrumentenmacher … Namens Georg Ludw. Krämer, hat … eine neue Art von Fortepiano … erfunden, die nicht

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185 Cole, ‘Another Line of Investigation’.
186 See ‘Moderator’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
188 See M. Cole, The Invention of the Square Piano: A Review of Some Claimed Early German Tafelklaviere (n.d.).
grösser als ein gewöhnliches Clavier’¹⁹⁰ (‘A famous and skillful Organ maker and Instrument maker … whose Name is Georg Ludwig Krämer, has invented … a new Kind of Fortepiano … not much larger than a Clavichord’).

Similarities ‘between the actions in extant instruments by Krämer and Zumpe’¹⁹¹ suggest that Zumpe may have been influenced in some way by Krämer’s tafelklavier. (At the very least, Krämer’s influence may have extended only to the notion of a rectangular-shaped piano.)

The Pantalon

It could be viably posited that the design features of a pantalon represent a subset sitting at the extreme end of the design range of the tafelklavier. A pantalon (pantaleon, pantalone or bandaleon) is a small rectangular or harp-shaped keyboard instrument whose horizontal metal strings run obliquely from the keyboard. The soundboard extends the entire length of the instrument, above the keys. Typically, a pantalon has a single string for each note. Usually, the strings are struck by bare wooden pivoted hammers. Commonly, there are no dampers (in such instances, there were never meant to be any).¹⁹²

Because the action of a pantalon has no escapement, the range of dynamic nuance that can be achieved through touch is limited. There is no check¹⁹³ (a check catches the hammerhead after it rebounds from hitting the string and prevents the hammer from bouncing back up and hitting the string again). Without a check (depending on the dynamic), rapid note repetition and trills may be fairly slow and awkward. Pianos with no check must be played physically more gently than those with a check (especially within the dynamic context of forte).¹⁹⁴

A variety of timbres is available to the player via ‘mutation’ stops. A mutation (in eighteenth-century German writings, Veränderung or Mutation) alters or modifies the timbre of the sound using a mechanical device that is incorporated into the instrument, such as a ‘moderator’,¹⁹⁵ or, as another example, an s-shaped wooden batten suspended above and following the line of the bridge, with a teased cloth covering attached to the underside that, when lowered, rests lightly on the strings (producing a characteristically ‘pizzicato’ sound). A pantalon may have as many as five or more mutations. Because the scope of dynamic nuance that can be achieved through touch is limited, the sense of dynamic shading is mostly created through

¹⁹³ Also called ‘back check’.
¹⁹⁴ In music, the Italian term forte is a performance instruction denoting ‘loud’ and ‘strong’.
¹⁹⁵ See ‘Moderator’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
changes in tone colour that result from the use of mutations. These mutations ‘were designed to reproduce the tonal effects and musical resources of’ the dulcimer—perhaps specifically of Pantalon Hebenstreit’s (1667–1750) ‘famous dulcimer but with the convenience of playing them through a standard keyboard’.196

The shape of Hebenstreit’s dulcimer was trapezoidal. The instrument ‘had two soundboards, and two or more bridges and soundholes’.197 On Tuesday, 22 September 1772, whilst in Dresden, Charles Burney saw Hebenstreit’s instrument, observing that it was ‘more than nine feet [2.7 metres] long, and had … 186 strings of catgut’.198 (The Guinness Book of Musical Facts and Figures claims that Hebenstreit’s dulcimer was the ‘largest stringed instrument ever made’.199 This is true, at least for the eighteenth century.) Hebenstreit’s dulcimer also had an unknown number of metal strings. Alternation between gut and metal strings gave the player a choice of different tone colours. Each note probably had three unison strings (some notes may have had four). As with all dulcimers, the strings were hit with small, handheld mallets. The creation of a variety of timbres was achieved by alternating bare wooden mallets with mallets that had padded cloth-covered heads.

None of the strings had a damper, and therefore the instrument, as it was played, built up a rich and prominent background ‘glow’ of overtones.

Hebenstreit … liked to roll great billows of arpeggiated chords over the wide range of his instrument and to allow the full resonance of the undamped strings to die slowly on the listeners’ ears. It was a new sensation at the time, and it seemed ravishing.200

When one set of … strings [gut] was played upon, the other set [metal] (attached to the bottom, or ‘flip-side’ of the instrument) vibrated sympathetically. Piano makers later achieved this same musical effect [via a mechanism that enabled all the dampers to be simultaneously raised] …

Hebenstreit went to Paris in 1705 and performed for King Louis XIV, who christened this large dulcimer a ‘pantalon.’ According to Sarah E. Hanks [1969], ‘the fact that the Sun King … [so named] the instrument … was a

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200 Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos, p. 25.
double-entendre. The term pantalon was a familiar designation in French and Italian comedy for a clown, and appropriately described the amusing jerks and leaps of the player’s body, visible behind the large instrument.201

Charles Burney tells us that, following Hebenstreit’s audience with Louis XIV, ‘the inventor [that is, Hebenstreit] went by the name of his instrument ever after’202 (that is, Pantalon Hebenstreit).

It was only a matter of time before instrument makers created a keyboard version of the pantalon, inspired (if not by the timbres and undamped sounds of the folk instrument the dulcimer) by the opulent undamped soundscapes that emanated from Hebenstreit’s giant dulcimer.

Herman Vietor

In London, Herman (or Harman) Bernard Vietor (or Viator) (?–?), instrument maker and organist at ‘St George’s Lutheran Church, Allie Street, Whitechapel, since at least early 1764’,203 advertised in the press between 1766 and 1768. The only extant instrument by Vietor is a square piano dated 1767. This instrument has no dampers, and as such reflects tafelklavier/keyboard pantalon making, ‘knowledge of which … [Vietor] had presumably imbibed somewhere in north Germany before 1765’.204

In 1766 Vietor was located at 19 Mercer Street, Longacre, Soho, and by 1767, had moved to 32 Porter Street, Newport Market, St Ann’s, Soho.205 Unfortunately, Herman Vietor was not a professional instrument maker, and his sole extant instrument exhibits both faulty design and poor craftsmanship.206

In 1765, Vietor named his ‘invented’ instrument Coelestin d’Amour.207 In 1766, he gave the instrument the name ‘Piano ex Forte’.208 In an advertisement published in The Public Advertiser of Monday, 1 February 1768, Vietor claimed to be the ‘sole Inventor’ of his ‘Forte Pianos’, which came in ‘different Sizes and

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204 Cole, ‘Another Line of Investigation’.
207 The Public Advertiser, 27 September 1765, No. 9643, p. 3.
208 The Public Advertiser, 2 May 1766, No. 9826, p. 3.
Constructions'. Vietor also claimed that he ‘had the Honour to sell a great many of them within these seven Years to a great Part of the Nobility and Gentry in these Kingdoms’—that is, the United Kingdom.

It is difficult not to see in … [Vietor’s advertisement] the desperate braggadocio of a failing entrepreneur. From being an organist with a sideline in making and selling novel keyboard instruments he is now apparently a dealer in all manner of musical instruments and, if we were to believe him, the sole inventor of Forte Pianos. Musical cognoscenti of the period cannot have been fooled by this, for they would certainly be aware that in 1768 regular professional instrument makers—Zumpe, [Gabriel] Buntebart [fl. 1768–95], [Johannes (John)] Pohlman [or Pohlmann] [fl. 1767–93], and others—were experiencing huge demands for their ‘Forte Pianos’. There is not much that may be said for his astonishing claim to have sold ‘a great many of them … to a great part of the Nobility and Gentry in these Kingdoms’. Judging by the poor quality of design and construction in his 1767 specimen one would be surprised to find any example of such work in the well-furnished homes of any English aristocrat … His claim to have been selling such instruments ‘within these last seven years’ could be as dubious as his other statements, or it may suggest that he had been constructing some sort of [experimental] hammer-action instruments since 1761.

If this is so, it is possible that similar instruments were also being made in northern Germany as early as 1761.

Zumpe’s Genius

In 1761, Johann Zumpe left Shudi’s employment to set up his own workshop at the sign of the Golden Guitar. We may never know exactly what it was that inspired Zumpe to invent the square piano; perhaps it was Krämer’s tafelklavier, the keyboard pantalon, early eighteenth-century German tafelklaviere, or instruments made in London by Friedrich Neubauer or Herman Vietor during the early 1760s.

Historians often marvel at the tendency for inventions to come in multiples, the lightbulb going on in several people’s brains at almost


210 *The Public Advertiser*, 1 February 1768, p. 4. See also Cole, ‘Another Line of Investigation’.


exactly the same moment. Great ideas often seem to be less the result of brilliance than the logical outcome of having a set of thinkers who share the same questions and methods.\textsuperscript{214}

Evidence suggesting that Zumpe was influenced by anyone at all, however, is, at best, both fragmentary and inferential. There remains the strong possibility that his invention of the ‘small piano-forte’ may simply have been the product of his genius alone.

**No Escapement**

The action of Zumpe’s square pianos (as also with Krämer’s *tafelklavier* and Neubauer’s piano forte) does not have an escapement. This creates two major disadvantages:

1. in order to enable the hammer to build up enough momentum to hit the string, the player has to use a slightly ‘jabbing’ touch; this touch is the antithesis of what would naturally be associated with dynamically subtle, expressive playing

2. the touch for *pianissimo* can be difficult to predict; sometimes, the small amount of energy required to produce a *pianissimo* is absorbed by the baleen\textsuperscript{215} damper springs; when this happens, the hammer falls back to its rest position before it hits the string. A reliable *pianissimo* depends on the player perfectly judging the touch.

**Mutations**

In order to reproduce the background ‘glow’ of overtones and tonal variety associated with Hebenstreit’s pantalon, Zumpe incorporated mutations into his pianos; these mutations were engaged via hand levers. The following mutations are found in Zumpe’s pianos:

1. 1766 (the five earliest extant Zumpe pianos date from 1766):\textsuperscript{216} one hand lever for raising the bass dampers


\textsuperscript{215} ‘Usually called ‘whalebone’ … [baleen is] made from the filter-plates from the mouth of certain kinds of whale. Its most common use was in corsets, but it was also used for the springs of … dampers in … early square pianos.’ Gadd, *The British Art Piano and Piano Design*, Vol. 1, p. 261.

\textsuperscript{216} 1) Privately owned in the United States; 2) Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, inv. no. 1968-294; 3) Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, inv. no. 1982-96; and 4) Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 15. 5) Recently, another early square piano by Zumpe (albeit severely reworked during the early nineteenth century) has been discovered; the instrument is part of the Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney (Plates 455–77). According to Michael Cole (Email from Michael Cole to the author, 5 December 2012), certain features of the instrument’s action suggest it was originally constructed either late in 1766 or in 1767.
2. 1767 onwards: two hand levers for independently raising treble or bass dampers
3. 1769–70: a ‘buff’ stop, which places a strip of leather against the strings, producing a lute-like sound.

In performance, mutations would have been used quite freely. It is reasonable to assume that some pianists played with the dampers continuously raised. An observation made by Charles Burney reinforces this proposition.

On Wednesday, 20 June 1770, whilst in Paris, Burney heard Madame Anne Louise Brillon de Jouy (née Boyvin d’Hardancourt) (1744–1824) play the piano. He describes her as being

one of the greatest lady-players on the harpsichord in Europe. This lady not only plays the most difficult pieces with great precision, taste, and feeling, but is an excellent sight’s-woman; of which I was convinced by her manner of executing some of my own music, that I had the honour of presenting to her. She likewise composes; and was so obliging as to play several of her own sonatas, both on the harpsichord and piano forte … To this lady many of the famous composers of Italy and Germany, who have resided in France any time, have dedicated their works; among these are [Johann] Schobert [ca 1720, 1735 or 1740?–67] and [Luigi] Boccherini [Boccherini; 1743–1805].217

It appears that Burney did not like the piano played with the dampers continuously raised. He remarks: ‘I could not persuade Madame Brillon to play the piano forte with the Stops on [that is, with the dampers lowered, in contact with the strings]—“too dry” she said—but with them off unless in arpeggios, nothing is distinct—’tis like the sound of bells, continual and confluent.’218

Burney’s comment reveals that there were differences of opinion amongst musicians during the 1770s in relation to playing with the dampers lifted.

Some pianists went to great lengths to exploit the effects of mutations. Morse (1902) provides an example:

There is an Astor [square] piano in Salem … made as late as 1815. It had two pedals, one being used to prolong the tones [probably damper raising]. The other served to produce a novel and taking effect, by lifting a section of the top of the piano lid, which was then allowed to fall suddenly, the slamming serving to illustrate the firing of a cannon. [This mutation was called a ‘Nag’s Head swell’, and was a commonly

218 C. Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770: Being the Journal Written by Charles Burney, Mus.D., During a Tour through these Countries Undertaken to Collect Material for a General History of Music, edited by H. E. Poole (London: Eulenburg Books, 1974), pp. 19–20. This is an extended version of Burney’s The Present State of Music in France and Italy collated with his unpublished notes.
encountered accessory on square pianos during the 1780s and 1790s.[219]
The young lady who owned the piano created a sensation by playing battle pieces with this startling accompaniment.220

In the hands of an imaginative player, the mutations available in Zumpe’s pianos allowed for the enhancement of an already sweet, sonorous and succulent un-mutated sound. These dimensions of sonic beauty go a long way to explain the success of Zumpe’s pianos, as well as the contemporaneous emergence of the music they inspired.

Zumpe’s House

Zumpe’s workshop was at 7 Princes Street,221 a small street leading to the then fashionable Hanover Square, on the western fringes of London.222 Zumpe’s shrewd decision to live and work near a fashionable district ensured that his clientele would be of the wealthy and ‘respectable’ variety.

Plate 9 shows Hanover Square as it appeared in 1754 (seven years prior to Zumpe’s relocation from Shudi’s workshop in Great Pulteney Street to his own premises in Princes Street). Princes Street enters Hanover Square at the square’s north-eastern corner. Tall buildings obscure the street, but the small chimneypot at the very edge of the picture (or the roof above the three windows immediately to its left), following the line of the street to the right, may belong to the house in which Zumpe lived and worked. In ca 1787 (five years after Zumpe had relinquished his business and address to the Schoene brothers, and approximately three years before his death), the bird’s-eye-view paths in the shape of a cross with diagonals in the gardens of Hanover Square were replaced ‘with a circular path running around the circumference bordered by trees’.225

Plate 10 shows Zumpe’s house as it appears today; it is the building painted white, and further marred by a tinted-glass street-level front. What a scandal that such architectural vandalism has been allowed to occur. Because Zumpe’s house was the first building in the world to be dedicated exclusively to the making

of pianos, the cultural significance of this building cannot be underestimated. Oddly, there is no blue heritage plaque identifying the building as the residence of the inventor of the English square piano.

Zumpe’s house is currently owned and occupied by the Salvation Army. A conversation held between the author and a representative of the Salvation Army’s London management revealed that the 2008–09 global financial crisis had stalled the planned gutting of Zumpe’s house. The photographs of and from the first-floor front room (Zumpe’s principal room for receiving guests) are possibly the last to be taken before redevelopment (which was scheduled to begin in early 2010) obliterates the internal space as it currently exists (Plates 11 and 12).

In Plate 12, the ‘Lloyds TSB’ building on the left-hand side of the image occupies land on the southern corner of the intersection of Princes Street with Hanover Square. If Zumpe had walked a few buildings south from this intersection, he would have come upon the Hanover Square Music Rooms, located at the intersection of Hanover Square and the northern side of Hanover Street. Richard Horwood’s Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and Parts Adjoining226 shows Hanover Square, 7 Princes Street (Zumpe’s house) and the Hanover Square Music Rooms (Plate 12a). Horwood labels the Hanover Square Music Rooms as ‘Concert Rooms’. During Joseph Haydn’s (1732–1809) first visit to London in 1791, the symphonies he composed for Johann Peter Salomon’s (1745–1815) concert series were premiered at the Hanover Square Music Rooms (the concert hall comprised 235 square metres, and accommodated an audience of 500). ‘Credit for the first regular series of public commercial concerts in England is usually given to the violinist John Banister (ca 1624–79); they were held in his own house in Whitefriars [two blocks south of Fleet Street, near the northern bank of the Thames]227 in 1672 and advertised in … [The London Gazette, thus drawing on the coffee-house audience that provided the readership of early newspapers.]228

The front door of Zumpe’s house would have opened from the street directly into the front room, where he may have displayed the pianos he had for sale (Zumpe’s timber-framed workshop was situated behind the house). For those with money, ‘shopping was an important component of late 18th century [life]. Indeed, the shops where luxury objects’ such as Zumpe’s pianos ‘were sold were places for sociability’.229

‘In England a man’s house served as his ultimate possession, the absolute confirmation of his status. Accordingly, vast sums of money (often a family’s

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228 Chanan, Musica Practica, p. 133.
whole substance) were spent to build, decorate, improve, maintain, and furnish the domestic enclosure.230 There can be little doubt that a large portion of the considerable fortune that Zumpe made through the sale of his pianos would have been spent on improving, maintaining and furnishing his house.

During the five years after 1774, London experienced the biggest surge of the century in building:

Fireplaces and bigger windows became standard, but spaces were also more confined. In small houses status was indicated by a simple cornice over the best fireplaces or in the best room, and plain painted panelling was found in all but the poorest houses.

Large numbers of houses incorporated shops.231

Zumpe’s house was one such building.

Plate 9 Sutton Nicholls (fl. 1680–1740): Hanover Square (1754). Engraving; longest dimension 46 centimetres.


Plate 10 Johann Zumpe’s house.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 11 The first-floor drawing room in Johann Zumpe’s house. The fireplace surround is not from the eighteenth century.

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 12 The view of Hanover Square from the first-floor drawing room in Johann Zumpe’s house.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 12a Hanover Square and surrounds (detail).

The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

Johann Christian Bach’s Support

Zumpe appears to have gained affirmation and support from his friends Johann Christian Bach (1735–82), the youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750; ‘Master of the Queen’s Musick’, chamber musician to the Queen’s household, ‘accompanist to the flute-playing George III’232 and internationally acclaimed composer), and Gabriel Buntebart, possibly harpsichord maker to Queen Charlotte (1744–1818) and ‘grand Piano forte Maker to Her Majesty’.233 A favourite at court,234 affable with both the aristocracy and the intelligentsia, and comfortable in lower social circles,235 J. C. Bach was good looking (he had an ‘enchanting smile’),236 engaging, was of ‘worthy character’237 and had a gift for making friendships that captivated both sexes equally.238 Bach was greatly respected not only by the professional musical fraternity, but also by the royal family.239 Both J. C. Bach’s and Buntebart’s close connections with the court and the immediate cohort of attendants in Queen Charlotte’s household240 meant that these two gentlemen were perfectly positioned to encourage the acceptance of Zumpe’s new invention by those who represented the highest and most fashionable levels of society.

J. C. Bach arrived in London in the summer of 1762. (‘London in 1762 was well provided with musical entertainment, concert halls, and musicians … [including] foreigners, attracted to its service by the generosity of its purse.’)241 The position J. C. Bach occupied at court had remained unfilled since Händel’s death in 1759. Amongst the small number of German professional musicians in London, only J. C. Bach was considered to have sufficient reputation and merit to replace Händel.242 That the German-born Queen Charlotte ‘should desire a

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232 Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 389, fn. 11.
233 Circumstantial evidence suggests that Gabriel Buntebart was Queen Charlotte’s harpsichord maker. Buntebart arrived in London from Strelitz at the same time as Queen Charlotte. See M. Cole, ‘John Zumpe’ in Square Pianos (n.d.).
239 See Papendiek, Court and Private Life in the Time of Queen Charlotte, p. 133.
242 See ibid., p. 60.
compatriate as her music-master was as natural as that she should invite her brother Duke Adolph Friedrich to provide one … The national bias of a German Queen rejected an Italian master’. 243

Queen Charlotte was a passionate devotee of music.

At the tender age of 17, during a stormy ten-day voyage ['which rendered her five ladies-in-waiting unfit for service'] 244 when she crossed the English Channel to marry a man she had never seen (George III), she comforted herself by playing the harpsichord. She … left her cabin door open so that others on board the ship could enjoy her playing. 245

Revealing a degree of political astuteness surprising in such a young person, she included in her performances her rendition of the British national anthem, *God Save the King*. She also 'memorized a few English sentences—English had not been taught at the court of Neustrelitz'. 246

The young King George III … was woefully immature to be an effective ruler, and Charlotte was certainly no beauty, but they had one redeeming feature in common: both were ardent music lovers. The king had taken instruction on composition from Handel, and the queen was a competent singer and [keyboardist]. 247

After her wedding to George III, the Queen established her own private orchestra; members of the orchestra dressed in uniforms of scarlet and gold. She often performed organ concerti by Händel, having beforehand placed a bust of the composer by Louis-François Roubillac (Roubiliac; 1695–1762) above the organ. 248

Roubillac, 'whose statue of Handel erected at Vauxhall Gardens249 in 1737 was among his first works for London, was commissioned to create the monument’ for Händel’s grave, located in Westminster Abbey; ‘it turned out to be his last work’. 250

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243 Ibid., pp. 59–60.
244 Cooper and Powell, ‘Sophie Charlotte’.
246 Cooper and Powell, ‘Sophie Charlotte’.
The sculptor probably knew Händel as a friend. They may have met at Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin’s Lane\textsuperscript{251} [Charing Cross] to exchange gossip and discuss Händel’s scores, some of which had been published with engraved illustrations by [Hubert-François Bourguignon, commonly known as] Gravelot [1699–1773], a French artist who was also a friend of … [William Hogarth (1697–1764). At the time, Hogarth was] the most famous frequenter of Slaughter’s.\textsuperscript{252}

Queen Charlotte cannot have been blind to the musical strengths of Zumpe’s square piano (during his first visit to London, between 1791 and 1792, Joseph Haydn found Queen Charlotte’s keyboard skills to be ‘quite good—for a Queen’).\textsuperscript{253} Fortunately for Zumpe, Queen Charlotte’s acceptance of his square pianos conferred upon them the ultimate accolade and guarantee of fashionable status.\textsuperscript{254} Queen Charlotte may even have been one of the first to play a Zumpe piano.\textsuperscript{255} Because Zumpe’s pianos were ‘the chosen instrument of the Queen … no woman of fashion or quality could be without one’.\textsuperscript{256} As a result, Zumpe soon had more orders than he could fill. It is probable Zumpe made up to 50 instruments a year (that is, about one every week).

The Bach-Abel Concert Series

It took a long time for the grand piano to win general favour in London. On the other hand, Zumpe’s ‘small piano-forte’ quickly became prodigiously fashionable.\textsuperscript{257} The popularity of Zumpe’s square pianos may have been due, in part, to their use in the exclusive Bach-Abel concert series. This series began on Monday, 23 January 1764, and continued until 9 May 1781.

Carl Friedrich Abel (1723–87), ’a former pupil of J. S. Bach and friend of’ the German composer and music theorist Johann Adam Hiller in Dresden,\textsuperscript{258} was not only an accomplished harpsichordist, but was also renowned as the greatest viola da gamba virtuoso of his day.

\textsuperscript{251} See ‘St. Martins St.’, in Bowles, \textit{Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster}.
\textsuperscript{254} See Cole, \textit{The Pianoforte in the Classical Era}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{255} See ibid., p. 61.
\textsuperscript{256} Goold, \textit{Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano}, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{257} See Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{258} Young, \textit{The Concert Tradition}, p. 144.
In 1743, Abel was a gamba player in the Dresden court orchestra (the high technical and musical standard of which amounted to that of a utopian fantasy) under the direction of the famed Oberkapellmeister Johann Adolph Hasse (1699–1783). During the destruction of Dresden by Frederick the Great in 1758–59, Abel left the city and travelled to Frankfurt, Mannheim and Paris. In 1759, Abel went to London, where he became a vital force in the musical culture of the city that was to be his home until his death. Approximately five years after his arrival in London (in ca 1764), Abel was appointed as a chamber musician at the court of Queen Charlotte.259

As two of London’s internationally respected immigrants, J. C. Bach and Abel sought to present their subscription concerts like an expanded soirée for polite society, a simulation of the private sphere with many of the audience known not only to the performers but also to each other. True, the buying of tickets was a commercial transaction, but it was disguised under a veneer of aristocratic sociability in a manner very characteristic of London’s advanced urban culture.260

Bach and Abel’s concert series was not only ‘a vital marketing tool in building a reputation and maintaining public visibility, but … was’, as for most instrumentalists in eighteenth-century London, ‘primarily a way of engineering … essential contacts with influential and wealthy patrons at the core of the musical structure’.261

Concerts were given weekly, with J. C. Bach and Abel directing the concerts on alternate Wednesdays. Subscription tickets could be purchased at J. C. Bach’s house, on the corner of Carlisle and Dean streets262 near Soho or Kings Square.263

Plate 13 shows J. C. Bach’s house as it appears today. Coincidentally, the security alarm of the ‘Jazz@Pizza Express’ shop located directly opposite Bach’s house is labelled ‘Abel’ (Plate 14).

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261 Ibid., p. 32.


263 An engraving entitled Soho or King’s Square, by Sutton Nicholls (fl. 1680–1740), dated 1754, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an10268665). See ‘Soho Squ.’, in Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Cn.
Plate 13 Johann Christian Bach’s house.
Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 14 The security alarm labelled ‘Abel’ located directly opposite Johann Christian Bach’s house.
Source: Photo by the author.
The music presented at the Bach-Abel concert series ‘was doubtless of fine quality, yet … the [high-society] audience was largely interested in itself and came to see and be seen … In 1774 Bach deposited £3595 in the bank as the season’s gross revenue from the undertaking—not a bad intake in any century.’

Not surprisingly, the use of a Zumpe square piano in the Bach-Abel subscription concerts would have brought the instrument to the attention of both potential and socially influential buyers.

Charles Burney remarks:

After the arrival of Johann Christian Bach in this country … all the harpsichord makers tried their mechanical powers at piano-fortes; but their first attempts were always on the large size [that is, grand pianos], till Zumpé … constructed small piano-fortes of the shape and size of the virginal, of which the tone was very sweet, and the touch, with a little use, equal to any degree of rapidity. These, from their low price, and the convenience of their form, as well as their power of expression, suddenly grew into such favour, that there was scarcely a house in the kingdom where a keyed instrument had ever had admission, but was supplied with one of Zumpé’s piano-fortes. In short, he could not make them fast enough to gratify the craving of the public.

One infers from the opening of Burney’s statement that J. C. Bach’s preference was unequivocally in favour of the piano rather than the harpsichord. This is not surprising. Between 1750 and 1754, J. C. Bach studied music in Berlin under his half-brother Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–88). The extraordinary expressivity of Emanuel Bach’s musical style, and the sound of the grand piano by Gottfried Silbermann that C. P. E. Bach used to accompany the flute-playing Frederick the Great (1712–86) (within the context of the royal concerts at Sanssouci—Frederick’s summer palace—and at the Berlin court), may have inspired J. C. Bach to support piano making in London.

[Although] Burney gives no date for the first appearance of … [Zumpe’s square pianos], the start of … [the Bach-Abel concert series] in 1764 must have roughly coincided with the time the piano first came into fashion in London. This is not contradicted by the date of the four earliest surviving Zumpe square pianos, all made in 1766.
'Documentary evidence shows that both J. C. Bach and Charles Burney thought so highly of Zumpe’s square pianos that they willingly acted as agents, recommending them to friends and acquaintances everywhere.'

**Gabriel Buntebart**

It is likely that as harpsichord maker to Queen Charlotte, Gabriel Buntebart provided politically valuable connections between Zumpe and the palace. Buntebart may even have been involved with Zumpe’s work from the very beginning in 1766. From 1768 onwards, the names of both Zumpe and Buntebart appear jointly on the nameboard of Zumpe’s pianos, which are inscribed: *Johannes Zumpe et Buntebart Londini fecerunt*. Given the popularity of Zumpe’s pianos, it is reasonable to assume the need for increased production was the catalyst for Zumpe’s partnership with Buntebart.

Buntebart was J. C. Bach’s close friend and business associate. Evidence of some of their financial transactions is preserved in Bach’s bank accounts of the 1770s. (‘An interesting feature of some surviving pianos by Buntebart is the presence of J.C. Bach’s endorsement which appears as a faint but legible signature at the far edge of the soundboard.’)

After Zumpe and Buntebart amicably dissolved their business partnership on Friday, 25 September 1778, it was Buntebart who supplied a grand piano for Queen Charlotte. If Charlotte Papendeik (the assistant keeper of Queen Charlotte’s wardrobe) observed correctly, this ‘superb instrument’ may have been ‘a little hard in the touch’. Doubtless, J. C. Bach was an essential link in the process associated with the Queen’s acquisition of a grand piano by Buntebart.

**Frederick and Christian Schoene**

Following the dissolution (by mutual consent) of Zumpe and Buntebart’s business partnership in 1778,

Zumpe established a new workshop … in a newly built house in Princes Street [off the northern side of Oxford Street] near Cavendish Square.
In 1782 he relinquished this address and the business to the brothers Frederick and Christian Schoene (born 1749 and 1747 respectively). They came from his home town Fürth: like him they had previously served an apprenticeship there. Presumably they paid Zumpe royalties because the inscription of their pianos reads *Schoene & Company/Successors to Johannes Zumpe etc.* The name Zumpe is purposely written much bolder than Schoene, sometimes leading to mistaken identifications. Buntebart meanwhile … took a new partner, Christoph Julius Ludwig Sievers, from Hanover, who presumably brought new capital into the business.\textsuperscript{276}

In the mid-1780s, the Schoene brothers made improvements to Zumpe’s action by including

an intermediate lever between the hammer and the key. This had the effect of transforming the action from one in which the acceleration ratio between the hammer and the key increases as the key is depressed, to one in which it decreases … this makes for much easier finger control. Moreover, this second lever also increased the damping factor of the action, reducing hammer rebound. This action … was capable of rapid and reliable repetition and of a wider dynamic range; the overall performance of this action was not improved further until the advent of [Sébastien] Érard’s double-escapement action in the 1820s.\textsuperscript{277}

**Zumpe’s Pianos are an Inspiration**

Zumpe’s square pianos so captivated hearts and minds that professional and amateur musicians alike ‘almost fell over each other in their intense desire to explore and exploit the piano’s potential for both brilliance and subtlety of expression’.\textsuperscript{278}

Because Zumpe’s square pianos have a keyboard compass\textsuperscript{279}

of almost five octaves\textsuperscript{280} … they could be used for virtually any published music. Their clear articulation and charmingly novel tone made them ideal for the kind of … sonatas … as provided by J. C. Bach (and his brothers), Boccherini, [Baldassare] Galuppi [1706–85] and dozens of lesser masters. The soundboard is very small, but the success of their

\textsuperscript{276} Cole, ‘John Zumpe’.
\textsuperscript{277} Clarke, ‘The English Piano’, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{278} Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, p. xv.
\textsuperscript{279} See ‘Compass’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
\textsuperscript{280} An ‘octave’ is the sounding distance between two pitches, where the sound of the higher pitch is produced by vibrations that are double the frequency of the lower pitch; the sound of the lower pitch is produced by vibrations that are half the frequency of the higher pitch. See ‘Octave’, in ibid.
distinctive tone originated chiefly in very robust string tensions (greater than on any piano made before)\textsuperscript{281} and the voicing of their tiny hammers by covering them with soft bookbinders’ leather.\textsuperscript{282}

The softness, elasticity and durability of leather depend on the type of tanning process.\textsuperscript{283} ‘Deer, goat, sheep, and calf can make good covering material, though it seems that goat and deer are more likely to be found in English square pianos.’\textsuperscript{284} The leather found on a 1769 Zumpe is vegetable-tanned sheepskin—but beware, an eighteenth-century sheep bears no resemblance to today’s animal, which has such a relatively massive coat that the skin structure is compromised. ‘Vegetable tanning is the oldest [tanning] method, dating back to prehistory. It involves treating in tannic acid from plant/tree material’,\textsuperscript{285} often using a combination of several tree species—‘oak or spruce bark, chestnut wood, sumach leaves, and oakgall’\textsuperscript{286}—for the best results. Vegetable-tanned leather is easily recognisable by its yellow or light-beige coloration.\textsuperscript{287} The tanning process ‘is generally slow (6–12 weeks), [and] involves numerous manual bath changes and stirring, [resulting] … in leather that will need to be physically worked and oiled to become flexible again’.\textsuperscript{288}

Several eighteenth-century piano makers (for example, Adam Beyer and John Broadwood) used ‘alum-tawed goat skin … It is usually white, soft, and flexible, but when you pull it does not stretch … However, another frequent choice by historic makers was thin vegetable-tanned calf. It is flexible, but ultimately it is not so durable.’\textsuperscript{289}

The succulent treble of Zumpe’s square pianos was especially suited to the prominent melodic lines and the expressive subtlety of music written in the fashionable ‘galant’ style. Like most stylistic labels (perhaps even more than most), the term galant is a vague one.

In non-musical discourse of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its signification varied with the user, covering such a broad range of meanings as to embrace virtually opposite attributes—brave, noble, chivalrous, courtly, lascivious, immoral. Often it was simply an

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{281} The geometry of the design of Zumpe’s pianos results in a very short string scaling. By way of example, for c2, ‘Zumpe, pushing the material to its limits, used ferrous wire on a 12-inch scaling’. Debenham and Cole, ‘Pioneer Piano Makers in London’.
\textsuperscript{282} Cole, ‘John Zumpe including Gabriel Buntebart’.
\textsuperscript{283} See ‘Tanning’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{286} L. Vass and M. Molnár, Handmade Shoes for Men (Potsdam: H. F. Ullmann, 2006), p. 93.
\textsuperscript{287} Ibid., p. 93.\textsuperscript{288} ‘Vegetable Tanning’, in Strange, ‘Re-Leathering Your Square Piano Hammers and Action Parts’.
\end{footnotes}
approbatory adjective describing what was modish ... Although the application of galant to music was often wide ranging and imprecise, a general concept of galant composition emerged towards the middle of the eighteenth century: easily accessible, agreeable, flowing music, in which melody predominated [commonly comprising predictable, symmetrically balanced phrase lengths] and accompaniment played a subordinate role, or, negatively, music that avoided contrapuntal texture or other compositional complexity, and made no stringent demands on the intellect or emotions of the listener.290

In some instances, adjectives such as ‘urbane’, ‘elegant’, ‘pleasing’, ‘light’ and ‘charming’ were used to conceal judgment of the galant style as being superficial, facile and short-winded. Such a judgment is reflected, for example, in the opinions of the eighteenth-century English music theorist Sir John Hawkins (1731 – ca 1800), who, in his An Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music (published in 1770), states:

For reasons, which no one is willing to avow, adagio music is exploded, and we are content to forego [sic] the majesty and dignity of the largo and andante movements, with all the variety arising from the interchange of various airs and measures, for the noise and rattle of an unisonous allegro, to which no name can be given, or the intoxicating softness of that too-often iterated air, the minuet.291

It is not surprising that, as a 69-year-old, Hawkins found it difficult to adapt to the aesthetic changes wrought by the emergence of the galant style; as with many innovative musical styles, galant was ‘at once proposition’ (that is, an experimental style, whose aesthetic, emotional and compositional limits were untested) ‘and resolution’ (that is, a style defined by specific aesthetic and compositional parameters).292

In London, the musical strengths of Zumpe’s pianos and the compositional characteristics of the galant style not only found themselves inextricably linked, but also inspired composers to produce some of the late eighteenth century’s most extraordinarily beautiful piano music.

Several decades after Zumpe’s invention, the square piano was still viewed in a more than favourable light. A dealer’s catalogue dated 1789 describes some

291 Quoted in Hogwood, Liner notes for Johann Christian Bach, p. 2.
of the advantages of the square piano: ‘Their tones are remarkably sweet and
delicate, and their structure renders them agreeable for travelling with, as they
may be conveyed and even performed upon in a coach.’

A complex mixture of social and economic factors contributed to the square
piano’s popularity. During the late eighteenth century, trade was the foundation
of the English economy. As a consequence, the ‘professional’ classes acquired
more wealth and influence, many finding themselves both with the desire for
and in a position to purchase a ‘small piano-forte’; the status of ‘gentlemen’ was
associated not only with wealth, but also with ownership of a piano.

Zumpe’s Pianos in England and Abroad

The Professional Class: Piano music and hedonism

In 1709, the English author, journalist and pamphleteer Daniel Defoe (ca 1660–
1731) described England’s socioeconomic groups as

1. The great, who live profusely.
2. The rich, who live plentifully.
3. The middle sort, who live well.
4. The working trades, who labour hard, but feel no want.
5. The country people, farmers, &c, who fare indifferently.
6. The poor, that fare hard.
7. The miserable, that really pinch and suffer want.

Defoe’s ‘middle sort’ included both the lower end of ‘the rich’ and the upper end
of ‘the working trades’. ‘Contemporary observers noted the apparent ease by
which gentility could be acquired via … prosperity, and thus how new blood
from trade or the professions swelled the ranks of the “genteel”.’

A large number of the people in late eighteenth-century England who owned
a piano and who bought and played piano music belonged to the ‘middle sort’.
This socioeconomic group is now commonly described as middle class; this is

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293 Music Trades Review, 15 December 1890, p. 21, Col. 1.
294 See ‘The Professional Class: Piano music and hedonism’, below.
296 Defoe’s fame derives from his novel Robinson Crusoe.
298 Ibid., p. 13.
not a term with which the middle sort would have been familiar. ‘Such people probably did not consider themselves to be part of a monolithic … [middle] class, but rather as part of a professional class.’\textsuperscript{299}

The ‘professional class’ comprised those who did not hold hereditary noble titles, and who earned

\begin{quote}

a living by some (legal) activity other than manual labour … [The professional class] was a highly diverse group, extending from very wealthy industrialists and commercial magnates and bankers, through the ranks of lawyers, physicians, and holders of middle-tier government posts, down to small shop keepers, minor officials, and school teachers.\textsuperscript{300}
\end{quote}

At the ‘lower’ end of this social spectrum, certain trades possessed an inherently higher status than others. For example, goldsmiths and watchmakers were considered to be more ‘respectable’ than shoemakers and butchers. Traditionally, apprentices were held in low esteem, regarded as ‘members of a youth sub-culture prone to frivolous behaviour, irresponsibility, riot, and in the worst cases, criminality’.\textsuperscript{301}

As the professional class became increasingly affluent,

\begin{quote}

their demand for music in diverse forms increased and spread to an ever-widening fraction of the population. Hearing music performed professionally and having the means to perform it oneself were luxury goods, defined by economists as goods whose consumption rises more than proportionately with advances in real income.\textsuperscript{302}
\end{quote}

The expansion of the professional class presented significant opportunities for social mobility.

One was recognised as a gentleman through the acquisition of the proper clothing, manners, fashionable possessions and, most importantly, the ability to support oneself without manual labour.\textsuperscript{303}

The piano became a status symbol, not only because elaborately inlaid instruments were expensive, but also because they provided the

\textsuperscript{302} Scherer, \textit{Quarter Notes and Bank Notes}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{303} Loesser, \textit{Men, Women, and Pianos}, p. 185.
opportunity for a gentleman’s wife and/or daughters to acquire and display musical skill, which was considered a highly attractive genteel ‘accomplishment’.  

Genteel families and those aspiring to higher ranks subscribed to the belief that among women an appearance of leisure, combined with moderate artistic accomplishments reflected directly on their families’ prestige in society. Alongside needlework, drawing, and an understanding of foreign languages, the ability to sing and play the piano were considered highly desirable skills for nubile ladies who were expected to parlay their accomplishments into suitable matrimonial matches. Unsurprisingly, women were important consumers of keyboard music in the late eighteenth century, a considerable amount of which was written to meet what was seen as their tastes and needs.

The presence in the home of a piano served not only to substantiate a gentleman’s claims to consequence, but was also useful in revealing his innate moral character; the piano continued to function in this regard well into the early nineteenth century. For example, in Jane Austen’s (1775–1817) novel, Pride and Prejudice (1813), Mr. Darcy’s gift to his sister of a piano demonstrates his generosity and readiness to care for the women nearest to him. Tender recesses of Darcy’s character are thus revealed, and by strong implication, his potential kindness as a husband. Simultaneously, Austen shows that a piano was regarded as an essential feature of gentility.

Making music at the piano was often the primary source of entertainment in the home, and amateur musicians (often members of the professional class) sought both ‘diversion and refuge in providing their own musical entertainments … Images of elegant ladies, gentlemen, and children playing instruments permeate … the arts of … [the] period’.

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304 Conway, The Advent of the Zumpe Square Pianoforte, p. 12.
‘The salon was the locus where music became a commodity which could be exchanged for social status.’ In the salon, the aspirational, status-conscious professional class sought to emulate the tastes and materialistic ostentation of the wealthy aristocracy; the purchase and ownership of a piano enhanced this aim.

It appears that there was no limit to the obsessive materialism of the professional class. In Essays on Practical Education, the Anglo-Irish novelist Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849) wrote (in collaboration with her father) of ‘the higher classes in life … it is in vain that they intrench themselves, they are pursued by the intrusive vulgar. In a wealthy mercantile nation there is nothing which can be bought for money, that will not long continue to be an envied distinction.’

In attempting to provide a reason for the ‘addictive consumption of the late 18th century’, Colin Campbell proposes that it was a ‘modern hedonism, an individual pleasure in luxury material goods’ within the context of ‘a newly legitimised commercial society’ that motivated the affluent, multi-layered ranks of the professional class to imitate the manners, ‘luxury tastes and conspicuous consumption of the wealthy elite’.

During the late eighteenth century, the enriched bourgeoisie’s hedonistically motivated hunger for belongings, as well as its insatiable appetite for style and fashion, radically changed patterns of consumption. This ‘consumer revolution’ sometimes catalysed shrewd responses from craftsmen. The production and marketing strategies of Josiah Wedgwood (1730–95; ‘Potter to her Majesty’) provide us with a particularly fine example. Wedgwood’s vision was to expand the market for his pottery by

not simply ... churning out cheap cups and plates for a mass market, but by replicating a luxury product for a wider clientele. He invented a classic design subliminally identified with aristocratic culture ['Wedgwood cultivated a taste for classical forms and ornamentation in reaction to earlier rococo styles'], only to develop the revolutionary technical processes and working methods needed to reproduce it in

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309 Chanan, Musica Practica, p. 141.
310 The educational writer and engineer Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744–1817).
315 See ibid., p. 5.
quantity for a bourgeois market. Yet Wedgwood still made sure to woo royalty and aristocratic patrons, retaining an image of luxury as he sold in large numbers. His success was nicely dependent upon retaining the prestige value of his products: if the brand became too widely diluted it would lose its exclusive cache, disdained by the aristocracy and thus no longer desirable to the emergent bourgeoisie either.318

The production and sale of square pianos in late eighteenth-century London mirror Wedgwood’s production and marketing strategies. Piano makers were quick to follow Wedgwood’s ‘concept of commercialising a luxury product … simultaneously’ making it relatively cheap and ‘widely desirable’.319 The square piano, in particular, represented a new and desirable type of luxury item. In its most unadorned, basic version, it was not specifically ‘crafted for high society’,320 and yet through ownership of a square piano, the ‘modernity, politeness, respectability, and independence’321 associated with the values of the aristocracy were instantly made available to members of the professional class.

Ownership of a square piano by an aspiring professional-class family was a visible symbol of respectability (which was ‘the sharpest of all lines of social division’), and placed ‘the piano … at the centre of social change’, identifying it as ‘a potent symbol of social emulation’.322 This is not to say that a square piano might not have been ‘desired for its own sake rather than for any prestige which may’ have been attached to it (after all, a square piano does yield its ‘own immediate and obvious satisfactions’).323 The professional class was ‘both able and willing to purchase a product previously’ identified with ‘aristocratic consumption patterns’.324

Social standing, pretence or hedonism were not the only things that may have stimulated many in the professional class to purchase a piano; the notion that a true gentleman should express his emotions in a refined and/or artistically mediated way may also have had an influence. In the end, ‘a variety of … meanings, motives and intentions’325 goes towards explaining why the professional class regarded the square piano as an essential part of their material world.

319 Ibid., p. 9.
320 Ibid., p. 7.
324 Ibid., p. 40.
325 Ibid., p. 41.
The design of the square piano ensured that it could be made inexpensively and reproduced (handcrafted) easily. The late eighteenth-century ubiquity suggests that the professional class placed ‘value on craftsmanship, on beauty, on being able to see and feel the hand of the artisan behind the [instrument]’.326 Their response was an emotional as well as an aesthetic one.

The professional class overwhelmingly ‘came to be thought of as a “public”—a group with growing economic clout, and one thought to hold certain collective ideas, wishes, and tastes’.327 At the end of the eighteenth century, this was a completely new notion. Some researchers ‘with a xenophile agenda have suggested that interest in pianos and piano music was superficial and reflected no genuine musicality on the part of the British’—for example, Hermann Muthesius (1861–1927), ‘that intense watcher of the British’, explained to his German audience328 that ‘the English are probably the most unmusical race in the world’).329 ‘They forget that people, however rich or poor, are not generally inclined to spend their money on something they don’t like or don’t understand, nor to raise their social standing by acquiring something unless it is highly valued and prized by society.’330

As the 1700s gave way to the new century, London piano makers did not restrict themselves to the home market. In relation to the sale and distribution of English pianos on the Continent, the trade embargo imposed on English goods during the Napoleonic wars amounted to nothing more (at least for entrepreneurial London piano makers) than a passing inconvenience. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, ‘the manufacture of British pianos represented not only a significant export but also a powerful symbol of national technological prowess and modernity’.331

Zumpe’s ‘Small Piano-Forte’ Copied Abroad

By 1780, many instrument makers throughout Europe had copied Zumpe’s concept—for example: in Stockholm, Pehr Linholm (1742–1813) and Mathias Peter Kraft (1753–1807); in Amsterdam, Meinke Meyer (ca 1740–?); in Paris, Balthazar Péronard (fl. 1760–89) and Johann Kilian Mercken (1743–1819); in

Brussels, Henrique van Casteel (fl. ca late 1750s–70s); in Berne, Johann Ludwig Hellen (1716–81); in Madrid, Antonio Enríquez (fl. ca late 1770s); and in Seville, Juan del Mârmol (1737–?). Given the current paucity of research into the dissemination of Zumpe’s ideas on the Continent, it is possible that other such makers will be identified in the future.332

‘The late eighteenth century ‘English square piano’, with its origins in Zumpe’s square pianos, was the instrument that established the piano both as an item of trade and as a cultural artefact of central significance.’333

### The Cost of Zumpe’s Pianos

Charles Burney ascribes the success of Zumpe’s square pianos, in part, to ‘their low price’.334 Compared with harpsichords, Zumpe’s square pianos were inexpensive; in the 1770s, at 16 guineas each,335 they were priced at the equivalent of approximately one-half to one-third of the cost of a single-manual harpsichord. Shudi, for example, ‘charged between thirty-five and forty guineas for a single-manual instrument, fifty guineas for … [a] single-manual [harpsichord] with an added “Venetian swell”336 device he invented, and eighty guineas for [a] double-manual harpsichord … with the swell’.337

Reckoned in today’s monetary values, the price of a Zumpe square piano was approximately £1070 (that is, approximately A$1900).338 During the 1780s in London, ‘a prosperous tradesman’s family lived well on £350’ (approximately £22 000, or A$39 000). ‘People with incomes of between ca. £50’ (£3100, or approximately A$5600) and £200 (£12 600, approximately A$22 000) ‘a year who could afford some of life’s pleasures constituted about a quarter of the population’.339

During the mid-1780s, the usual cost of a square piano made in London ranged between 15 and 20 guineas340 (£990–1300, or approximately A$1800–2400). This represents about one-fifteenth of an annual middle-class income. (Analogously,

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333 The University of Edinburgh, Russell Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments, St Cecilia’s Hall, Niddrey Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JL, catalogue no. P2-ZJ1768.35 (n.d.), p. 89.
334 Burney, *Harpischord*.
335 In late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England, piano prices ‘were always quoted in the dignifying unit of guineas’. Ehrlich, *The Piano*, p. 39.
337 Leppert, ‘Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism’, p. 82, fn. 27.
338 Currency conversion using The National Archives; Universal Currency Converter.
339 Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 146.
this is the current equivalent in Australia of the cost of a reasonable-quality home entertainment system. Unlike contemporary home entertainment systems, however, the making of piano-based chamber music encourages both community and communication.) At the same time, 6d would buy enough meat and drink for a journeyman's dinner [a journeyman cabinet-maker earned between 15s and £1 a week], 1lb of candles cost 2s 10d, a ticket for the Messiah at the Foundling Hospital was 10s 6d and a set of false teeth with gold springs at £73 10s cost more than a [good single-manual] harpsichord; little wonder that many got dead drunk on gin for 2d.342

The Popularity of the ‘English’ Piano in Paris

During the late eighteenth century, the only city that rivalled London in importance and influence was Paris.343 Only a handful of years after the invention of the ‘English’ (that is, Zumpe-style) piano, the instrument (and the music it inspired) had spread to the French capital. By 1770, J. C. Bach had arranged for at least one piano to be shipped to Paris (whether this instrument was a square piano made by Zumpe is not known).

On Wednesday, 20 June 1770, Charles Burney, whilst in Paris, encountered the pianist Madame Anne Louise Brillon de Jouy.344 Burney reports:

There was a good deal of company at dinner which was excellent and bien servi. After coffee we went into the music room where I found an English pianoforte [that is, a Zumpe-style square piano]345 which Mr. [J. C.] Bach had sent her. She played a great deal and I found she had not acquired her reputation in music without meriting it.346

During the Ancien Régime, playing the harpsichord and the fortepiano was a favoured pursuit for French aristocratic women.348

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342 Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, p. 146.
343 See Burnett, Company of Pianos, p. 133.
344 See ‘Mutations’, above.
345 The Zumpe-style square piano was widely called ‘the English piano forte’. See Debenham and Cole, ‘Pioneer Piano Makers in London’.
346 Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770, pp. 19–20.
347 ‘While literally meaning the “old” or “former” regime, and properly describing the aristocratic and political system of rule established from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the term ancien régime has become synonymous with the years immediately preceding the French Revolution.’ E. Cross, ‘The Ancien Régime’, in Napoleon: Revolution to Empire (Melbourne: The Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, 2012), p. 49.
Madame Brillon was ‘rather pretty … charming … polite, easy … naturally cheerful’, and often played host to musical luminaries. Her musical abilities were greatly respected by, for example, J. C. Bach, Luigi Boccherini, Johann Schobert, Ernst Eichner (1740–77) and Henri-Joseph Rigel (1741–99). Madame Brillon also enjoyed the company of the political and social elite. Benjamin Franklin, for example, became a close friend.

In the year following the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin went to Paris to represent American interests. He stayed there throughout the Revolutionary War, returning after eight years in 1785. Franklin—now a widower in his seventies—did not let politics stand in the way of earthly pleasures. He spent a good deal of time socializing with the women of France to whom he was unceasingly attracted. Franklin was a lover of music, and he was able to combine his interest in women, chess, and music in twice-weekly gatherings at the home of … Madame Brillon de Jouy. Madame Brillon was the thirty-three-year-old wife of a wealthy civil servant. At first Franklin’s attention to Madame Brillon was rather more than platonic—and her habit of sitting in his lap in the presence of others stimulated at least rumours. But before long, they adopted a father–daughter relationship, and she referred to him affectionately in her voluminous correspondence as ‘mon cher Papa’.

The date of Burney’s visit to Madame Brillon (20 June 1770) indicates that she was among the first Parisians to own a piano. Her connection with J. C. Bach, and the fact that Burney describes Madame Brillon’s piano as ‘English’—that is, a Zumpe-style square piano—allow for conjecture that the instrument may have been made by Zumpe.

Charles Burney mentions that Zumpe had been in Paris in 1770. Unfortunately, the exact date of Zumpe’s visit to the French capital is unknown, as are details concerning his activities whilst there. Charles Burney’s encounter with Madame Brillon and her ‘English pianoforte’ took place on 20 June 1770. If Zumpe made Madame Brillon’s square piano, perhaps he personally delivered the instrument to her during the first six months of 1770. Had this been so, however, the evening’s conversation would surely have revealed that Madame Brillon’s square piano was relatively new, and that the piano’s maker (by 1770, Zumpe was a famous man) had travelled from London to deliver the instrument; Burney remains silent in relation to these matters. It is also possible that Madame

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349 Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770, p. 19.
351 Burney, Music, Men & Manners in France & Italy 1770, p. 19.
352 See ibid., p. 27.
353 Ibid., p. 19.
Brillon’s English pianoforte\textsuperscript{354} was an instrument made by Frederick Beck, Adam Beyer (fl. 1768–1801), Christopher Ganer (fl. 1774–1809), Johannes Pohlmann or the brothers Frederick and Christian Schoene.

\textit{Un Inventaire sous La Terreur}

Thanks to the meticulous record-keeping of the French revolutionaries, the popularity of the English square piano in France during the 1770s and 1780s is exposed. During the Reign of Terror (Thursday, 5 September 1793 – Monday, 28 July 1794), an \textit{Inventaire}\textsuperscript{355} of ‘confiscated ancient and foreign instruments which were ‘\textit{les plus rares, par leur perfection}’ [the most rare, because of their perfection] was made by the eleventh sub-commission of a ‘\textit{Commission temporaire des arts}’\textsuperscript{356}.

The Commission temporaire des arts (Temporary Commission of Arts) was established to protect the objects confiscated from the French aristocracy and bourgeoisie from vandalism. The Commission included two musicians: 1) violinist (at the Comédie Italiene, one of the three principal theatres of Paris) and composer Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni (1757–1821); and 2) Bernard de Sarette (1765–1858), the first director of the Institut National de Musique—subsequently the Conservatoire National de Musique).

On Saturday, 3 May 1794 (12 weeks and two days before the Reign of Terror came to an end), the Commission temporaire des arts decreed that authorisation had been given for ‘the professors of the Institut National de Musique to betake themselves, together with the commissioners, into the houses of the emigrated and the condemned, there to choose the best musical instruments for the use of the Institute’.\textsuperscript{357} The instruments were to be brought to a specially designated depot.

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{356} Gadd, \textit{The British Art Piano and Piano Design}, Vol. 1, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{357} Loesser, \textit{Men, Women and Pianos}, p. 322.
Antonio Bruni supervised the seizure of instruments, a process that began on 3 May 1794, and concluded more than 15 months later, on Tuesday, 18 August 1795. Bruni and de Sarette ‘visited 111 houses and mansions of the emigrated and the condemned, removing 367 items’.358

Although there were 33 houses that owned one or more pianos and no harpsichords or spinets, there were 31 other houses that owned one or more harpsichords but no pianos. Nevertheless, most of the dated harpsichords are earlier than the dated pianos and none of the seventeen houses with both harpsichords and pianos appears to have acquired a harpsichord after purchasing a piano, assuming the harpsichords were all acquired when new. Except for one, those houses that certainly or probably owned grand pianos had no other keyboard instrument.359

Confiscated keyboard instruments provided the fledgling Institut National de Musique with an instrument collection,360 a public ‘Cabinet of instruments’361 that ‘served as models because of their working principles’.362 Although instruments were stored in preparation for the establishment of a museum collection, little action was taken in relation to the matter ‘until 1861, when Louis Clappisson was finally put in place as curator’.363 (During the cold winters of the early 1800s, some of the confiscated instruments were used as firewood. During the winter of 1816, 20 harpsichords met their fate in this way.)364 Thankfully, not all seized instruments found their way into the collection of the Institut National de Musique. Some of the confiscated instruments were returned to the families of their guillotined owners365—however, not all. Certain ‘high executives’ of the Directoire exécutif or Directory (‘a body of five directors that held executive power in France from 26 October 1795 until 10 November 1799, following the end of the Reign of Terror’),366 ‘as well as other highly placed officials seem to have taken’ the declaration of the instruments as ‘property of the nation’ quite personally … One of the Directors … Jean-François Rewbell [1747–1807] … had a Taskin harpsichord and a Schoene piano, quite

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358 Ibid., p. 324.
360 Some of the instruments in this collection ‘form the basis of the collection of the … Conservatoire in Paris, now in the Cité de la Musique’. Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 391, fn. 55.
impartially, sent home for the use of his wife. Lazare Carnot [1753–1823], another exalted Director, must have been quite a music lover, for he helped himself to three pianos. The high-talking political moralist [Louis-Marie] Larevellière-Lepeaux [1753–1824], another of the nation’s chief executives, took four instruments. [Pierre] Benezech [1775–1802], Minister of the Interior, inspired by the example of his superiors, also took a grab from the bag, but contented himself with a single organ—as did citizen [Charles] Cochon [de Lapparent, 1750–1825], a mere modest Minister of Police. However, citizen Angibault, Comptroller of Buildings, seems to have been quite drunk with musical enthusiasm, for he pilfered no fewer than seven instruments, some of them amongst the most valuable … It appears that … when the Conservatoire … [formed its] museum, not one of the enthusiastically ‘socialized’ instruments was at hand for inclusion.367

Of the seized keyboard instruments, 62 were harpsichords and 71 were pianos.368 Amongst the instruments catalogued as a *clavecin* (harpsichord), one made in 1769 (24 years before the start of the Reign of Terror) by Jean-Henri Silbermann (1727–99) may have been one of Silbermann’s *Hammerflügel* (grand pianos):369

92.—Un clavecin en bois de noyer, par Jean Henri Silbermann, année 1769, à Strasbourg.

[A harpsichord of walnut wood, by Jean Henri Silbermann, year 1769, from Strasbourg.]

(Confiscated from Laurent Planelli de Mascrany de la Valette, Baron de Maubec.)

‘The surviving pianos by Silbermann … all have plain walnut cases while numerous French harpsichords of the second half of the eighteenth century are painted and further decorated with gold bands.’371 That the confiscated 1769 instrument is described as a *clavecin* is confusing. ‘Perhaps Silbermann’s *Hammerflügel* and other [instruments] like them were not … considered as pianos but as expressive harpsichords.’372

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368 See Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 369.
370 ‘XXII Inventaire du 16 Messidor l’an Ile’, in Bruni, *Un Inventaire sous La Terreur*.
372 Ibid., p. 368.
Some of the other seized clavecins may also have been grand pianos. One of the named harpsichords of the confiscated 62 is listed as an undated clavecin by Louis Dulcken (1733 – after 1793). ‘Another, a clavecin anglais by John Broadwood, dated 1789, was almost certainly one of his grand pianos.’

Of the 22 seized French-made pianos, 13 were by Sébastien Érard or by the ‘Érard frères’ (Érard brothers); ‘this is over half again as many as all other French makes put together’.

Of the 71 pianos seized from the aristocracy, 68 were square pianos: 34 were made in London; 22 were by Parisian makers; one was ‘Un forte-piano allemand par Henrion’, a German-style square piano by Henri Henrion (fl. ca 1780); and the remaining 11 square pianos were the work of unidentified makers.

Dated square pianos … were made between 1769 and 1791. [With the exception of two instruments] … twelve of the dated forte-pianos made between 1769 to 1782 were English. Of those made between 1783 and 1791, sixteen were English and eighteen were French. Apparently, until about 1782, the Parisians preferred … [imported square pianos] from London rather than equivalents made in Paris.

The Inventaire lists instruments made by Frederick Beck (five pianos), Adam Beyer (two combination piano-organs), Christopher Ganer (one piano), Johannes Pohlmann (four pianos) and Zumpe’s successors, the brothers Frederick and Christian Schoene (nine pianos). Bruni’s Inventaire attests not only to the popularity in Paris of instruments by these London-based makers, but also to the popularity in Paris of English pianos.

Listed amongst the confiscated pianos are seven instruments made by Zumpe: six pianos and an ‘organized piano’ (claviorganum)—that is, a square piano mounted on, and incorporated with, an organ. An organized piano may sound as a piano, an organ or as a simultaneous combination of both. With

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374 Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 369.
375 Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos, p. 324.
376 See Bruni, Un Inventaire sous La Terreur. See also Hess, ‘The Transition from Harpsichord to Piano’, Charts IV and V, pp. 83–90; and Latcham, ‘In the Shadow of the Enlightenment’, p. 10.
377 Bruni, Un Inventaire sous La Terreur, entry no. 1, p. 1.
379 Ibid., p. 10.
380 See ‘Frederick Beck and Christopher Fuhrlohg’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
381 See ‘iv) Adam Beyer (fl. 1768–1801)’, in Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
382 See ‘xxiii) Johannes Pohlmann (fl. 1767–93)’, in ibid.
383 See ‘xxvi) Frederick and Christian Schoene (fl. 1780s)’, in ibid.
384 See ‘vi) Adam Beyer (fl. 1768–1801)’, in Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
385 See ‘xii) Christopher Ganer’, in ibid.
386 See ‘xxvi) Frederick and Christian Schoene (fl. 1780s)’, in ibid.
Zumpe’s organized piano, the piano and the organ were combined using a single keyboard. A special feature of all such combination instruments is that by modifying the touch (hard, accentuated touch or soft, legato style of playing) either the sound of the piano or that of the organ can be emphasised.

There is a paucity of surviving repertoire written specifically for the organized piano. Two works are particularly impressive.

1. Dmytro Stepanovic Bortniansky’s (1751–1825) *Sinfonia concertante*, composed in 1790 (Bortniansky worked at the imperial court in St Petersburg). In addition to a ‘fortepiano organisé’, the work is scored for two violins, harp, viola da gamba, bassoon and violoncello.

2. Domenico Cimarosa’s (1749–1801) *Sextet in F major*. In addition to a ‘pianoforte organizzato’, the work is scored for a colourful mixture of instruments: violin, harp, viola da gamba, bassoon and violoncello.

There are no extant solo pieces for the organized piano; this sad state of affairs may be explained by the fact that every piano piece from the period not exceeding the commonly encountered keyboard compass (F–f) could also be played on an organized piano.

The *Inventaire* contains the following seven entries in relation to instruments made by Zumpe:

19.—Un forte-piano de Johannes Zumpe, Londini, année 1787.  
[A piano by Johannes Zumpe, London, year 1787.]  
(Confiscated from Joseph-Bernard de Chabert, Marquis de Gogolin.)

35.—Un forte-piano anglais, de Johannes Zumpe, année 1774.  
[An english piano, by Johannes Zumpe, year 1774.]  
(Confiscated from Charles-René-Félix de Vintimille, Marquis de Luc.)

73.—Un forte-piano organisé, par Johannes Zumpe: Londini fecit, année 1771.  
[A claviorganum, by Johannes Zumpe: made in London, year 1771.]  
(Confiscated from Count Pierre-Gaspard-Marie Grimod d’Orsay.)

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387 See ibid., p. 370. During the eighteenth century, the claviorganum seems to have enjoyed a particular popularity in England.
393 ‘XVI Inventaire du 6 Messidor l’an Ile, rue de Varenne’, in ibid.
In late eighteenth-century Paris, the term ‘English piano’—that is, an English square piano—was commonly regarded as being synonymous with the term ‘piano’. During the 1770s, Zumpe’s square pianos were especially sought after, so much so that cost was no impediment to ownership. For example, Burney, whilst acting as an agent for Zumpe, opportunistically quoted an inflated price to the philosopher, art critic and writer Denis Diderot (1713–84) of 28 guineas \(^{398}\) (in London during the 1770s, a Zumpe square piano cost only about 16 guineas). \(^{399}\) That Zumpe had a fine reputation in Paris is further revealed by implication in the following listing taken from the Inventaire:

\[141.—\text{Un forte-piano anglais de Schoene, successor de Johannes Zumpe, Londini fecerunt, estimé 800 francs.}\]

[An English piano by Schoene, successor to Johannes Zumpe, made in London, estimated 800 francs.]

(Confiscated from Lord François-Thomas Kerry.)

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\(^{394}\) ‘XLV Inventaire du 6 Thermidor l'an Ile’, in ibid.

\(^{395}\) ‘XCII Inventaire du 29 Germinal l’an IIIe, rue du Montparnasse’, in ibid.

\(^{396}\) ‘XCV Inventaire du 12 Floréal l’an IIIe, faubourg Honoré’, in ibid.

\(^{397}\) ‘XCV Inventaire du 12 Floréal l’an IIIe, faubourg Honoré’, in ibid.

\(^{398}\) See D. Diderot, Correspondence, edited by G. Roth and J. Varloot, 16 vols (Paris: Minuit, 1955–70), Vol. 11, pp. 197, 213. Reckoned in today’s monetary values, this was approximately £1800 (approximately A$3300). Currency conversion using The National Archives; Universal Currency Converter.


\(^{400}\) ‘XL Inventaire du 26 Vendémiaire l’an IIIc’, in Bruni, Un Inventaire sous La Terreur.
The square piano by Schoene is deemed to be of quality because of Schoene’s association with Zumpe (‘successor to Johannes Zumpe’).

By the 1780s, English pianos became so fashionable that ‘a Parisian of the 18th Century’ advertised ‘that he would swap a Stradivarius [or Amati] violin for a … piano’. The advertisement is dated Sunday, 25 August 1782, and appears in the semiweekly gazette *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* [Various Posters, Advertisements and Opinions]:

\[
\text{T\`eres bon forte-piano \`a vendre ou troquer contre un violin de Stradivarius, d’Amati … 25 \`aout, 1782.}
\]

[A very good forte-piano through purchase, or in exchange for a violin by Stradivarius, or Amati … 25 August, 1782.]

The offer of exchanging a Stradivarius or Amati violin for a ‘very good forte-piano’ does not stipulate that the piano should be an English piano or one made by Zumpe. Readers of the advertisement, however, would have understood that the offer was made by a person who wished to acquire an English square piano. Because the musical quality of square pianos made in London was rarely poor, the advertisement’s ‘very good’ may refer to the excellence and beauty of the instrument’s casework.

Two years prior to this advertisement, in 1780, a combination piano-organ by ‘Zump’ is advertised for sale in the *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*:

\[
\text{Forte-piano de Zump, organis\'\i\ e d’un flute, hautbois, galoubet, basse et bassoon. Prix 48 louis, 23 d\’ecembre.}
\]

[A piano by Zump, organised with a flute, oboe, galoubet, bass and bassoon. Price 48 louis, December 23.]

In 1788, again in the *Affiches, annonces et avis divers*, a square piano by Zumpe is advertised for sale: ‘Piano de Zump, 22 louis, 16 novembre.’

In both of these instances there is no connection with the advertisement dated 25 August 1782, in which an exchange with a Stradivarius or Amati is offered. The mention of Zumpe’s name in all of these advertisements suggests, unsurprisingly, that he enjoyed a credible and international reputation.

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404 Ibid., p. 17.
405 Ibid., p. 18.
During the early 1770s in France, discussion took place within public forums concerning the viability of the English square piano as an alternative to the harpsichord. For example, the periodical L’Avant-coureur (The Forerunner), dated Monday, 25 February 1771, contains an advertisement concerning the publication of a song (an ‘arietta’) composed by Antoine Albanèse (1729–1800). Albanèse was an Italian castrato, who had been a member of the Chapelle Royale. Between 1752 and 1762, he often performed as a soloist in the Concert Spirituel (a series of elite concerts that was presented in a room provided by Louis XV, located in the central pavilion of the Palais des Tuileries).

Albanèse’s *ariette* is dedicated to the Comte Louis d’Affry (1713–93), a French general and ambassador to the Dutch, and is entitled ‘The Arrival of the Pianoforte’. The advertisement in L’Avant-coureur reveals that in order to purchase Albanèse’s song, the buyer was required to part with 3 livres, 12 sous.

The text of Albanèse’s *ariette* passionately declaims:

*Oui, cher ami, tu me viens d’Angleterre,*  
*Hélas, comment lui peut-on declarer la guerre …*  
*Il est donc vrai qu’enfin je te possède,*  
*Mon cher ami, mon pianoforte.*  
*Au plaisir de te voir tout autre cede.*  
*Ah, que tu vas être fêté!*  
*Ah, comme tu seras goûté!*  

[Yes, dear friend, from England do you come,  
Alas, how can I declare war upon you …  
It is true that finally I will have you,  
My dear friend, my pianoforte.  
All other pleasures diminish at the joy of seeing you.  
Ah, how you will be celebrated!  
Ah, how you will be savoured!]

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408 French text quoted in ibid., p. 316.
Even as early as Monday, 2 April 1770, the *L’Avant-coureur* reported that a performance had taken place on a piano made by ‘M. de Virbès’; the description of the piano suggests it was a square piano inspired by Zumpe’s instruments—made ‘in the shape of those from England’.

Not all late eighteenth-century French music lovers were in favour of the piano. The writer, philosopher and historian François-Marie Arouet (pen name Voltaire, 1694–1778), for example, ‘declared in 1774 that the piano was a mere “kettle-maker’s instrument in comparison with the harpsichord”’. The reactionary Canon and organist of Nevers Cathedral “Trouflant was “alarmed’” at the piano’s ‘internal complexity adding: *Si les dessus en sont charmans, les basses dures, sourdes & fausses, semblent donner la consomption à nos orielles françaises* [If the treble is charming, the bass, hard, muffled and false, seems consumptive to our French ears]’.

In 1785, when Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel (1756–1823) wrote about the harpsichord in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, he remarked that the characteristic ‘grace and lightness’ of harpsichord music were the consequence of ‘the different styles’ of certain composers. Hüllmandel’s list of the composers who had ‘wrought this revolution almost simultaneously’ comprises: Domenico Alberti (ca 1710–40), Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), Johann Gottfried Müthel (1728–88), Georg Christoph Wagenseil (1715–77) and Johann Schobert.

The inclusion of the *peau de buffle* (soft quills of buffalo leather) and the machine stop with *genouillères* (knee-levers to change registration) into the French harpsichord enabled musicians to play the music they wanted to hear.
In fact, despite the change in musical style and the piano’s built-in ability to make ... dynamic nuances with fingers alone, it took hammer-action instruments much longer to achieve popularity in France than they did in England and Germany. The French believed that they had brought the harpsichord to perfection and did not easily give it up.416

Despite an enduring French confidence in harpsichords, the Encyclopédie méthodique reveals that by the last two decades of the eighteenth century, the English square piano had become the instrument of choice for many French composers:

Le forté-piano est agréable à entendre, sur-tout dans des morceaux d’une harmonie pathétique, & lorsqu’il est ménagé avec goût: par un habile musicien; mais outre les reproches qui lui sont faits par plusieurs maîtres, entr’autres, par M. Trouflant, organiste de Nevers, on l’accuse d’être pénible à jouer, à cause de la pesanteur du marteau qui fatigue les doigts, & qui même peut rendre la main lourde avec le temps. Cependant, l’on voit la plupart des maîtres s’attacher de préférence à cet instrument pour leurs compositions de musique, parce qu’il leur donne des effets plus marqués que le clavecin.

[The forte-piano is agreeable to hear, especially in pieces that are filled with sad harmonies, and when the instrument is played with taste by a skilled musician. Adding to the disparaging remarks made by several master musicians, Mr Trouflant, organist of Nevers, regards the instrument as being painful to play because of the weight of the hammers, which fatigue the fingers and may make the player’s touch insensitive over time. However, it should be noted that most composers prefer this instrument, because it gives them more pronounced effects than the harpsichord.]417

The following passage is representative of criticisms levelled at the harpsichord throughout the eighteenth century (the late eighteenth-century appearance in Paris of the English square piano certainly did nothing to alter negative opinion):

Le prix exhorbitant que coûte un bon clavessin, la difficulté de son transport, la place qu’il occupe, la dépense de son entretien, le mistère de son accord ou partition, dont le tempérament ... n’est fondé que sur une longue expérience ... & l’impossibilité d’enfler & de diminuer les sons, rebutent aujourd’hui les Dames de bon goût qui préfèrent la Vielle dans laquelle elles ne trouvent aucun de ces défauts.

416 Ibid.
417 Quoted in Latcham, ‘In the Shadow of the Enlightenment’, p. 45.
[The exorbitant price of a good harpsichord, the difficulty of transporting it, the space that it occupies, the expense of its upkeep, the mystery of its tuning, of which the … temperament is founded only on long experience … and the impossibility of increasing and diminishing the sound, repel Women of good taste who prefer the Hurdy-gurdy in which they find none of these defects.]418

By 1791, Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel was unquestionably preaching to the converted when he wrote:

The harpsichord lacks nuances … An instrument in which evenness and purity of sound and all the desired degrees of strength and gentleness speak to the heart without hurting the ear, fulfils the aim of music to a much greater degree … [Now various composers,] by giving to their music graduated nuances, contrasts, and a melody suited to the tone and resources of the piano, have prepared or determined the downfall of the harpsichord.419

The results of

a careful analysis of the availability of pianos [during the late eighteenth century in France], their mention on the title pages of published music, and the use of dynamic markings … [in late eighteenth-century French keyboard music] strongly … [suggest that the era of the French Revolution approximately] represents the close of the harpsichord era in France. It’s not that composers wrote exclusively for the piano after … [the late 1780s and 1790s] but that they no longer called specifically for the harpsichord.420

The First Pianos in America

David Propert advertised in the New York Mercury to sell a piano, but nothing is known about the instrument. ‘Propert also gave America’s first known public performance on a piano.’421 On Thursday, 7 March 1771, a notice in the Massachusetts Gazette422 advertised a concert in Boston in which a piano was used.423 Unfortunately, Propert’s program is lost. ‘Propert also offered lessons in Boston in 1770.’424 Later, on Thursday, 7 November 1771,

421 Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 382.
422 Massachusetts Gazette, 7 March 1771 (Boston: Richard Draper).
423 See Palmieri, Piano, p. 48.
424 Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 382.
the *Virginia Gazette* announced a performance of ‘select pieces on the … Piano-Forte’ in the town of Williamsburg.\(^{425}\) Also in 1771, Col. Robert Carter bought a piano for his house in Virginia, and Thomas Jefferson ordered an English piano as a gift for his fiancée. Thus, by the early 1770s, imported pianos had entered fashionable homes and appeared in public concerts from Massachusetts to Virginia.\(^{426}\)

As the commercial manufacture of grand pianos in England began during the 1780s, these instruments were square pianos (if not made by Zumpe, then modelled on his instruments).

In 1772, Johann Sheybli (‘an organ builder from Philadelphia’),\(^{427}\) ‘advertised in New York that he made and repaired pianos. In 1774, Sheybli offered to sell a ‘Hammer spinet’, by which he surely meant a square piano [one that, perhaps, he had made]. From New York, Sheybli moved to Pennsylvania, where he advertised pianos “of the best and newest sort”.\(^{428}\)

In 1773, ‘H. B. Victor, formerly organist to the Princess of Wales, taught piano in Philadelphia and the Dutch immigrant Peter Albrecht Van Hagen gave lessons in Charleston, South Carolina’.\(^{429}\)

John (Johann) Behrent (Bahrent or Brent; fl. early to mid-1775), a German immigrant to Philadelphia\(^{430}\)—‘the nation’s second largest city until around 1830’\(^{431}\)—is usually credited with making America’s first piano. On Monday, 13 March 1775, Behrent placed the following advertisement in *Dunlap’s Pennsylvania Packet*:

> John Behrent, joiner and instrument maker, living in Third-street continued, in Campington, directly opposite Coates’s Burying-ground, Has just finished for sale, an extraordinary fine instrument, by the name of piano forte, of mahogany, in the manner of an harpsichord, with hammers, and several changes: He intends to dispose of it on very

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\(^{426}\) Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 381.


\(^{429}\) Libin, Liner notes for *Childhood Memories*.


reasonable terms; and being a master in such sort of work, and a new
beginner in this country, he requests all lovers of music to favour him
with their custom, and they shall not only be honestly served, but
their favours gratefully acknowledged, by their humble servent, John
Behrent.432

That Behrent described his piano as being made ‘in the manner of a harpsichord’
suggests that the instrument was not a square piano, but rather, wing-
shaped433—‘a model rarely seen’ in late eighteenth-century America.434

Behrent may have based his design on the pianos of Gottfried Silbermann.
Silbermann is commonly regarded as being the first instrument maker in
Germany to make pianos. By the early 1750s, Silbermann’s fame ‘as a builder of
excellent piano-forte instruments’435 had spread throughout Germany.

In 1732, Silbermann’s wing-shaped ‘Piano Forte’ combined the action design
principles and una corda436 of Cristofori’s arpicembalo che fa il piano e il forte with
a mutation437 that enabled all the dampers to be raised simultaneously. Some of
Silbermann’s pianos also included a mutation comprising ‘a row of ivory plates
mounted over the strings right above the strike line of the hammers. When they
touch the strings, a bright, almost harpsichordlike sound … [is] produced.’438

The mutation stops in Silbermann’s pianos were operated by hand levers. The
dampers, for example, had ‘to be lifted from both ends simultaneously. This is
also true for … [other] mutation stops. Thus, it … [was] not possible to’ engage
or disengage the mutations ‘in the midst of playing, but only’ when the music
allowed time for the player to take his or her hands from the keyboard.439

Given John Behrent’s German origin, and the fact that he had not spent any
time in London (where, in 1771, Americus Backers replaced mutation hand-
levers with foot pedals), the ‘several changes’ mentioned in Behrent’s 1775
advertisement may refer to an una corda and hand-lever-operated mutations
similar to those found in Gottfried Silbermann’s pianos. Then again, it is possible
that several changes may refer to hand-lever-operated mutations commonly
found in English square pianos of the time.

432 A facsimile of Behrent’s newspaper advertisement is reproduced in Hoover et al., Piano 300, p. 15.
433 A shape that we would now refer to as being ‘grand’.
434 Libin, ‘Early Piano Culture in America’, p. 381.
436 A device that enables the keyboard (and therefore the action) to be laterally realigned, causing the
hammers to strike only one string of double or triple-strung notes.
437 A ‘mutation’ alters or modifies the sound by using a mechanical device that is incorporated into the
instrument. The mutations in Silbermann’s pianos are engaged using hand-stops.
438 Badura-Skoda, ‘Silbermann, Gottfried (1683–1753)’, p. 357.
439 Ibid., p. 357.
Behrent’s piano forte certainly attracted attention. In 1775, when the champion of independence from British rule, John Adams (1735–1826), ‘inspected Philadelphia’s defenses … he wrote that Michael Hillegas [1729–1804], a music dealer and treasurer of the Continental Congress’—the governing body of the United States during the American Revolution—‘talked “perpetually of the forte and piano”’.

Behrent’s piano-making activities were probably brought to a halt in late 1775 by the commencement of the revolutionary war against the British. The war for independence, however, did not create a context within which music was absent: ‘The civilian repertory before and after the war was kept up-to-date by the presence of British soldiers and their commanders, who favored Handel, Haydn, C. P. E. Bach, [Henry] Purcell [1659–95], and Arne.’

During the 1780s, several piano makers emigrated from London to America. These included Thomas Dodds (New York, 1785), Charles Albrecht (Philadelphia, ca 1785), Charles Taws (New York, 1786; Philadelphia, 1787) and Charles Trute (fl. 1760–94). In 1786, John (Johann) Jacob Astor (1763–1848) was importing square pianos made by his brother George (1752–1813), from London into New York.

In late eighteenth-century Philadelphia, audiences were especially erudite, for on Thursday, 14 December 1786, at a concert given in Philadelphia’s City Tavern, the composer and organist Alexander Reinagle (1756–1809) gave the first public performance in the United States of a work by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91): an unspecified piano sonata. In response to the public’s thirst for amusement, warnings concerning the moral dangers posed by the performing arts ensued. The New York Packet, for example, consumed by a paroxysm of civic duty, ardently protested:

A correspondent observes that the infatuation which possesses many of the people of this state for Theatrical Exhibitions is truly alarming … Alas! The delerium appears to have spread far and wide. And, strange to tell! The honest, sober Dutchmen of Albany, who were once distinguished by industry and a laudable parsimony, are now plunging
into that very species of luxury and folly which stamps upon the metropolis an indelible stigma. Is it not high time for the considerate inhabitants to step forth and oppose the increasing evil.\textsuperscript{445}

By the early 1790s, the square piano had established itself in America as an indispensible instrument. In New York (America’s most important port during the eighteenth century)\textsuperscript{446} on 19 September 1792, the Loudens Register published the following report:

The forte-piano is become so exceedingly fashionable in Europe that few polite families are without it. This much esteemed instrument forms an agreeable accompaniment to the female voice, takes up but little room, may be moved with ease, and kept in tune with little attention … so that on that account it is superior to the harpsichord.\textsuperscript{447}

\textbf{The Triumph of the Piano in London}

There is a widespread, but mistaken, perception that during the 1770s the piano had already supplanted the harpsichord in London, and had become the invariable choice for professional musicians. This is not borne out by archival evidence. Throughout the 1770s, harpsichord sales in London continued to grow, apparently unaffected by the surge in piano production. Similarly in Paris, the rising popularity of the piano hardly affected the harpsichord, which was thoroughly established and showed little indication of any decline before 1780.\textsuperscript{448}

The musical advantages of the harpsichord were its clarity and the brilliance of the treble. On the other hand, Zumpe’s square pianos were capable of flexible dynamics, and the sweet, radiant beauty of their sound was enticing. When compared with the sound of Continental square pianos (\textit{tafelklaviere}), the sound of Zumpe’s pianos attenuated more slowly; the general effect was of greater smoothness.

Even as late as the mid-1780s the harpsichord and the piano were not so much rivals as equally popular alternative instruments. Many affluent households would have considered themselves socially compromised if they did not have both.\textsuperscript{449} For example, Thomas Twining (1735–1804), an astute amateur

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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\bibitem{445} Quoted in Isacoff, \textit{A Natural History of the Piano}, pp. 36–7.
\bibitem{449} See Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, pp. 20, 29.
\end{thebibliography}
musician, decided (like many) to keep his harpsichord, but supplemented it by purchasing a square piano. In a letter written to Charles Burney, Twining, with enthusiastic anticipation, states: ‘How I shall accent and express, after having been so long cramped with the mountainous impotence of the harpsichord!’

Burney expressed his own (and perhaps prevailing) opinion by observing that ‘the harsh scratching of the quills of a harpsichord can now no longer be borne’.

By the mid-1780s, the piano (especially the square piano) had grown in popularity to such an extent that at least 31 piano makers were flourishing in London. In 1794, ‘that most conservative institution, the King’s band, retained’ the harpsichord for ‘as long as possible but this year it had to go. A harpsichord was used for … rehearsal but a grand piano for … performance.’

‘The latest dated surviving English harpsichord was built in 1800 … While Harpsichords were sporadically built later in Italy and used in Italian opera houses, the English were the last to build them on a large scale.’

‘Toward the end of his life Joseph Kirckman the Younger recalled having made, along with his father, the firm’s last harpsichord in 1809. The Kirckmans were almost certainly the last to make harpsichords in England.’

In relation to the history of the development of the piano between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, all available evidence annihilates the commonly encountered and ‘misguided idea that the grand piano of the late eighteenth century was created by inserting a hammer action into the harpsichord and that the square piano then followed in its wake as a lesser, domestic instrument’. In late eighteenth-century England, the square piano preceded the grand, and was the commonly encountered type; generally, financially successful professional musicians and the wealthy owned grand pianos.

From the second half of the 1780s, instruments inspired by Zumpe’s design were ubiquitous in England, and could be found throughout Europe. In January 1788, a fine example of one such square piano sat on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*, as it lay anchored in Botany Bay.

450 An instrument by Abraham Kirckman.
452 Burney, ‘Harpsichord’.
453 See Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
Chapter 2

Surgeon George Worgan’s Square Piano
(Frederick Beck, London, 1780/86?)

Stewart Symonds, the owner of a large private collection of keyboard instruments in Australia,\(^1\) claims that one particular square piano in his collection was brought to Australia by surgeon George Worgan on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius* (Plate 15). Although there is no single piece of evidence that definitively and unequivocally substantiates the claim, the instrument’s date, its campaign-furniture-style stand (which uniquely incorporates cabriole legs hinged to the bottom of the piano’s case) and hearsay strongly reinforce the validity of Symonds’ assertion; each of these factors is ‘reliant on a broad historical and colonial context for their relevance to be apparent’.\(^2\)

Plate 15 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

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\(^1\) Within Australia, Symonds’ collection (which currently comprises 131 instruments) is unrivalled in both its scope and its depth. In ca 1969, Symonds purchased his first piano from Albert George Briskie (1914–87), an eccentric antiques collector and dealer in Sydney. See ‘Tea, Cake, Convivial Company and a Proposed Provenance’ in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication. The instrument, a Broadwood & Sons square piano, dated 1837, was completed on Monday, 2 January 1837, exactly 100 years (to the day) before Symonds was born. The piano still forms a part of Symonds’ formidable keyboard instrument collection.

The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

The First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove on Saturday, 26 January 1788. During the two decades preceding 1788, there were several highly regarded piano makers in London. One of these makers was Frederick Beck. In late January 1788, as the Sirius lay anchored in the tranquil waters of Sydney Cove, it appears that part of the precious cargo that had been brought thousands of kilometres from England to the Antipodes was a square piano made by Frederick Beck.

Frederick Beck

Frederick Beck’s signature—‘Fk Beck London 1763’—appears on an English ‘guittar’.³ An inscription, handwritten in ink on the soundboard of a 1778 Beck square piano reads: A F Beck, 1777.⁴ Frederick Beck’s signature on his marriage bond, dated Tuesday, 7 September 1779 (Plate 16), takes the following form: Arnold Frederick Beck (Plate 16a).⁵ Furthermore, a handwritten inscription on the soundboard of one of the two extant Beck ‘tangent action’⁶ square pianos reads: A. F. Beck. 1790. Patent (Plate 16b).⁷ Beck is commonly referred to as ‘Frederick Beck’; the usual omission of Beck’s first name, ‘Arnold’, may be due to the fact that nameboard inscriptions on his extant square pianos usually include Fredericus Beck.⁸

³ See P. Poulopoulos, ‘The Influence of Germans on the Development of “This Favourite Instrument the Guittar” in England’, in Soundboard: The Journal of the Guitar Foundation of America (2012), Vol. 38, No. 4, p. 72, fn. 59. The English guitar ‘is a plucked-stringed instrument which was popular in the British Isles during the second half of the eighteenth century. The instrument is characterized by a wide variety of design, construction, and decoration features; however, the majority of surviving guitars typically have a round or oval body with a flat back, a movable bridge, twelve or more metal frets fixed on an arched fingerboard, and a head equipped with wooden pegs or a watch-key tuning machine. The guitar, which usually had ten wire strings, with two single strings for the bass and four double for the treble courses, was normally tuned to an open major chord and plucked with fingers rather than a plectrum. During the second half of the eighteenth century, when the instrument was developed, it was usually called “guitar” (and more rarely “guitar”).’ Poulopoulos, p. 69, fn. 1.
⁴ The soundboard date denotes a late-year production. I am indebted to Thomas Strange, owner of this instrument, for this information. See also ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’, below.
⁵ I am indebted to Graham Walker for providing me with a copy of the marriage bond.
⁶ See ‘Tangent Action’ in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
⁸ See ‘b) The Absence of a Date’ in ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.
Plate 16 Marriage bond between Arnold Frederick Beck and Rose Ann Shudi, 7 September 1779.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the London Metropolitan Archives (Diocese of London Deposit).

Plate 16a Marriage bond between Arnold Frederick Beck and Rose Ann Shudi, 7 September 1779: Frederick Beck’s signature (detail).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the London Metropolitan Archives (Diocese of London Deposit).
Not much is known about Frederick Beck. Unfortunately, ‘little biographical detail is available even today about major’ late eighteenth-century London-based piano makers.\(^9\)

Beck’s place and date of birth are unknown. Margaret Cranmer informs us that Frederick Beck was born in Württemburg, and baptised there on Friday 30 May 1738.\(^{10}\) Regrettably, Cranmer does not provide information concerning the source(s) upon which her remarks are based.

‘There is inferential evidence that … [Beck] was born in a German-speaking [culture] … because, along with Gabriel Buntebart, he was selected for a jury at

the Old Bailey which was composed of six “German” and six English members.” On Wednesday, 26 February 1783, a certain Charles Bairnes appeared at the Old Bailey, charged with stealing. Records of Bairnes’ trial reveal that:

(The prisoner being a German, was asked by the Court, whether he chose to have one half of the jury composed of his own countrymen, to which he replied in the affirmative, and the following jury were sworn.)

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<td>William Massey</td>
<td>Gabriel Buntebart</td>
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<td>Alexander Grant</td>
<td>Frederick Beck</td>
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<td>Henry Bensley</td>
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According to the court record, the six jurors listed in the right-hand column were Bairnes’ ‘own countrymen’—that is, German. Frederick Beck is listed among them. The inclusion of Beck and his Germanic compatriots, however, may have been predicated on the fact that they all spoke German, not that they were all German by birth. Happily, Charles Bairnes was pronounced not guilty.

In 1741, in Lavenham, England, ‘there was a spinet maker’ with the surname Beck, ‘but it is most unlikely that this was’ Frederick Beck. Boalch posits that this artisan ‘may have been’ Frederick Beck’s forebear, but provides no information to substantiate his hypothesis.

Frederick Beck’s surname should not be confused with that of the harpsichord maker Nicholas Beckman (fl. ca 1775–78), who, according to a Sun Fire Office insurance policy dated ‘[Thursday,] 5 October 1775’ (policy no. 360046), lived at ‘9 Little Russell Street Drury Lane’. No harpsichords or spinets by Beckman are known to have survived.

Frederick Beck’s surname should also not be confused with that of the Bavarian-born London-based piano maker John Conrad Becker (fl. ca 1801–41). Johann Nikolaus Forkel, the German music theorist and organist at the University Church at Göttingen, reports (albeit two decades before John Conrad Becker flourished) in his *Musikalischer Almanach für Deutschland auf das Jahr 1782*:

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16 See ibid., p. 27, fn. 30.
Becker … Klavierinstrumentmacher in London; geb. in Deutschland. Soll besonders gute Pianoforte machen.

[Becker … Keyboard instrument maker in London; born in Germany. He makes particularly good Pianofortes.]

Becker worked in Princes Street, Soho, London, in about 1801. At some time during the first decades of the nineteenth century, Becker returned to Germany with his son Jacob (d. 1879). Subsequently, father and son moved to St Petersburg in Russia, where they established a renowned piano-making firm that bore their surname.

There is no evidence that Becker and Beck were related. Furthermore, the period during which Becker made pianos in London lies outside the period during which Beck flourished in that city.

Cranmer states that Frederick Beck ‘left Germany for England some time after 1756’—that is, some time after his eighteenth year. Clinkscale, citing Adélaïde de Place, states that Beck ‘opened a dealership or perhaps even operated a workshop in Paris … at 364 rue Saint-Denis’. De Place and Clinkscale give no evidence to support their assertion, and provide no time frame for the period during which Beck conducted his trade in Paris. If de Place, Clinkscale and Cranmer are correct, Beck may have: 1) interrupted his journey to England in order to establish a dealership/workshop in Paris; or (more plausibly) 2) after establishing a successful dealership/workshop in London, subsequently set up a sales outpost in Paris; or 3) moved to Paris from London in later life, continuing to make pianos between his 81st and 84th years. According to de Place, a piano maker named Beck worked in Paris between 1819 and 1822. It has not been verified whether: a) this was Frederick Beck; or b) this maker was a relative of Frederick Beck. The unidentified Beck may have been Joseph Beck (1777–1848), maker of a miniature square piano dated ca 1820–1848 (estimate).

In Paris, the law dictated that Frederick Beck would have been allowed to open a dealership/workshop if he satisfied one of two requirements:

17 Forkel, Musikalischer Almanach für Deutschland auf das Jahr 1782, p. 197.
21 This calculation is based on the date of Frederick Beck’s birth (1738) given in Cranmer, ‘Beck, Frederick’ (2007–13).
23 Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, p. 19.
24 de Place, Le Piano-forte à Paris entre 1760 et 1822, p. 180.
1. acceptance into the guild of Tabletiers, Luthiers et Eventaillistes (fine cabinet makers, instrument makers and fan makers)

2. having a ‘brevet from the King or some noble family’.

The Parisian guild of Tabletiers, Luthiers et Eventaillistes rarely admitted craftsmen under the age of 30 into their ranks. If de Place, Clinkscale and Cranmer are correct, Frederick Beck may have arrived in Paris some time after his eighteenth year—that is, some time after 1756. Evidence suggests that approximately six years later, in ca 1762—that is around his 24th year—Beck was resident in London. If Beck sojourned in Paris on his way to London, managing to obtain Parisian guild recognition some time between his 18th and 24th years, he must not only have ‘achieved master class skill’, but also ‘have had experience with making keyboard instruments, and certainly fine cabinet making before he came to Paris’. It is unlikely that Beck

1. possessed the skills of a master craftsman by his 24th year (let alone earlier)
2. was considered for guild membership at the tender age of 24 (let alone earlier).

It is doubtful that Beck—a relatively young and untested instrument maker during the late 1750s to early 1760s—would have been allowed to establish a dealership/workshop in Paris at that time.

The earliest written evidence of Beck’s business activities [in London] indicates that he was involved in the manufacture of [English guittars in] 1763, while ‘a Guittar by Beck’ was auctioned among other household objects in 1766. However, the earliest surviving instrument bearing Beck’s name is a guittar signed ‘Beck & Pinto/London 1764’ while there are five more surviving guittars by Beck alone, all produced between 1765 and 1766.

‘The guittar dated 1764 and signed “Beck & Pinto” suggests that in the mid-1760s’ Frederick Beck was in partnership with Charles Pinto (fl. 1764–92).
Records of the City of Westminster Coroner’s Court show that a ‘Frederick Beck’ was a member of the jury at an inquest held on Wednesday, 20 November 1765— that is, 18 years before he served as a jury member at the Old Bailey on 26 February 1783. Court records give Frederick Beck’s address as ‘Gla.– Court, Sw’ (Plate 16c). Although the superscript squiggle following the period is undecipherable, ‘Gla.– Court’ almost certainly refers to Glassonbury Court. ‘Sw’ refers to the Borough of Southwark. (Glassonbury Court was located off Rose Street, three blocks westward from Covent Garden Market, and was bordered by St Martin’s Lane on the west, Long Acre on the north, James Street on the east, and New Street/King Street on the south.) If the person listed in the court record of 20 November 1765 is Frederick Beck the piano maker, we must assume that he was officially regarded as a London resident by late November 1765.

Cranmer states that Beck, aged 32, ‘married Mary Coles on 23 September 1770’ in London.

What is certain is that some time after 1756 and before his marriage, Frederick Beck left the Continent for England.

Barbara Broadwood’s account book (begun in 1769) contains a mention of ‘Mrs. Beck’. (The book contains entries made ‘by at least four … people, though Barbara was the first to use it, and she opened the book with the statement: this is the Book belongs to Barbara Broadwood’.) On page 71 of Barbara’s account book, a number of wives are listed together. The list

34  See ‘Frederick Beck’, above.
37  This calculation is based on the date of Frederick Beck’s birth (1738) given in Cranmer, ‘Beck, Frederick’ (2007–13).
39  Barbara Shudi married John Broadwood in 1769.
41  Barbara died, at the age of 27, on Monday, 8 July 1776.
is undated but ... is almost certainly in Barbara’s writing ... [and] is probably dated ... [some time between late 1770\textsuperscript{43} and] 1773. [Under the heading] ... Five pieces of Handkerch ... there follow the names Mrs. Rector, Mrs. Wild, Mrs. Ruff, Mrs. Calwell, Mrs. Bates, Mrs. Hands, Mrs. Beck, Miss Shudi, Mrs. Motrey, Mrs. Patadergell, Mrs. Broadwood, Mrs. Jenny and Mrs. Newby ... whatever was being paid for cost 3/6 per item ... Mrs. Beck was probably [Mary (née Coles)] the wife of the piano maker Frederick Beck.\textsuperscript{44}

The mention of Mrs Beck in Barbara Broadwood’s account book suggests that London piano makers and their families formed a closely knit and supportive community.

By 1771, Beck’s pianos were highly regarded (at least in Leipzig); according to Henkel, Leipzig newspapers from that year observe that Beck’s pianos were both ‘famous and popular’\textsuperscript{45} (Henkel does not provide bibliographical information regarding the ‘Leipzig newspapers’). The Leipzig newspapers’ observation implies that Beck had been successfully making instruments prior to 1771. One can only wonder where, and for how long.

If ‘Beck left Germany for England some time after 1756’\textsuperscript{46}—that is, some time after his 18th year—and by 1765 (at 27 years of age) resided at Glassonbury Court, London, then by 1771 he would have had approximately 15 years to develop his piano-making skills to the point where his instruments were both ‘famous and popular’.\textsuperscript{47}

With such a scenario, it is reasonable to posit that Beck was making square pianos in London around 1765. Just what type of square piano is a mystery. Square pianos (\textit{tafelklaviere}) had been made in Germany from as early as the 1740s. Zumpe’s earliest ‘English’ square pianos were made around 1766. With the exception of two ‘tangent action’ pianos,\textsuperscript{48} extant Beck square pianos are closely modelled on those of Zumpe.

There is disagreement in relation to the year when Beck began selling his pianos in London. For example, Cranmer gives the date ‘from midsummer 1771’,\textsuperscript{49} while Mould\textsuperscript{50} and Heaton\textsuperscript{51} suggest 1774. Scholars do agree, however, that by ca 1771–73, Beck’s premises were located on the north side of Broad Street’ (now

\textsuperscript{44} See Mould, ‘The Broadwood Books’, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{45} H. Henkel, \textit{Lexicon Deutscher Klavierbauer} (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Erwin Bochinsky, 2000), p. 45.
\textsuperscript{47} Henkel, \textit{Lexicon Deutscher Klavierbauer}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{48} See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’ below. See also ‘Tangent Action’ in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
Broadwick Street), Carnaby Market, Golden Square (now Soho), at number 4 and at number 10. (In ca 1777, the house numbers in Broad Street were changed; number 4 became number 10.)

The second of Beck’s four Sun Fire Office insurance policies (policy no. 248579) is dated ‘[Thursday,] 17 December 1767’. The policy gives Beck’s address as ‘Mr Horncastle’s a Stationer in Broad Street Carnaby Market’. It is not known when Beck established his own atelier, but it is reasonable to assume that by mid-1771, he was living and working in a building on Broad Street. ‘The rate books of St. James, Westminster, show that … [Beck] lived at a house in Broad Street ... from midsummer 1771 until the end of 1798.’ Peter Barfoot and John Wilkes erroneously place Jacob and Abraham Kirckman’s workshop at Frederick Beck’s address: ‘10, Broad-str. Golden-sq’ (the Kirckman’s workshop was at 19 Broad Street).

The third of Beck’s four Sun Fire Office insurance policies (policy no. 301057) is dated ‘[Thursday,] 29 August 1771’. The policy gives Beck’s address as ‘Broad Street Carnaby Market’. This is consistent with data found in the rate books of St. James, Westminster, which shows that from midsummer 1771, Beck ‘lived at a house in Broad Street’.

A Beck square piano dated 1773 (Plate 43a) carries a nameboard inscription that reads: *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1773 / No 4 Broad Street, Golden Square.* This is the earliest of the 24 Beck piano nameboard inscriptions known to the author; of these, the inscription is the first that includes a street number. The inscription allows for speculation that by ca 1771–73, Beck’s premises were located at number 4 Broad Street.

A square piano dated ca 1769–73 (a date towards the end of the range seems most likely—ca 1772–73) made for Longman, Lukey & Co., has been reasonably attributed to Frederick Beck (Plates 43u and 425b). The attribution to Beck is largely based on the absence of dampers after c3. The undamped top five notes are

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60 See ‘b) The Absence of a Date’, in ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.
61 See also photographs in D. Hackett, ‘(2) An Early London Square Piano Made for Longman, Lukey & Co. c. 1774’, in *Restoration Diaries* (n.d.). The instrument is currently owned by Albert Bil, Scotland. I am indebted to David Hackett for information regarding the current owner of this instrument. On Thursday, 11 November 2010, the piano was offered for sale at auction by Serrell’s of Malvern, UK. The instrument was described as a ‘square piano by Songman’. The sale price was estimated at between £150 and £200. The piano
characteristic of Beck’s instruments; no other maker of square pianos followed this damping pattern. Both the damping pattern and the nameboard inscription (Plate 425c) of this instrument suggest that in ca 1769–73, Beck was in business with Longman, Lukey & Co. It is not known what Beck’s obligations to Longman, Lukey & Co. were, nor is it known for how long the business relationship was maintained.

‘Contemporary estimates for the capital required to set up in business as a musical instrument maker’ were quite high. In 1747, for example, R. Campbell suggests a lower limit of £100, with an upper limit of £500. Campbell’s estimate represents the normal earnings obtained by Beck from the London sale of between four and 21 of his square pianos (each instrument being sold at a price of approximately £20–25). Campbell informs his reader that the ‘hours of working’ for a musical instrument maker are six to eight a day. (For the time, these hours are somewhat on the low side, and may be explained by the fact that a piano maker’s productive working hours were in large part determined by light levels derived from the sun.) Campbell suggests that the prerequisites needed in order for a keyboard instrument maker to thrive are ‘a tolerable Genius and some Strength’.

Nine years after his marriage to Mary Coles on 23 September 1770, and, following her death, on Tuesday, 7 September 1779 in London, Frederick Beck, aged 41 years, ‘married Rose Ann Shudi, daughter of Joshua Shudi [1739–74], the harpsichord maker (nephew of Burkat Shudi the elder)’. Because Rose Ann Shudi was a minor at the time, her mother, Mary (widow of Joshua Shudi), signed the marriage bond (Plate 16). Between 1782 and 1791, Frederick and Rose Ann ‘had six children including three boys’.

On Friday, 9 March 1781, ‘Frederick Beck Instrument Maker’ was a participant in the deliberations of the City of Westminster Coroner’s Court.

sold for an astonishing £2700. Six months later, in May 2011, the instrument was again offered for sale. By April 2012, the piano had been sensitively restored by David Hackett. See D. Hackett, ‘Restoration Diary for Longman Lukey & Co Square Piano: November 2010–April 2012’, in Restoration Diaries (n.d.).

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Several trade directories from 1784–94 mention Frederick Beck. These include: *Bailey’s Directory* (1784 and 1785); *The Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce* (1790); *Wakefield’s Directory* (1790 and 1794); and *A Musical Directory* (1794). The relevant entry in each directory is quoted below (in chronological order):


years before he served as a jury member at the Old Bailey on Wednesday, 26 February 1783. See ‘Frederick Beck’, above.


73 See ‘Beck Frederick, Piano Forte Maker Music (m)’.


79 See ‘Beck Frederick, Piano Forte Maker Music (m)’.

80 Barfoot and Wilkes, *The Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce*, p. 68. See Appendix P Volume 2 of this publication.


83 Wakefield, *Wakefield’s Merchant and Tradesman’s General Directory for London*, p. 22. See also ‘Beck Frederick, Piano Forte Maker Music (m)’.
Plate 16d Broad Street (detail): Frederick Beck’s house is number 10 Broad Street.


Both Carnaby Market and Golden Square were close to the then highly respectable district of Soho.

Broad Street, three blocks south of Oxford Street, extended from number 86 Berwick Street to Marshall Street, Golden Square. According to Horwood’s *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster*, the north side of Broad Street was three blocks long, the south side four. House numbering began on the north side, at the Berwick Street (eastern) end (number 1), extending westward to Marshall Street (number 28). House numbers on the south side of Broad Street extended in the opposite direction, from Marshall Street (number 29) eastward to Berwick Street (number 54). Frederick Beck’s workshop was on the north side, in the first and largest block (comprising house numbers 1–13), at number 10 (Plate 16d).

On Thursday, 1 January 1784, the rental value of Frederick Beck’s property was determined. The valuation document gives his address simply as ‘Broad St’. 86

In ca 1790, Beck appears to have formed a business relationship with George Corrie (d. 1803?). 87 In 1794, Doane’s A Musical Directory lists George Corrie as ‘Corrie, Pia Forte Maker. No. 41, Broad-St, Carnaby-M’. 88 Corrie’s workshop was on the opposite side of the street to Beck’s, westward, five houses away. 89 Between 1767 and 1775, Beck’s average annual output is conjecturally estimated as being 250 pianos—that is, one instrument approximately every day-and-a-half. 90 If his output was similar during the 1790s, Beck may have joined forces with Corrie in order to keep up with the demand for pianos. (Then again, data regarding Beck’s average yearly output are estimates only—and extremely generous ones at that. Perhaps, by ca 1790, Beck’s business was floundering, and he had need to establish a business connection with Corrie in order to survive. No documentary evidence has come to light concerning the catalyst for, or the nature of, Beck’s business arrangement with Corrie; as a consequence, any commentary is purely speculative.)

Beck’s business relationship with Corrie is confirmed by the nameboard inscription on piano number 2505 (Plates 17 and 43r): 91 No 2505 / F Beck et G Corrie Londini Fecerunt / No 10 Broad Street Soho.

To the author’s knowledge, this is the only extant nameboard inscription that gives the abbreviation ‘F Beck’; it is also the only extant nameboard inscription that identifies Beck in conjunction with George Corrie.

Of the 32 extant Beck pianos, the author is aware of the wording of 25 nameboard inscriptions. 92 All but one (piano number 2505) gives ‘Fredericus Beck’ as the maker. Assuming that the abbreviated ‘F Beck’ on the nameboard inscription of piano number 2505 represents Frederick Beck (and this is extremely likely), the inscription is inexplicably inconsistent with Beck’s usual practice. As with Frederick Beck’s Christian name, George Corrie’s Christian name has also been abbreviated using a single initial; in both instances, the abbreviation may have been an aesthetic and practical response to the limited space available within the

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87 See ‘Beck, Arnold Frederick’, in The Early Piano. See also Plate 17. I am indebted to Graham Walker for information regarding George Corrie’s date of death.
89 See Horwood, Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster.
90 See ‘Serial Number in George Worgan’s Piano (Frederick Beck, London, 1780/86?)’ below.
91 See ibid.
92 For a list of the Beck square piano nameboard inscriptions known to the author, see ‘b) The Absence of a Date’ in ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.
elliptical boundary of the nameboard cartouche. ‘Sometime during the Victorian or Edwardian period, the case [of piano number 2505] was painted with neo-classical decoration’93 (Plate 43r). In the light of this decorative alteration, it is reasonable to entertain the notion that the nameboard inscription, cartouche and decoration may also have been altered.

Another line of investigation points to the supposition that ‘F Beck’ refers to the Francis Beck, who, in 1790, is listed in *The Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce*: ‘Beck Francis Piano Forte-maker 10, Broad-str. Golden-sq.’94 Was this mysterious Francis one of Frederick’s sons? Between 1782 and 1791, six children were born to Frederick and Rose Ann; unfortunately, this time frame renders Beck’s children too young to have made piano number 2505 (ca 1790?). Moreover, none of Beck’s three sons was named Francis.95 It appears that the listing of Francis Beck in *The Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce* is erroneous.

There was logic in Frederick Beck’s decision to locate his workshop in Broad Street:

The narrow surrounding streets sheltered a mixed population of foreigners and of artists and craftsmen, including a concentration of piano ... and harpsichord makers. At the same time, [the] … area had become a serious threat to St. Martin’s Lane [near Covent Garden Market] as center for the workshops of top-flight cabinetmakers: Robert Campbell was in Little Marylebone Street, Chipchase and Lambert in Warwick Street. The carvers Sefferi Alken and Sefferin Nelson had workshops in Dufours Court, off Broad Street, while John Oakley (a cabinetmaker who had been apprenticed to David Roentgen in Germany) and William Ince and John Mayhew had premises right in Broad Street, within a few doors of Frederick Beck’s workshop. It would have been a simple matter [for subcontracted cabinetmakers to deliver completed piano cases and stands to Beck’s establishment].96

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93 Email from Graham Walker to the author, 15 March 2013.
95 I am indebted to Graham Walker for information regarding Frederick Beck’s children (Email from Graham Walker to the author, 15 March 2013).
At some stage during the late 1770s, the house numbers in Broad Street were changed. This has led some writers to imply (erroneously) that Beck worked from two separate locations. Numbers 4 and 10 Broad Street were in fact the same location. The inscription on the nameboard of George Worgan’s piano (Plate 17a) reads: Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1780 / No 4 and 10 Broad Street Soho.

Beck’s inclusion of two different street numbers is doubtless his response to confusion that may have arisen at the time (Plate 17b).

Plate 17 Square piano by Frederick Beck and George Corrie (London, ca 1790?; serial number 2505): nameboard inscription.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Graham Walker. Photo by Graham Walker.

Plate 17a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): nameboard inscription.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

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97 The nameboard inscriptions on the two extant 1777 Beck pianos read: Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1777 / No. 4 Broad Street Golden Square (owner: Carleton University, Ottawa) (Plate 20d); and Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1777 / No. 4 and 10 Broad Street Golden Square (owner: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto). The two extant 1778 Beck pianos each have a nameboard inscription that reads: Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1778 / No. 4 and 10 Broad Street Golden Square (Plate 20e). The address given on these nameboards suggests that the renumbering of houses in Broad Street may have taken place sometime during 1777.

98 For example, Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, p. 19.

99 See ‘Date’, below.
During the 1780s, Frederick Beck was one of six piano makers whose workshops were located within two blocks of one another—on Broad Street: Christopher Ganer (located on the opposite side of the street to Beck, at numbers 47 and 48);100 Jacob and Abraham Kirckman101 (located on the same side of the street as Beck, in the adjacent block, at number 19);102 and Charles Trute (whose workshop was on the same side of the street as Beck, close by at number 7);103 on Great Pulteney Street:104 John Broadwood, and George Froeschle (Fröschle)
The spirit of invention was in the air and it is tempting to think that the natural affinity of like-minded [piano makers] … living and working at close quarters would have brought [them] … into contact with [each other].”

Perhaps the London-based Belgian inventor and combination harpsichord-piano maker John Joseph Merlin (1735–1803) best exemplifies the ‘spirit of invention’ that permeated London’s keyboard instrument makers’ community during the second half of the eighteenth century. At one of the highly fashionable (yet scandalously indecorous) masquerades given in London during the 1760s and 1770s at Carlisle House by the notorious ‘Viennese adventuress’ Theresa Cornelys (1723–97), Merlin made a memorable appearance: ‘Merlin was a charmer, much in demand at parties and social events of all sorts. His witty, French-accented English appeared to have delighted the ladies, and his propensity for outrageous but essentially harmless behaviour only seemed to make him more endearing to London society.’

The English composer, musician and writer Thomas Busby (1755–1838), in his Concert Room and Orchestra Anecdotes of Music and Musicians, Ancient and Modern, tells the story:

One of [Merlin’s] … ingenious novelties was a pair of skaites contrived to run on [small metallic] wheels. Supplied with a pair of these and a violin [‘he was skating and playing at the same time’], he mixed in the … group of one of the celebrated Mrs. Corneily’s masquerades at Carlisle-house, Soho-square; when, not having provided the means of retarding his velocity, or commanding its direction, he impelled himself against a mirror of more than Five hundred pounds value, dashed it to atoms, broke his instrument to pieces and wounded himself most severely.

What could have been closer to Merlin’s spirit of invention and freedom ‘than literally gliding through the echelons of society, combining the use of one of his inventions, a pair of roller skates, with a performance on the violin, and breaking

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105 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 38.
106 Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, p. 105.
107 ‘Two combined harpsichord-pianos built in their entirety by Merlin’ have survived: ‘one in private ownership in Switzerland (undated) and the other in the Deutsches Museum in Munich (1780).’ Latcham, ‘The Apotheosis of Merlin’, p. 293.
108 Ibid., p. 298.
110 Ibid., p. 379.
through a mirror, that decorated symbol of vanity’. The indefatigable Merlin also invented a ‘self-flicking buggy whip’, ‘a Dutch oven with a spring jack to rotate meat’, ‘mechanical tea tables that poured a dozen cups at once’, ‘a pocket-sized scale for weighing gold coins’ (in order to verify ‘that none of the precious metal had been shaved off’), and the wheelchair (an invention of lasting value).

Another of his gadgets was a music-desk table for eight performers, which could be raised or lowered, depending on whether the players were seated or standing ([Charles] Burney owned one of these ‘Merlin tables’).

Merlin’s instruments, be they grands, squares or whatever, were always expensive … in 1793 Charles Burney tried out a new square piano by Merlin. ‘The dog has just finished a small Piano Forte [that is, a square], so loud, sweet and beautiful that I could sit and devour myself upon it without food for 24 hours. Ma-ma the price is … 40 pounds!’

Unlike Merlin, Frederick Beck (it seems) was content simply to make square pianos. Beck sold his pianos not only to customers in England, but also to instrument makers in Paris. On 19 April 1777, for example, the eminent Parisian harpsichord maker Pascal Taskin noted that he owed 660 livres to ‘Mr. Beck in London’ for five square pianos that he had imported.

No records mention Frederick Beck after 1798. Cranmer posits that Frederick Beck died in London ca 1798.
Frederick Beck: A time line

1738? Beck is born in Württemburg(?)
1738 30 May: Beck is baptised in Württemburg
After 1756 Beck leaves Germany
Between 1756 and ca 1762 Beck establishes a dealership (and/or workshop) at 364 Rue Saint-Denis, Paris(?)
Between 1756 and ca 1762 Beck leaves the Continent for London
1763 Beck is involved in the manufacture of 'English guittars' in London
1763 2 August: Beck’s address is Glassonbury Court, near Covent Garden Market
Mid-1760s Beck is in partnership with Charles Pinto
1765 20 November: Beck is a juror at the Westminster Coroner’s Court
1765 20 November: Beck’s address is Glassonbury Court, near Covent Garden Market
ca 1769–73 Beck is in business with Longman, Lukey & Co
1770 23 September: Beck marries Mary Coles in London
1771 Midsummer: Beck moves into 4 Broad Street, Carnaby Market
ca 1771 Beck begins to sell pianos from his workshop, at 4 Broad Street, Carnaby Market
After ca 1771 Beck establishes a dealership (and/or workshop) at 364 Rue Saint-Denis, Paris(?)
During the late 1770s The street number of Beck’s Broad Street property is altered from 4 to 10
1779 7 September: Beck marries Rose Ann Shudi in London
1781 9 March: Beck is a juror at the Westminster Coroner’s Court
1782–91 Frederick and Rose Ann have six children, including three boys
1783 26 February: Beck is one of six German jurors at the Old Bailey
1784 1 January: the rental value of Beck’s Broad Street property is calculated
1780–89 Beck’s annual output averages 222 pianos(?)
ca 1790 Beck is in business with the piano maker George Corrie
1794 Beck is still making pianos at 10 Broad Street, Carnaby Market

ca 1798 Beck dies(?)

1819–22? Beck lives in Paris, and sells pianos from his dealership (and/or workshop) located at 364, Rue Saint-Denis(?)

* See ‘Serial Number: Frederick Beck’s estimated output—What five serial numbers suggest’ below.

### Beck’s House

Plate 18 shows Beck’s Broad Street house as it appears today (it is the red brick building with the internally lit street-level shopfront window). Beck’s house is currently occupied at street level by a shop specialising in beauty products. Coincidently, an audio-recording shop occupies the corner of the tiny street (Duck Lane) directly opposite; the shop has four colourful adjustable canvas awnings, upon two of which are written the following words: ‘Sounds of the Universe’ (Plate 19).

Even though Beck’s income from piano making may have ‘been earned at irregular intervals and in lump sums’, the apparent ongoing success of his piano-making business suggests that he probably did not have to bring in extra income through the letting of a part of his house. During the late eighteenth century, for a piano maker who was less successful than Beck, generating money through letting would have been in line with Adam Smith’s (1723–90) comments on the state of housing costs in London:

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123 See ‘Serial Number: Frederick Beck’s estimated output—What five serial numbers suggest’, below.
Plate 18 Frederick Beck’s house.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 19 ‘Sounds of the Universe’ in Duck Lane, opposite Frederick Beck’s house.

Source: Photo by the author.
The dearness of house-rent in London arises, not only from those causes which render it dear in all great capitals ... but it arises in part from the peculiar manners and customs of the people, which oblige every master of a family to hire a whole house from top to bottom. A dwelling-house in England means every thing that is contained under the same roof.\textsuperscript{124}

Smith continues:

A tradesman in London is obliged to hire a whole house in that part of the town where his customers live. His shop is upon the ground-floor, and he and his family sleep in the garret; and he endeavours to pay a part of his house-rent by letting the two middle stories to lodgers. He expects to maintain his family by his trade, and not by his lodgers.\textsuperscript{125}

In late eighteenth-century London (as also in Vienna), ‘food constituted the largest proportion of living expenses, but ... unlike housing, it was abundant and relatively cheap’.\textsuperscript{126}

Very few people owned the freehold of their homes at this time ... According to information from the Public Record Office only the holders of British citizenship were entitled to buy or inherit land under English law ... Long term residents in England who lacked British citizenship could remedy this situation by applying for ‘Letters of Denization’ or, at a little extra expense, the full legal rights of a British citizen by Naturalization.\textsuperscript{127}

Perhaps the success of Beck’s piano-making business resulted in his becoming a wealthy man. If so, and as a long-term resident in England, he may have eventually bought a long lease on his house in Broad Street. If wealthy enough, he may also have obtained ‘naturalisation’ and, subsequently, purchased his house.

‘It is not possible to provide a ... vivid’ and yet generalised ‘description of the premises of’ London piano makers, as ‘no eighteenth century visitors seem to have thought them worthy of special comment’.\textsuperscript{128} A workshop making pianos in a dwelling-house was not necessarily noisy or intrusive. No power machinery was involved (obviously, there was no power). Typically for the time, a feeling of intimacy would have been the most salient feature of Beck’s street-level workshop, which, perhaps being of the standard three-man type, had three workbenches. Beck and his family would have lived on the first floor, while

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 117.
\textsuperscript{126} A. M. Hanson, \textit{Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 15–16.
\textsuperscript{127} Cole, ‘Adam Beyer, Pianoforte Maker’.
\textsuperscript{128} Hubbard, \textit{Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making}, p. 197.
the attic rooms may have been occupied by journeymen or an apprentice. It is reasonable to imagine corridors and stairways being cluttered with instruments and wood (poor Mrs Beck may have found the task of keeping her house clean more than formidable).

Beck’s apprentice (if he had one) would have been contractually bound to him for a certain number of years (‘the usual period was seven years’).129 ‘It was usual for the parents or guardians of [an apprentice] … to pay the master a certain sum on signing the contract. The apprentice lived with his master’s family and was not paid for his work. At the end of his term, the apprentice became a journeyman, entitling him to work for any master he chose.’130 Traditionally, young journeymen travelled from city to city, working with various masters in order to perfect themselves in their trade.131 ‘The journeyman aspired to become a partner with his master or to establish his own shop.’132

It is possible that the street-level front room of Beck’s house had a large window for displaying finished instruments that were kept for sale. In 1782, a visitor to London, Carl Philip Moritz,

found no need for elementary primers and prints for the education of children: you can take them about the street and show them all the things themselves … Paintings, machines, precious objects—all can be seen advantageously displayed behind great clear-glass windows … Such a street often resembles a well-arranged show-cabinet.133

By the middle of the eighteenth century,

London was famous throughout Europe for the number and variety of its shops and for the crowds of people strolling about looking and buying from eight in the morning until darkness and beyond … In 1786, Sophie de la Roche, visiting from Frankfurt, described walking the length of Oxford Street by lamplight: ‘We strolled up and down lovely Oxford Street this evening, for some goods look more attractive by artificial light. Just imagine … a street taking half an hour to cover from end to end with double rows of brightly shining lamps … The pavement, inlaid with flagstones, can stand six people deep and allow one to gaze at the splendidly lit shop fronts in comfort. First one passes a watchmakers, then a silk or fan store, now a silversmith’s, a china or glass shop. Just as alluring are the confectioners and fruiterers, where, behind the

132  Hoover, ‘Pianos for Sale’, p. 36.
handsome glass windows, pyramids of pineapples, figs, grapes, oranges, and all manner of fruits are on show. Up to eleven o’clock at night there are as many people along this street as at Frankfurt during the fair, not to mention the constant stream of coaches.’

These transformations in shopping, advertising and marketing rendered ‘material acquisition and visible consumption highly eligible activities’. The wisdom of the ages had been reversed: boundless consumption was healthy both for individuals and for society. At the very least, window-shopping had arrived.

Frederick Beck’s house was very close to Oxford Street, and there is little doubt that some Oxford Street window-shoppers would have found themselves at Carnaby Market, from thence eventually looking through Beck’s shopfront window at the newly completed pianos on display.

**Beck and Square Piano Production**

The complexity of a grand piano required that it be almost completely produced within a single workshop. The process involved the application of many high-level specialist skills, resulting in an elaborate division of labour within a workshop. On the other hand, the relative ‘simplicity of the construction of [a] … square piano’ meant that ‘the majority of its components could [be] … made outside the workshop by skilled or semi-skilled men who did not have to be instrument makers’. These outsourced individuals were located in nearby houses, which, like Beck’s house, contained a workshop. Workers in distant premises may have produced, for example, a square piano’s case (‘which could have been made by any competent cabinet maker’), keyboard, hammer rails (‘complete with ready-mounted [leather] … covered hammers’), damper mechanisms, tuning pins, bridge-pins, strings, lid hinges and the component parts of (or completed) stands. The pianos could then have been assembled in-house, using parts made off-site as well as parts produced in the workshop by highly skilled specialists.

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136 By the end of the eighteenth century, the eminent piano maker John Broadwood referred to people who walked into his showroom on Great Pulteney Street as the ‘chance trade’ (as distinct from ‘regular customers to whom the firm regularly sold instruments and for whom it regularly tuned’). Hoover, ‘Pianos for Sale’, p. 34.
138 Ibid., p. 260.
139 Ibid., p. 264.
(parts such as the soundboard). Subsequently, the remainder of the process leading to the completion of an instrument would have been undertaken in the workshop: stringing, setting up the action and voicing.\textsuperscript{140}

The making of a square piano in Frederick Beck’s workshop may have entailed the following construction process.

1. Off-site subcontractors deliver the case to the workshop as an empty box. Beck incorporates the wrest-plank, belly rail and hitch-pin block (the last ‘pierced through with accurately-placed holes determined by a template to receive the damper-lifters’).\textsuperscript{141}

2. Beck (or a specialised worker) makes the soundboard. The bridge is attached, string positions are marked and the bridge is pinned. The soundboard is glued into place.

3. Beck (or a journeyman/apprentice) drills holes for the wrest-pins.

4. Hitch-pins and nut-pins are inserted.

5. Beck strings the instrument.

6. Beck (or a specialised worker) finishes the keyboard with its action (prior to this, the keyboard, sets of hammers and the dampers have been delivered to the workshop).

7. The action is put into the instrument.

8. Beck voices the instrument.

That the entire production process was not housed under one roof had its advantages:

Since the basic processes required considerable manual skill, it was inevitable that the work would be carried out in workshops of traditional type. Supervision of the various branches of manufacture could have been more efficient if done under one roof, but this would have meant heavy commitments in buildings and labour. It was thus more convenient to call on skills on demand, according to its ebb and flow.\textsuperscript{142}

On one hand, the workshop’s structure and practice ‘could be run with low overheads and on the other enabled craftsmen to work at home’.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{140} See ibid., p. 260.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 260.
\textsuperscript{143} Clarke, ‘The English Piano’, p. 264.
In his *Cyclopædia of the Useful Arts*, Charles Tomlinson (1808–97) describes a mid-nineteenth-century piano-making context similar to that found in late eighteenth-century London:

> Although in the London Directory there are only entered 6 piano-forte *fret cutters*, 2 hammer and *damper-cloth* manufacturers, 4 *hammer-rail* makers, 6 pianoforte *key*-makers, 2 piano-forte *pin* makers, 5 silkers, 1 *stringer*, and 29 tuners, yet there are a large number of persons occupied as small makers of parts of the instrument, and not being housekeepers are not entered. And even if it were possible to make this list complete, it would by no means represent the extensive subdivision of the trade.\(^{144}\)

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**George Worgan’s Piano (Frederick Beck, London, 1780/86?)**

It is reasonable to hypothesise that the Frederick Beck square piano dated 1780/86?, currently housed in the Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney, is the instrument that was brought to Sydney Cove by George Worgan on board the *Sirius*. The hypothesis is reinforced by certain peculiarities, the most important of which is the piano’s campaign-furniture-inspired stand, which (uniquely) includes cabriole legs hinged to the bottom of the instrument’s case.

The dimensions of the piano’s case fit comfortably within the norm for Beck’s extant instruments.\(^{145}\) This piano, however, reveals certain distinctive characteristics.

**Date**

The calligraphic style of Beck’s nameboard inscriptions did not remain consistent throughout his output—note the difference, for example, between the ‘7’ on an instrument of 1786 (Plates 20a and 20b) and the ‘7’s on instruments dated 1774 (Plate 20c), 1776 (Plate 43t), 1777 (Plate 20d), 1778 (Plates 20e and 20f), 1780 (Plate 20), 1782\(^{146}\) and 1783 (Plate 20g). Note also the difference between the ‘8’ on an instrument of 1786 (Plates 20a and 20b) and the ‘8’s on instruments dated, respectively, 1778 (Plates 20e and 20f), 1780 (Plate 20) and 1783 (Plate 20g).

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\(^{145}\) See ‘Average Dimensions of Frederick Beck’s Square Pianos’, in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.

\(^{146}\) See photograph in A. Beurmann, *Das Buch vom Klavier: Die Sammlung Beurmann im Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg und auf Gut Hasselburg in Ostholstein [The Book of Keyboard Instruments: The Beurmann Collection in the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg and the Hasselburg Estate in East Holstein]* (Hildesheim: George Olms, 2007), Plate 110b Das Tafelklavier von Beck, p. 54. See also photographs in hammerfluegel.net.
Consistencies in calligraphic style, however, can also be found—note the similarity between the ‘7’s on Beck instruments dated 1774 (Plate 20c), 1776 (Plate 43t), 1777 (Plate 20d), 1780 (Plate 20), 1782\(^{147}\) and 1783 (Plate 20g). Note also the similarity between the ‘8’s on Beck instruments dated 1778 (Plate 20e and 20f), 1782\(^{148}\) and 1783 (Plate 20g).

Regardless of any variations in calligraphic style, Beck’s nameboard inscriptions reflect the characteristically serpentine freedom and balance of numerals written by accomplished eighteenth-century hands.\(^{149}\)

Initial inspection of George Worgan’s piano suggests the date of the instrument to be 1780 (Plate 20). It is tempting, however, to construe the small oblique line above the ‘0’ as a now-faded oblique line that once comprised the top of a ‘6’ (Plates 20 and 139). Given the degree of fading and the calligraphic style (which is full-bodied, rather than fine-lined), this may be the case.

Comparison between the ‘0’ (if viewed as a ‘6’) written on the nameboard of Worgan’s piano (Plate 20) and the ‘6’ written on the nameboards of two Beck pianos dated 1776 (Plate 43t) and 1786 (Plates 20a and 20b)\(^{150}\) reveals marked differences in proportion and form (especially in relation not only to the thickness and angle of the two thick pen strokes of the circular body of the ‘0’, but also to the thickness and angle of the curving top stroke of the ‘6’). Using the calligraphic style of the 1776 (Plate 43t) and 1786 (Plates 20a and 20b) instruments as a basis for supposition, had the ‘0’ on Worgan’s piano been a ‘6’, the body of the ‘6’ would have been more elliptical, and the angle of the two thick pen strokes of the circular body would have inclined markedly towards the right.

Although it seems likely that the date of Worgan’s piano is 1780, reasonable doubt remains; it might be 1786.

\(^{147}\) See photograph in Beurmann, *Das Buch vom Klavier*, p. 54. See also photographs in hammerfluegel.ne.

\(^{148}\) Ibid.


\(^{150}\) The Stockholm Music and Theatre Museum, inv. no. N61230.
Plate 20 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): nameboard—‘1780’ (detail).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 20a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1786): nameboard inscription.


Plate 20c Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1774): nameboard inscription.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bachhaus, Eisenach/Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V. Inv. no. 1. 4. 1. 12., I 86.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa, Ontario. Photo by James Park.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange. Photo by Thomas Strange.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange. Photo by Thomas Strange.

Plate 20g Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1783): nameboard inscription.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland.
Plate 20h Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.

Plate 20i Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): nameboard inscription.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.

Serial Number: Frederick Beck’s estimated output—What five serial numbers suggest

It is not known how many instruments Beck made. Given the relentless demand for square pianos in late eighteenth-century London, and Frederick Beck’s reputation as one of the finest instrument makers, it is possible that he produced an average of 30 to 50 pianos a year—that is, assuming continuous output, an average of one instrument every seven to 12 days. This figure is derived from comparison between the known output of other successful, representative contemporaneous piano makers.

1. Adam Beyer: Between 1773 and 1788, Beyer made an average of 50 square pianos a year—that is, one instrument every seven days.151 (During his lifetime, the prolific Beyer manufactured in excess of 900 square pianos.)

2. John Broadwood: In 1783, Broadwood made 45 pianos—that is, on average, one instrument every eight days.152

3. Thomas Haxby (1729–96): Between 1772 and 1786, the York-based Haxby made an average of 19 square pianos a year—that is, one instrument every 19 days.153 From 1787, Haxby’s annual production increased to 24 instruments—

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152 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 61.
that is, averaging one piano every 15 days.\textsuperscript{154} By 1790, Haxby’s yearly output was 36 instruments—that is, on average, one piano every 10 days.\textsuperscript{155}

The truth of Beck’s output may, however, be more astounding. Cranmer records the following piano nameboard inscription: No. 1941 Fredericus Beck Londini fecit 1788 / No. 10 Broad Street Soho.\textsuperscript{156} To the author’s knowledge, there is only one extant Beck square piano dated 1788;\textsuperscript{157} presumably, this is the 1788 instrument of which Cranmer speaks. Regrettably, Cranmer gives no further information regarding this piano. Oddly, Clinkscale’s description of this piano’s nameboard inscription\textsuperscript{158} does not include ‘No. 1941’. Assuming that Cranmer and Clinkscale are referring to the same instrument, if Beck gave the piano the serial number ‘1941’ (at the same time giving the piano a date of 1788), the instrument must be regarded as the product of Beck’s ‘prolific output in earlier years’.\textsuperscript{159}

Cranmer observes that until ‘1780 at least, Beck’s square pianos were not numbered’.\textsuperscript{160} Unfortunately, Cranmer provides no supporting data to substantiate her assertion. If, however, Frederick Beck did not number his instruments until after 1780, the 1788 piano’s serial number (1941) as documented by Cranmer\textsuperscript{161} suggests that within eight years, Beck made an average of 242.6 pianos a year—that is, one instrument every day-and-a-half.

Further data assist in the formation of a speculative estimate of Beck’s annual output. James mentions a Beck ‘piano dated 1789 bear[ing] … the number 2000’.\textsuperscript{162} James does not reveal the instrument’s location. (Unfortunately, no piano dated 1789 can be found among the 32 extant square pianos by Frederick Beck.)\textsuperscript{163} James then refers his readers to a photograph of one of two extant Frederick Beck instruments made in conjunction with the Swedish-born Paris-trained cabinet-maker and marquetry master Christopher Fuhrlohg (ca 1737–1800);\textsuperscript{164} this instrument is dated 1775, not 1789. If Beck’s square pianos

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See ibid.
\item Owner(s): unknown. See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’, below.
\item Watson, Clinkscale Online.
\item P. James, Early Keyboard Instruments: From their Beginnings to the Year 1820 (London: The Tabard Press, 1970), p. 64.
\item See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’ below.
\item James, Early Keyboard Instruments, pp. 64, 138, ‘Plate LVIII Square Pianoforte by Frederick Beck English, 1775’. This exquisitely beautiful instrument is owned by the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight Village, Wirral, UK. See ‘Frederick Beck and Christopher Fuhrlohg’, below. See also the photograph in ‘English Square Piano’, in Lady Lever Art Gallery.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
were not numbered until at least 1780, the 1775 Beck/Fuhrlohg instrument: 1) cannot form part of the data used to create an estimate of Beck’s annual output; and 2) disproves Cranmer’s notion that until 1780 Beck’s square pianos were not numbered. Given that the 1775 Beck/Fuhrlohg instrument bears the serial number 2000, two paths of inquiry may be taken in order to create a speculative estimate of Beck’s average annual output.

1. Beck’s square pianos were not numbered until 1780 and James’ unidentified 1789 piano has the serial number 2000: If the number 2000 on James’ mysterious 1789 piano is a serial number, and if Beck assigned a number sequentially to every instrument that he made from 1780, the serial number 2000 indicates that between 1780 and 1789 Beck produced a remarkable yearly average of 222.2 pianos—that is, one instrument every day-and-a-half. This estimated average annual output is on the impressive side, and most probably represents an overestimation.

2. Beck’s square pianos were numbered prior to 1780, and the 1775 Beck/Fuhrlohg instrument has the serial number 2000: Given that the 1775 Beck/Fuhrlohg instrument has a serial number of 2000, determination of the date when Beck first began to make and number his pianos (assuming that he assigned a number sequentially to every instrument that he made, and that his output was uninterrupted) enables an estimate of his average annual production to be created. Unfortunately, it is not known exactly when Beck began to make pianos. It is also not known if Beck made German tafelklaviere prior to his making English Zumpe-style pianos, and, if so, whether or not he assigned serial numbers to these tafelklaviere. Assuming that Beck only began to number his English Zumpe-style pianos in London in about 1767—that is, shortly after Zumpe’s initial experiments—the serial number 2000 for the 1775 Beck/Fuhrlohg instrument suggests that between 1767 and 1775 Beck produced an astonishing yearly average of 250 pianos (that is, one instrument every day-and-a-half).

In London during the late 1760s, the demand for square pianos was high, and the demand continued to rise throughout the next few decades. For example, between 1773 and 1788, the prolific Adam Beyer made an average of 50 square pianos a year—that is, one instrument approximately every seven days).
In 1786, Longman & Broderip undertook to obtain ‘at least £5000 worth of instruments annually, that is, somewhere between 200 and 300 keyboard instruments—harpsichords and pianos—per year’.\textsuperscript{172} Furthermore, taking known serial numbers as our guide, [during the early 1790s] it would appear that in only four years [John Broadwood sold] one thousand three hundred square pianos … an annual rate of almost three hundred and fifty. This far exceeds any year’s production seemingly reported in the firm’s books up to that time—or in the years immediately afterwards. So caution is necessary when interpreting such data.\textsuperscript{173}

A similar caution should be exercised when establishing estimates of Frederick Beck’s average annual output. Because it is not known when Beck began to make and number his pianos (pianos made either in the German tafelklavier or in the English style),\textsuperscript{174} any estimation of his output remains within the realm of pure conjecture. All that may be said with certainty is that Beck’s production in England appears to have been both consistent and considerable.

In order to achieve an annual average production rate of between 222.2 and 250 pianos, Beck would have had to employ a considerably large workforce (several hundred people). Because contemporaneous commentary and documentation do not support this conjecture, such a large number is extremely unlikely. The exact number of Beck’s employees has not been established.

Around 1790, Beck was in business with the piano maker George Corrie.\textsuperscript{175} A square piano made during the (unknown) period of this business relationship has the serial number ‘2505’ (Plates 17 and 43r). If Beck produced an average of 250 pianos a year between 1767 and 1775, and if Beck’s output after 1775 remained consistent and unchanged, piano number 2505 should be dated 1777. That a period of approximately 13 years exists between 1777 and Beck’s association with Corrie in ca 1790 highlights the difficulties associated with attempting to ascertain Beck’s average annual output.

Of the 27 Beck pianos listed in Clinkscale,\textsuperscript{176} only one has a serial number: number 5008, dated 1782/87? (Plates 20h and 20i).\textsuperscript{177} Piano number 5008 is owned by the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA. The Trust’s ‘museum records give

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{173} Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 61.
\item \textsuperscript{174} See ‘Frederick Beck’, above.
\item \textsuperscript{175} ‘Beck, Arnold Frederick’, in The Early Piano.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Watson, Clinkscale Online.
\item \textsuperscript{177} See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’ below. See also ’1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.
\end{itemize}
a date of 1782, but without explanation'. Clinkscale also dates piano number 5008 as 1782. Inconsistencies in the calligraphic style of this instrument’s nameboard inscription suggest that the nameboard inscription cartouche, if not perhaps the entire nameboard, may have been replaced. If Beck produced an average of 250 pianos a year between 1767 and 1775, and if Beck’s output after 1775 remained consistent and unchanged, piano number 5008 should be dated 1787.

Of the six Beck pianos not listed in Clinkscale, three have serial numbers:

1. number 2505 (by Beck and Corrie, described above)
2. number 2580, with an estimated date of ca 1790
3. number 3091, with an estimated date of 1778

In relation to piano number 2580 (ca 1790), if Beck produced an average of 250 pianos a year between 1767 and 1775, and if Beck’s output after 1775 remained consistent and unchanged, piano number 2580 should be dated 1777. Once again, a discrepancy of approximately 13 years between 1777 and the instrument’s estimated date (ca 1790) emphasises the difficulties associated with attempting to ascertain Beck’s average annual output.

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178 ‘English Square Pianoforte by Frederick Beck, London, circa 1782’, in Norfolk Charitable Trust Records. I am indebted to Elisabeth McGregor, Curator/Archivist of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, for this information. See ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.
179 See Watson, Clinkscale Online.
180 See ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.
181 1) A piano dated ca 1769–73 (a date towards the end of the range seems most likely: ca 1772–73), made for Longman, Lukey & Co., reasonably attributed to Frederick Beck; owner: Albert Bil, Scotland (Plate 43r). 2) A piano dated 1773; owner: Pelham Galleries, London, UK (Plate 43a). 3) A piano dated 1778? (estimate); owner(s): unknown; serial number 3091. 4) A piano dated 1782; owner: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany. 5) A piano dated ca 1790? (the nameboard inscription reads: No 2505 / F Beck et G Corrie Londini Fecerunt / No 10 Broad Street Soho); owner(s): unknown, in Germany; serial number 2505 (Plate 43r). 6) A piano dated ca 1790; owner(s): unknown; serial number 2580.
182 On Thursday, 12 December 2013, this square piano was offered for sale in Conway Hall, Holborn, London, by Piano Auctions Limited, with an estimate of £2,000–3,000. The reserve was too high, and the instrument did not sell. The provenance of this square piano is unknown. The instrument currently requires significant restoration, especially the front right corner, which is badly cracked and requires gluing and clamping. I am indebted to Andrew Snedden, York, UK, for this information [Email from Andrew Snedden to the author, 12 December 2013].
183 On Wednesday, 9 March 1994, this square piano was offered for sale at auction (Sale 6414) in South Kensington, London, by Christie’s. The instrument was described as a ‘line-inlaid square piano by Fredericus Beck No. 3091, 10, Broad Street, Soho [presumably an accurate quotation of the complete nameboard inscription], on square tapering legs joined by an undertier, early 19th century, mechanism now broken’. The piano was offered as Lot 277, and sold for £352. See ‘Sale 6414 Lot 277’, in Christie’s The Art People [n.d.]. If Beck produced an average of 250 pianos a year between 1767 and 1775, and if Beck’s output after 1775 remained consistent and unchanged, piano number 3091 should be dated 1778.
Because the ‘relentless march of time clouds the truth in theory and speculation’, the extent of Frederick Beck’s output currently remains, alas, a tantalising mystery.

**Serial Number: George Worgan’s square piano**

On George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano, the top dovetail joint at the spine’s bass-end corner is impressed with the stamp ‘I’ (Plate 21). This stamped figure is not a serial number. Rather, it is either:

1. associated with case assembly (ensuring that the case’s component parts were correctly matched with each other); or
2. a batch number (square piano cases were commonly made in a run, not one by one).

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Plate 21 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): five lapped dovetail joints at the bass corner of the spine (visible from behind)—the top joint is impressed with the stamp ‘I’.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

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The stamped figure suggests that someone other than Beck may have assembled the case, as one instrument’s case among many, in a location other than Beck’s workshop. The assembled case would have been brought into Beck’s workshop in order for him to complete the instrument. This scenario was not an unusual one for late eighteenth-century London piano makers.\(^{185}\)

George Worgan’s piano of 1780/86? does not have a serial number. If the date on the instrument’s original and unaltered nameboard is 1780 (as the date appears, at first glance, to be),\(^{186}\) the absence of a serial number is consistent with Beck’s practice (at least according to Cranmer—with no substantiating evidence—that until ’1780 at least, Beck’s square pianos were not numbered’).\(^{187}\) In the light of Cranmer’s observation, if the date on the nameboard is 1786, the absence of a serial number is perplexing.

Why did Beck not give George Worgan’s square piano a serial number? Until 1780 at least,\(^{188}\) it may have been his usual practice. Perchance he thought that the instrument would not survive its journey to Botany Bay, or that, having arrived safely, it would never return to London (in both of these instances, Beck may have regarded a serial number as being unnecessary). On the other hand, Beck’s prominent inclusion of unique design elements in the instrument (that is, the instrument’s legs and stand) may have offended his aesthetic sensibilities (see ‘Stand’ below). Although it is unlikely, hypothetically the presence of these elements may have caused Beck to ‘disown’ the instrument by leaving it unnumbered.

A Unique Stand

Some of Beck’s square pianos have been criticised in modern times for ‘rushed cabinet-work, poor key-carving, and even in one case an adze-mark on the wrestplank’.\(^{189}\) If George Worgan’s piano of 1780/86? is representative of the many instruments that Frederick Beck must have made (only 32 are extant) then, not to gratuitously disparage Beck, such criticism is justified; it seems that ‘quality, precision or even “flawlessness” were … extremes between which’ Beck found, according to his taste and (perhaps) whim, ‘the best position’.\(^{190}\) The combination of marked care in the critical areas of an instrument (for example, the action) with relatively slapdash work elsewhere is typical of many piano

\(^{185}\) See ‘Beck and Square Piano Production’ above.
\(^{186}\) See ‘Date’, above.
\(^{188}\) Ibid., p. 334.
\(^{189}\) Ibid., p. 335.
\(^{190}\) Skowroneck, Harpsichord Construction, p. 161.
makers; for a maker to pay close attention to the making of every component part of an instrument was unusual (exceptions to the norm are John Broadwood and Robert Stodart).

Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano reveals some surprisingly crude and careless work,191 and yet the care taken over certain elements of the instrument constitutes a curious inconsistency. One such element reinforces the hypothesis that the instrument was brought to Sydney Cove by George Worgan on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*: the instrument’s stand.

The stand of Worgan’s piano is not only unique among the surviving instruments made by Beck, it is also unique within the context of English square pianos of its time.

Until ca 1780, square pianos were supported by a trestle stand—that is, four legs connected by stretchers. At each end of the instrument, two square-section untapered legs (sometimes with a moulding cut into the outer arris) formed archaic Jacobean-style ‘H’ end frames192 (the Jacobean trestle style was already old-fashioned by 1725).193 The ‘H’ end frames were formed by joining each of the two legs at each end of the instrument with a single (or two) crossbar(s). The two ‘H’ end frames were connected with one another by a single (or two) long stretcher(s).

With many English square piano trestle stands, each end of a long stretcher was joined to an ‘H’ end frame with an iron bolt.194 Representative examples are found on the following pianos (to list but a few):195

1. Johann Zumpe 1766196
2. Johann Zumpe 1767197
3. Johann Zumpe, 1769198
4. Johann Pohlman 1769199
5. Johann Zumpe and Gabriel Buntebart 1770200

191 See Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
193 See ibid., p. 184.
194 In some instances, the long stretchers are glued, rather than bolted to the ‘H’ end frames.
195 Images referenced in relation to the listed pianos show bolted (rather than glued) cross stretchers.
197 See photograph in ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 123, 230. See also photograph in James, *Early Keyboard Instruments*, p. 137, Plate LVII.
199 See Beurmann, *Das Buch vom Klavier*, p. 21, Plate 102c.
6. Longman, Lukey & Co. 1770

7. Longman, Lukey & Co., ca 1772–73 (reasonably attributed to Frederick Beck)

8. John Broadwood 1774

9. Johann Pohlman 1774

10. Fredrick Beck 1775

11. Johann Zumpe and Gabriel Buntebart 1775

12. George Froeschle 1776

13. Frederick Beck 1777

14. Christopher Ganer ca 1777

15. John Geib ca 1777

16. Adam Beyer 1778

17. Adam Beyer 1780

18. Johann Pohlman ca 1780–84

19. Longman & Broderip ca 1782

20. John Broadwood 1783

21. Christopher Ganer 1785

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201 See photograph in ibid., p. 120.
202 See Plate 43u.
205 See photographs in ‘Cité de la musique, Paris, France/Musée de la musique/Collection Catalogue/Recherchez dans le catalogue/Facteur, auteur ou sujet/Piano carré/Frederick Beck, LONDRES/1775/E.1530’, in *MIMO: Musical Instrument Museums Online* (n.d.). Inconsistencies in the calligraphic style between the date’s ‘177’ and ‘5’ subtly suggest that the date may have been altered.
211 See photograph in ‘1778 Adam Beyer, square piano’ in ‘Gallery’, in *The Early Piano*.
22. Christopher Ganer, ca 1785
23. John Broadwood 1786
24. Adam Beyer 1788
25. James Houston (made for John Bland) early 1790s
26. John Broadwood 1791
27. John Broadwood 1795

When the trestle stand included bolts, the two ‘H’ end frames could be dismounted from the long stretcher(s) for transport. Characteristically, the trestle stand was considerably shorter than the length of the piano that was placed upon it (Plate 22). Some stands were mounted on castors.

Trestle stands were rarely made in a piano maker’s workshop, commonly being supplied instead by East End furniture workers. By ca 1780, the trestle stand was rejected for all but the cheapest class of piano, and was replaced with the so-called ‘French frame’ (Plates 23, 23a, 441, 444 and 453) (the term ‘French frame’ was first coined by John Broadwood).

A French frame fits closely with the lower edge of a square piano’s case. When the instrument is placed onto the stand, the illusion is created that the piano, legs and the stand’s top stretcher are one piece of furniture.

With a French frame, four slender straight square-tapering legs matching the colour of the piano’s case—sometimes fitted at their terminations with brass cup castors (Plate 24)—or with spade feet (Plate 43r), are joined by stretchers at the top.

The stretchers are secured with dry mortice and tenon sockets (traditionally used to joint wood with grain at right angles to each

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217 See photograph in ‘Gallery’ in *Lucy Coad Square Piano Conservation and Repair*.
219 See photograph in ‘For Sale’, in *Andrew Lancaster Music Room Antiques* (n.d.).
228 See Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos*, pp. 85, 123.
229 See ibid., p. 123.
other), and tightened by hidden [cheese-head] iron [coach] bolts … at the top of each leg. [Each of] the visible bolt heads holding the frame together [is] … usually covered by [a] brass oval [or sometimes round] patera (often with classical motifs) to conceal them [Plates 25, 26 and 452]. The entire frame can be dismantled.

Because of the time it takes to unscrew the bolts that hold the frame together, dismantling the frame can be a protracted process.

In the French frame’s most simple form, each pair of legs at either end of the instrument is joined by a cross member; this creates an ‘H’ end frame at either end of the instrument (Plate 446). In many instances, a long horizontal stretcher extends between the ‘H’ end frames (Plates 23 and 446). Sometimes, a mahogany under-tier (or shelf) is fitted between the ‘H’ end frames, ‘extending between the cross members’ that join each pair of legs at either end of the instrument (Plates 23b and 27). The front of the shelf is usually serpentine, ‘in order to make enough space to prevent players from hitting their shins’. Sometimes, the shelf has a vertical wooden back approximately 2.5 centimetres high, the purpose of which is not only to prevent sheet music and books from falling off, but also to reinforce the long, thin shelf (thereby preventing the shelf from bending under the weight of heavy music books and/or piles of sheet music) (Plate 27).

The earliest French frame for a square piano is found on an instrument by Christopher Ganer, dated 1778. ‘If you had been visiting someone’s home in 1780 and seen’ a square piano resting on a French frame, ‘there would have been nothing in its appearance to cause a moment’s regard or scrutiny’. The French frame remained in vogue until ca 1805, when it began to be replaced with ‘lathe-turned legs terminating in brass cup castors … Each leg had a wooden screw thread at the top. The screw tightened up into a socket penetrating into the base of the instrument’ (Plate 28).

230 See also photograph in hammerfluegel.net/.
233 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 123.
235 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 39.
236 See ibid., p. 85; Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 80.
Plate 22 Square-legged trestle frame: the frame belongs to a square piano by John (?) Simpson (fl. 1767–95) (London, ca 1770s).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.


Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, Inv. no. 0171.

Source: Australian National University School of Music, Keyboard Institute Collection, Canberra. Photo by the author.

Plate 23b Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): French frame with under-tier.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
Plate 24 French frame, Muzio Clementi & Co. (London, ca 1805): treble-end front; a slender, straight square-tapering leg, fitted at its termination with a brass cup castor (detail).

Source: Australian National University School of Music, Keyboard Institute Collection, Canberra. Photo by the author.

Left: Plate 25 French frame, Muzio Clementi & Co. (London, ca 1805): treble-front corner; the bolt head holding the frame together is visible because a brass patera has not been rotated into its rest position (detail). Right: Plate 26 French frame, Muzio Clementi & Co. (London, ca 1805): treble-front corner; the bolt head holding the frame together is concealed by a brass patera (detail).

Source: Australian National University School of Music, Keyboard Institute Collection, Canberra. Photos by the author.
Plate 27 French frame, Muzio Clementi & Co. (London, ca 1805): mahogany under-tier (shelf) with a serpentine front, fitted between the cross members in the end trestles.

Source: Australian National University School of Music, Keyboard Institute Collection, Canberra. Photo by the author.

Plate 28 Square piano by John Broadwood & Sons (London, ca 1817): lathe-turned legs terminating in brass cup castors.

Source: Australian National University School of Music, Keyboard Institute Collection, Canberra. Photo by the author.

Early nineteenth-century changes in French decorative fashion resulted in a corresponding alteration of English aesthetic sensibilities, and what the English called ‘French corners’ became à la mode. On a new and fashionable square piano ca 1810, for example, each front corner at the treble and bass end of the piano’s case was rounded (rather than right-angled, as had been the English tradition). Fine lathe-turned legs now supported the instrument: two at each of the front corners, and one for each back corner. Unfortunately, a piano’s rounded front
corners usually represented a fall in engineering standards. ‘The new fashion for rounded front corners was achieved by dispensing with the hidden dovetail joints, hand cut by skilled men. Instead the joints were merely lapped.’

In London, James Shudi Broadwood (1772–1851), writing in January 1807 to a Mr Harmon of Philadelphia, comments on the contemporaneous craze for lathe-turned legs: ‘6 legs are so much in vogue here that we cannot scarce sell any instrument without them.’

Elaboration in the appearance of these legs—or the want of it—was the chief visual reminder of the quality that the owners had paid for … [By the 1820s, the] more pricey examples had decorative brass collars around the top, and the smartest models also had reeded decoration [Plate 28].

Such brass collars were not purely decorative; they also functioned to subtly strengthen the leg top.

Because the bottom boards of square pianos were made almost exclusively from Scotch pine (Pinus sylvestris)—a wood that is very rigid and strong compared with other species of pine, but also a wood that is softer than mahogany—screwing the legs into holes drilled into the bottom of the instrument sometimes caused the bottom boards to split. Initially, a solution to this problem was attempted by gluing and screwing a wooden block onto the bottom boards; a hole was drilled into the wooden block and tapped so that the top of the leg could be screwed into it.

After 1820 square pianos were constantly redesigned for a more powerful tone … the keyboard was extended upwards … to six octaves, and afterwards in both directions to reach seven octaves. To achieve this stronger tone string gauges were progressively increased, until the strain was almost four times greater than on eighteenth-century pianos … In an effort to prevent structural collapse these later pianos were fitted with an iron hitch plate (from around 1825) and afterwards, on American pianos, full metal framing (from around 1840).

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237 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 94. See ‘Lap Joint’ in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
238 Letter from James Broadwood to Mr Harmon, January 1807. Quoted in Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, p. 248.
239 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 93.
240 A problem associated with Scotch pine bottom boards is their ‘tendency to shrink with time. Most of the shrinkage is in the tangential direction, and restorers frequently encounter early square piano bottoms … with substantial shrinkage’. For example, restoration reports for two Broadwood square pianos dated 1793 and 1795, as well as for a Longman & Broderip square piano dated 1785, ‘describe baseboard shrinkage of as much as 3/8 inch in width out of a total width of approximately 18 inches’. T. Strange, ‘Reading the Historical Record from an Early Broadwood Grand Piano’, in Square Piano Tech: A Resource for the Restoration of 18th and early 19th Century Square Pianos (n.d.), p. 16, fn. 11.
As pianos became larger and heavier, their lathe-turned legs became thicker and more sturdy.

Frederick Beck created a unique stand for George Worgan’s square piano. This unique stand reveals an inspired and practically motivated fusion of design elements. Beck’s innovative design excludes elements that would normally have been found in a French frame:

1. slender, straight square-tapering legs
2. brass cup castors on the leg terminations
3. hidden iron bolts and plates at the top of each leg
4. paterae at the top of each leg to hide bolt heads
5. the ‘lip with recess’ on the top of the frame
6. wooden or metal pegs protruding from the top of the frame fitting into small holes in the bottom of the piano to hold the instrument in place.

Instead of the French frame’s slender, square-tapered straight legs, Beck provided four square-tapered cabriole legs (Plate 29). Within the context of extant late eighteenth-century English square pianos, cabriole legs are unique.

Plate 29 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): four square-tapered cabriole legs.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Michael Cole, the eminent expert on the Classic-era piano, has informed the author that he knows ‘of no genuine original legs of cabriole form supplied with any English-made square piano c. 1780’. Email from Michael Cole to the author, 23 November 2012.
The delicate appearance of these cabriole legs is deceptive. Arguably, they are marginally stronger (given their thickness) and more stable (especially at the leg terminations) than the slender straight square-tapering legs of a French frame.

Cabriole legs (as one of the most distinctive features of the rococo style)\(^\text{245}\) were commonly associated with France. They instantly create an effect of elegance, sensuality, delicacy and a relaxed, whimsical ease. An observation made by the English painter and printmaker William Hogarth (1697–1764) is appropriate: ‘The serpentine line, or line of grace, by its waving and winding at the same time in different ways, leads the eye in a pleasing manner along the continuity of its variety.’\(^\text{246}\) If Beck operated a dealership and/or workshop in Paris,\(^\text{247}\) this may explain his incorporation of cabriole legs into Worgan’s piano; the French would certainly have regarded cabriole legs as a familiar, acceptable element of furniture design. Cabriole legs also reflected the contemporaneous ‘hegemony of France in matters of taste’\(^\text{248}\).

Another line of inquiry leads to the notion that George Worgan’s piano of 1780/86? was an instrument that Frederick Beck exported from his London workshop to Paris; once in Paris, hinged cabriole legs were added to the instrument for whatever reason. This is, however, an unlikely scenario. In Paris, when legs under imported pianos were changed, the result was nearly always screw-in lathe-turned legs in conical form;\(^\text{249}\) encountering such legs indicates that such an alteration took place some considerable time after 1780–86. There then remains the unanswerable question of how a Beck square piano exported to Paris came into the hands of George Bouchier Worgan.

Beck’s mixture of furniture styles in Worgan’s piano includes the aesthetic of his important contemporary George Hepplewhite (1727?–86), who, along with Thomas Sheraton and Thomas Chippendale (1718–79), was one of the most influential eighteenth-century English furniture makers. ‘Inlay in coloured woods, very sparingly used’\(^\text{250}\) was one of the features of the Hepplewhite style, and this feature can be seen in Worgan’s piano.

The elegant linearity of the neo-classical lines of the piano’s case, as well as the ‘Englishness’ of its restrained and sober appearance (at least when compared with the excesses of French rococo furniture) are skillfully combined with the curvaceous rococo lines of the instrument’s cabriole legs. During the late

\(^\text{247}\) According to Adélaïde de Place (*Le Piano-forte à Paris entre 1760 et 1822*), Beck’s workshop was at 364 rue Saint-Denis. See Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano 1700–1820*, p. 19.
\(^\text{248}\) Morley, *Furniture*, p. 190.
\(^\text{249}\) I am indebted to Michael Cole for this information.
eighteenth century in England, French rococo flamboyance was equated with meaningless frippery, and ‘resistance to triviality was regarded as a vindication of English good taste over the shallow [posturing] … of continental neighbours’. 251

Within the context of the neo-classical style, cabriole legs were the ‘last Rococo feature to be ousted in favour of vertical types’. 252 The English vernacular style comprised ‘conservative lines, emphasized by overall veneers … small areas might be decorated by chaste carving; and metalwork was confined to simple mouldings, functional handles, and keyhole escutcheons’. 253 ‘Restrained in its Neoclassicism and practical in its design, [English] furniture’ made during the 1770s and 1780s ‘was, generally speaking, more graceful and refined than at any other time in the history of English cabinetmaking’. 254 (During the late eighteenth century, the graceful elegance of English neo-classical furniture was, perhaps, best revealed in the design of chairs. ‘Ladies’ hoops were gradually disappearing; a woman no longer occupied “the space of six men,” and the old wide seats were accordingly superseded by smaller and neater shapes.’) 255

In England, the poised simplicity of neoclassicism was not confined to furniture design. The coin minter, industrialist, and silver-plate and ormolu maker Matthew Boulton, as well as the pottery maker Josiah Wedgwood, ‘articulated an anti-French design strategy to simplify, to move away from excessive ornament and glitter; the [aesthetic] … shift was ideal for a technology based on dies, stamps, moulds, and cast and polished steel’. 256

The austere rigour of Neoclassicism was well suited to the cult of reason, discipline and calculability typical of the rising bourgeoisie.

… [T]he beauty of Neoclassicism was [not only] a refreshing reaction to the [flamboyant Rococo] tastes of the [French] ancien régime, but was also a search for rules that were certain, and therefore rigid and binding. 257

The luxuriant French rococo lines of the cabriole legs supporting Worgan’s piano are far removed from the serene austerity of English neoclassicism.

The leg terminations of Worgan’s piano are not fitted with brass cup castors. This is contrary to the norm for an instrument of such quality made during the 1780s. The surface area of each of the bare-wood leg terminations, when they contact the ground, is larger than that of a cup castor. Also, the ‘roughness’ of the bare-wood terminations ‘grips’ wooden floorboards more effectively than a

254  Riley, World Furniture, p. 133.
255  Simon, English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century, p. 126.
smooth wheel. It appears that the bare-wood leg terminations are intentional, their purpose being to enhance the instrument’s physical stability within the context of a shipboard environment that is constantly moving. Furthermore, brass cup castors at the termination of cabriole legs are unusual, simply because such an addition to cabriole legs compromises the flowing, graceful aesthetic.

At each end of the instrument, the lower part of each pair of legs is fixed by a horizontal stretcher let into each leg (Plates 30 and 31).

When the piano is standing on its feet, each horizontal stretcher let into the legs (and therefore, each pair of legs at each end of the instrument) is held apart by a detachable lower stretcher running the length of the case (Plate 32).

At each end of this detachable lower stretcher, there is a protruding dovetail. Plates 31 and 33 show the protruding dovetail at the treble end inserted into its dry mortice and tenon socket. Plate 33 reveals that the treble-end socket has increased in depth because of wear; as a consequence, the top surface of the protruding dovetail sits slightly beneath the top surface of the stretcher that fixes the lower part of the legs.

The cabriole legs are joined at the top by a bar at the top edge, the hand-carved ends of which are curved into the legs (Plate 34).
Plate 32 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): detachable lower stretcher, running the length of the case, which holds the pair of legs at each end of the instrument apart.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 33 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): treble end of the instrument—the protruding dovetail at the end of the detachable lower stretcher has sunk into a socket that has increased in depth because of wear.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 34 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): treble end of the instrument—the legs are joined at the top edge by a bar, the ends of which curve into the legs.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

‘Standard works on British furniture history are virtually unanimous on the structural irrelevance of … stretchers, and their absence on fine [eighteenth-century] London furniture with cabriole legs. … Stretchers marred the appearance of the [bold, elegantly] … shaped cabriole leg and were unnecessary for strengthening purposes.’

‘On the Continent … unbraced cabriole stands’—that is, stands comprising cabriole legs with no stretchers—‘could be found under large and heavy keyboard instruments, including grand pianos’.

For example,

the 1776 … [Jean-Henri] Silbermann [1727–99] grand piano in Berlin, the Gottlieb Rosenau [ca 1720 – ca 1790] 1786 harpsichord in Copenhagen, the 1782 Carl [August] Gräbner [1749–96] harpsichord in Nuremberg, the 1779 … [Johann Ludwig] Hellen combination harpsichord and grand piano in Berlin, several Silbermann bentside spinets … many German and Scandinavian clavichords, a large Späth and [Christoph Friedrich Schmahl

258 Germann, ‘Stands’, p. 89, fn. 63.
259 Ibid., p. 85.
260 See, for example: 1) the photograph of a 1764/90? keyboard pantalon by Franz Ignatz Seuffert (organ and instrument maker to the court in Würzburg, Northern Bavaria, during the 1760s), in M. Cole, ‘Franz Ignatz Seuffert, 1764’, in The Invention of the Square Piano: A Review of Some Claimed Early German Tafelklaviere (n.d.). The stand of this instrument comprises cabriole legs without stretchers. This instrument is currently exhibited at the Schloss Benrath, Düsseldorf, Germany. 2) The photograph of a 1794 unfretted clavichord by Johann Bohak (ca 1754–1805; a Bohemian maker based in Vienna) in Brauchli, The Clavichord, p. 227; and I. Kipnis (ed.), The Harpsichord and Clavichord: An Encyclopedia (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 239. This instrument was used by Joseph Haydn, and is currently housed at the Royal College of Music, London (inv. no. 177). Although the stand is not original, it comprises cabriole legs without stretchers. 3) The photograph of an unfretted clavichord by Johann Adolph Hass (1713–71) in E. Winternitz, Musical Instruments of the Western World (London: Thames & Hudson, 1966), p. 223. The instrument is currently housed in the Musik Historiske Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark (inv. no. 462). 4) The photograph of a fretted clavichord by Christian Gottlob Hubert (1714–93), dated 1784, in G. Haase and D. Krickeberg, Tasteninstrumente des Museums Keilklaviere.
It is tempting to associate Frederick Beck’s combination of stretchers and cabriole legs with concerns for weight, mobility and convenience; however, the legs on many extant examples of heavy English furniture designed for mobility (that is, legs with castors) have no stretchers. Moreover, the need for strength does not provide reasonable cause for Beck to have combined stretchers and cabriole legs; after all, the structure of trestle and French frame stands is far more given to distortion than unbraced cabriole legs.

To Beck’s discriminating and fashion-conscious contemporaries, his combination of stretchers and cabriole legs would not only have represented a visual anachronism, it would also have seemed very odd, if not bizarre. In fact, it is ‘rare to find cabriole legs with stretchers … in any … period’.264

The author has seen many square pianos dating from the late eighteenth century. Uniquely within the context of late eighteenth-century English square piano stand design, George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano not only has cabriole legs, but also the top of each leg is attached to the bottom of the case by a relatively large (yet inconspicuous) iron butt hinge (Plate 35).

To the author’s knowledge, there are only four other extant late eighteenth-century English square pianos with folding legs:

1. an instrument by Charles Trute, dated ca 1771?, with four straight square-tapering legs braced by a removable shelf.265 This piano has a compass of...
four octaves (54 notes, C–f3 chromatic) — a compass perhaps inspired by that found on some seventeenth and eighteenth-century organs and clavichords

2. an instrument by Ferdinand Weber (1715–84), dated 1772, with a folding ‘picnic table’ stand. This piano has a compass of two keys less than five octaves (59 notes, GG–f3)

3. an instrument by Ferdinand Weber, date unknown, with a folding ‘picnic table’ stand. This piano has a compass of two keys less than five octaves (59 notes, GG–f3)

4. an instrument by Longman & Broderip (ca 1790), with four somewhat unattractive straight square-tapered legs that fold underneath the case.

At first, this instrument appears to support the notion that Longman & Broderip manufactured campaign-furniture-style pianos as a matter of course. It is not known, however, how many instruments with folding legs Longman & Broderip either commissioned or sold. Significantly, this decoratively plain instrument (whose unadorned nature precludes it from association with the campaign furniture aesthetic) has a keyboard compass of only three octaves (37 notes, F–f2 chromatic). This suggests that the piano may have been designed to function as a choirmaster’s or dancing teacher’s instrument, or as a portable piano made for a church organist (the so-called ‘shipboard’ piano, an especially narrow instrument in upright form, is a nineteenth-century invention).

George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano is the only extant late eighteenth-century English square piano with hinged legs whose case dimensions and fully chromatic five-octave keyboard compass reflect contemporaneous norms. That the instrument has cabriole legs and a unique stand designed to be quickly disassembled, packed away, transported and (most importantly) reassembled without using nails, tacks or tools further reinforces its distinctiveness.

The design of the butt hinge at the top of each cabriole leg on George Worgan’s piano originated in England during the early eighteenth century. That each hinge leaf is slightly tapered (from the hinge barrel outward) not only saves material and enhances the look, it is also typical of many eighteenth-century English butt hinges.

266 A strikingly beautiful example of a square piano with an identical compass to that of the ca 1771? Trute instrument may be seen in ‘Restored Instrument Archive: Square Piano by John Bland, London c.1790’, in The Music Room Workshop (n.d.).
267 This piano is housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Accession Number: 2003.300).
268 On Wednesday 11 March 2015, this square piano was offered for sale in Stansted, UK, by Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers. The instrument was offered as Lot 1395, and sold for £4200.
269 See Watson, Clinkscale Online, EP# 2139. See also photographs in ‘Square Piano (Portable Model Accession Number: 89.4.2849’, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art—Collections (n.d.).
‘Throughout … the 18th [century] … the typical butt hinge was meant to do its job without drawing attention to itself, functional items such as hinges … were not in competition with the designed elements for the viewers’ attention.’ Typically plain English eighteenth-century butt hinges blend in with the woodwork as much as possible.272

The plain iron hinges for the legs on Worgan’s piano reflect this eighteenth-century English aesthetic.

If the hinges were added by someone other than Frederick Beck after the completed piano had left Beck’s workshop, it is reasonable to assume that the mortices into which the hinge leaves are recessed would have been close to perfectly (if not perfectly) matched to the hinge leaves’ edges. That the mortices cut into the wood are imperfect and rough (Plate 35) conforms with Beck’s characteristically ‘rushed cabinet-work’273 and poor-quality carving style, suggesting that Beck himself was responsible for incorporating the hinges into the instrument at the time of its making. (The carving imperfections shown in Plate 35 are representative of each hinge.) The discolouration (oxidisation) of the wood visible at the vertical edges of the mortices suggests that the cavities are not recent, giving further credence to the notion that Beck may have made them.

Plate 35 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument—iron butt hinge attaching the top of the rear leg to the case.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

The 1780/86? Beck piano’s unique hinged cabriole legs are an integrated part of the campaign-furniture-inspired stand. Instead of having the French frame’s ‘lip with recess’ at the top of the frame, the top front of the stand has a detachable stretcher (Plate 36). The ends of this front detachable stretcher are inserted into slots at the top of both front legs (Plate 37). This detachable front stretcher tapers off at each end into the curve of the leg (Plate 38), and is held aloft by two brass swivel hooks mounted at either end on the back (Plates 39 and 40). Each hook catches in a square brass catch that protrudes from underneath the case (Plate 41). The front stretcher creates the illusion that the instrument, legs and front stretcher are one article (thereby alluding to the French frame) (Plate 42).

When the instrument is standing, both the detachable lower stretcher running the length of the case and the detachable front stretcher prevent the hinged legs from accidentally folding inwards.

When the detachable stretchers are removed (a quick and easy process), the hinged legs at each end can be quickly folded under the case (Plate 43). When the legs are folded underneath the instrument, the entire article takes up very little space (the fact that space on board ship was limited may have inspired Beck’s design).

Plate 36 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): top front of the ‘frame’—detachable stretcher running between the top of each front leg.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 37 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument—slot in the top of the front leg for the detachable front stretcher.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 38 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument—the detachable front stretcher tapers off into the curve of the front leg.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 39 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument—brass swivel hook on the back of the detachable front stretcher.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.


Right: Plate 41 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument—square brass catch (for the swivel hook) protruding from underneath the case.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 42 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): the front stretcher creates the illusion that the instrument, legs and detachable front stretcher are one article.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 43 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument—legs folded underneath.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
The Advantages of Beck’s Unique Folding Stand

Trestle Stand

The hinged folding legs and stand of Worgan’s piano have several distinct advantages over a trestle stand.

1. When the legs are folded underneath the instrument, only two elements of the stand remain separate from the entire article
   a) the detachable lower stretcher (running the length of the case when the stand is assembled) the detachable top front stretcher (the ends of which are inserted into slots at the top of both front legs when the stand is assembled).

   By way of comparison, when a trestle stand is disassembled, five or eight elements remain separate from the piano
   a) two ‘H’ end frames
   b) a single (or two) long stretcher(s)
   c) two (or four) iron bolts.

2. The risk of losing the several parts that make up a trestle stand is reduced.

3. The entire instrument can be quickly and easily dismantled and packed away without having to be lifted off its stand first (this is because the legs of Worgan’s piano are permanently hinged to the bottom of the instrument’s case).

4. The inconvenience of having to move a separate (assembled or disassembled) trestle stand is minimised.

5. The stand is more easily and quickly dismantled than a trestle stand.

6. The hinges of the folding legs on Worgan’s piano are more resistant to wear and tear than the wooden hole in the single (or two) crossbar(s) in each of the trestle stand’s two ‘H’ end frames (an iron bolt passes through each wooden hole, joining the crossbars with a long stretcher). Each time a trestle stand is assembled or disassembled, the wooden hole may be slightly damaged by the abrasive action of the iron bolt passing through it. As a consequence, the hole may increase in diameter. Eventually, the hole may become so wide that the trestle’s structural integrity is compromised.
French Frame

The hinged folding legs and stand of Worgan’s piano have several distinct advantages over a French frame.

1. When the legs are folded underneath the instrument, only two elements of the stand remain separate from the entire article:
   a) the detachable lower stretcher (running the length of the case when the stand is assembled)
   b) the detachable top front stretcher (the ends of which are inserted into slots at the top of both front legs when the stand is assembled).

By way of comparison, when a French frame is disassembled, eight to 13 elements remain separate from the piano (the exact number of elements depends upon the design of the legs and the presence or absence of an under-tier):
   a) either two stretchers (if the legs at either end are permanently joined by a stretcher) or four stretchers
   b) either two pairs of legs (if the legs at either end are permanently joined by a stretcher) or four separate legs
   c) an under-tier (if there is one)
   d) four iron bolts.

2. The risk of losing the several parts that make up a French frame is reduced.

3. The entire instrument can be quickly and easily dismantled and packed away without having to be lifted off its stand first (this is because the legs of Worgan’s piano are permanently hinged to the bottom of the instrument’s case).

4. The inconvenience of having to move a separate (assembled or disassembled) French frame is minimised.

5. The stand is more easily and quickly dismantled than a French frame.

6. The hinges of the folding legs on Worgan’s piano are more resistant to wear and tear than the wooden hole at the top of each leg in a French frame (an iron bolt passes through the wooden hole, joining the leg with the stretchers at the top). Each time a French frame is assembled or disassembled, the wooden hole may be slightly damaged by the abrasive action of the iron bolt passing through it. As a consequence, the hole may increase in diameter. Eventually, the hole may become so wide that the French frame’s structural integrity is compromised.
7. Beck’s unique inclusion of hinged, folding legs may have been his response to the knowledge that Worgan intended not only to store the piano on board ship, but also (when occasion dictated) to play it. In order to protect the instrument from storm-at-sea-induced movement, Beck
   a) used cabriole legs because of their inherent strength and stability
   b) excluded brass cup castors in order to prevent the instrument sliding around on the floor
   c) hinged the legs permanently to the underside of the case (if a storm at sea suddenly arose, the piano’s stand could be quickly and easily dismantled for safe and protectively immobilised storage).

8. The stand weighs significantly less than a French frame. This has ramifications not only in relation to the ease with which the piano may be moved with its stand assembled, but also in relation to the ease with which the stand may be assembled or disassembled.

It appears that Beck’s creative thinking was brought into play because he knew that on board the *Sirius*—as remarked by the soldier, composer, music publisher and ‘self-styled expert in the growing market for handbooks of practical tips for the oriental traveller’ Captain Thomas Williamson (1758–1817) in his *East India Vade-Mecum*—the instrument ran the risk of being ‘tumbled about, and shivered to atoms, by the vessel’s motion’. During a storm, a rampaging piano would have been a distinct liability.

**Campaign Furniture**

The design principle of hinged, folding legs has its precedent in military ‘camp’ or ‘campaign’ furniture.

Campaign (or travelling) furniture was not only durable and practical, but elegant, being designed in the most fashionable contemporary taste ... Examples include ... chairs, tables, desks, writing slopes, bookcases, chests, sofas, trunks, ecclesiastical rostrums, bedsteads, cots, dressing table sets, showers, washstands, bidets, reading lamps and even razor cases.

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The essential difference between elegant household furniture and campaign furniture was that the latter could be quickly disassembled, packed away, transported and (most importantly) reassembled without using nails, tacks or tools.\textsuperscript{276}

Campaign furniture was designed for use by officers on campaign.\textsuperscript{277} Its innate elegance and superb design ‘reflected the strong sense of superiority of the gentleman-officer class, its rank in both society and in the army, and its attitudes towards travel, camp and battle’. Moreover, it was precisely because issues of class and respectability were taken so seriously that makers of campaign furniture flourished.\textsuperscript{278}

Campaign furniture was ‘suitable for the fitting up of ships’ cabins … An advertisement for the auction of eighteen packages of … “camp furniture” by Thompson & Co, Launceston [Tasmania], as late as 1856, suggests that there was a strong and continuing demand for such pieces’.\textsuperscript{279}

Assuming that Beck contrived Worgan’s piano for shipboard use, he would have been aware that Worgan and his piano were destined for Botany Bay. Knowing that the navy and the military were associated both with the First Fleet and with the proposed colony, campaign furniture (long associated with the armed forces) may have inspired Beck’s design for the stand of Worgan’s piano. Beck’s lateral thinking suggests that he may have approached instrument making with an attitude similar to that espoused by George Hepplewhite in 1788: ‘To unite elegance and utility, and blend the useful with the agreeable, has ever been considered a difficult, but an honourable task.’\textsuperscript{280} Beck’s thinking reflects the wisdom and experience of a mature craftsman (Beck was 48 years old when he completed Worgan’s piano).

\textsuperscript{276} See McDonald, ‘Campaign Furniture’, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{278} McDonald, ‘Campaign Furniture’, p. 22. McDonald takes the quotation from: N. A. Brawer, British Campaign Furniture. Elegance under Canvas, 1740–1914 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001). The straight square-tapered legs that fold underneath the case of the four-octave (54 notes, C–f\textsuperscript{3} chromatic) English square piano by Charles Trute (ca 1771?) are quite elegant, and therefore representative of the campaign furniture aesthetic. The straight square-tapered legs that fold underneath the case of the three-octave (37 notes, F–f\textsuperscript{2} chromatic) English square piano by Longman & Broderip (ca 1790) are not representative of the campaign furniture aesthetic; they are not elegant, nor are they designed in the most fashionable contemporary taste. See photographs in ‘Square Piano (Portable Model Accession Number: 89.4.2849’.
### Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck

Clinkscale\(^{281}\) lists 27 Beck pianos. The dates of these instruments (as provided by Clinkscale) are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Owner and Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca 1770</td>
<td>Owner: Michael Günther Collection, Homburg am Main, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>Owner: Mr Tidstrom, Netherlands; formerly housed at the Rien Hasselaar Collection, Amsterdam, Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>Owner(s): unknown(^{b})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>Owner: Bachhaus, Eisenach, Germany (Plate 43b)(^{c})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>Owner(s): unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>One of two instruments with exquisitely beautiful casework of astonishing quality, made by Beck in conjunction with Christopher Fuhrlohg. Owner: Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight Village, Wirral, UK(^{d})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>Owner: Musée de la Musique, Cité de la Musique—formerly Musée Institut du Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique), Paris, France(^{e})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Owner: Michael Borgstede, Germany (Plates 43s, 43t, 428b and 428c).(^{f}) Clinkscale identifies the owner of this instrument as the Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin, Germany. The only Beck square piano in that museum’s collection, however, is dated 1780 (see 1780 below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>Recently restored to playing condition. Owner: Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada (Plates 43d, 43e and 249)(^{g})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>One of two instruments with exquisitely beautiful casework of astonishing quality, made by Beck in conjunction with Christopher Fuhrlohg. Owner: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada(^{b})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>Owner: Musée instrumental de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium(^{i})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>The soundboard is dated 1777, denoting a late-year production.(^{j}) Owner: Thomas Strange, Easley, SC, USA (Plate 43f)(^{k})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Owner: Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin, Germany(^{l})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{281}\) Watson, *Clinkscale Online*. 
1780/86? Owner: Stewart Symonds, Sydney, Australia (Plate 43g)
1782 Owner(s): unknown
1782/87? Owner: Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA; serial number 5008 (Plates 43h, 438 and 440)\(^n\)
1782/90? Owner: Osaka College of Music Museum, Osaka, Japan. This instrument has a ‘tangent action’,\(^o\) rather than pivoted hammers\(^o\)
1783 Owner: Sibeliummuseet, Turku, Finland (Plate 43i)\(^p\)
1784 Owner: Eberhard Brünger, Bielefeld, Germany
1785 Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA (Plate 43j)
1786 Owner: The Stockholm Music and Theatre Museum, Sweden (Plate 43k)\(^q\)
1788 Owner(s): unknown; serial number 1941\(^r\)
ca 1790 Owner(s): private collection, England. This instrument has a ‘tangent action’, rather than pivoted hammers (Plate 43m)\(^e\)
ca 1795 Owner(s): unknown
ca 1795 Owner(s): unknown
ca 1790–98 Owner: Musée de la Musique, Cité de la Musique—formerly Musée Institut du Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, Paris, France
Date unknown Owner: Halton Henderson, Dallas, TX, USA

\(^a\) See photograph in ‘Tafelklavier Fredericus Beck (Friedrich A. Becker) London, ca. 1770 Sammlung Michael Günther, Schloss Homburg a.M., Inv. Nr. 8’, in Clavier am Main Tasteninstrumente der Sammlung Michael Günther (n.d.). There is no date visible on the nameboard of this instrument.


\(^c\) Inv. no. 4.1.12., 186.d

\(^d\) See ‘Frederick Beck and Christopher Fuhrloh’ below. See also photograph in ‘English Square Piano’, in Lady Lever Art Gallery.

\(^e\) Inv. no. E.1530. See photographs in ‘Cité de la musique, Paris, France’.

\(^f\) See also photograph in C. Sachs, Das Klavier (Berlin: Verlag Julius Bard, 1923), photos on p. 13. The distinguished fortepiano dealer and aficionado Andrew Lancaster restored this square piano ‘a few years ago’ (Email from Andrew Lancaster to the author, 22 December 2013). The instrument eventually passed into the hands of Graham Walker, who acquired it in the United Kingdom at ‘a provincial auction a couple of weeks ago. Against an estimate of £200 (no reserve) it was knocked down for £4,000 (+ premium) to … Graham Walker.’ I am indebted to David Hackett for this information (Email from David Hackett to the
author, 24 November 2013). Graham Walker subsequently sold the instrument to Luke Bradley, Lausanne, Switzerland. In ca March 2014, Bradley offered the instrument for sale for £7000. The piano was purchased by its current owner, Michael Borgstede, Germany. The instrument is in excellent condition.

See P. Gessell, *Artful Blogger: On July 25, You, Too, Can Hear the 1777 Piano that was Once ‘Fit for a Queen’*, in Ottawa Magazine (15 February 2012).


I am indebted to Thomas Strange for this information.


Inv. no. 2174, Tafel 13. See photographs in hammerfluegel.net/.

‘Museum records give a date of 1782, but without explanation.’ (‘English Square Pianoforte by Frederick Beck, London, circa 1782’ in Norfolk Charitable Trust Records.) I am indebted to Elisabeth McGregor, Curator/Archivist of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, for providing me with this information. See ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’, in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.

A ‘tangent action’ has non-pivoting vertical rebounding hammers (rather than pivoted rebounding hammers). The distinguishing feature of the so-called tangent action is that the vertical hammers are not attached to any other part of the action but move up and down in a guide similar to the jack guide of the harpsichord … The non-pivoting vertical hammers are propelled towards the strings from below, either by the keys on which they rest or by intermediate levers interposed between the keys and the hammers.’ di Stefano, ‘The *Tangentenflügel* and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 80. Beck was granted a patent for his tangent action instruments; this is revealed by the inscription on the nameboard of the ca 1790 (private collection, England) instrument, which reads: *By the King’s *Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit Patent / No. 10 Broad Street Soho.* Moreover, a handwritten inscription on the soundboard, near the bridge, states: *A. F. Beck. 1790 Patent.* See Plate 16b.

This instrument can be heard at www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7_DsOxDR6c (retrieved 15 June 2013); and www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Z2xie6diGY (retrieved 15 June 2013).

Inv. no. 0171.

Inv. no. N61230.


See Appendix M, Volume 2 of this publication.

Because of this instrument’s extended keyboard compass (FF–c4), Kenneth Mobbs proposes a date of 1795. See Watson, *Clinkscale Online*.

Clinkscale erroneously attributes the ca 1790–98 piano to Frederick Beck. The instrument was made by Joseph Beck.282

Six known Beck instruments are not listed by Clinkscale

1. a piano dated ca 1769–73 (a date towards the end of the range seems most likely: ca 1772–73), made for Longman, Lukey & Co., and reasonably attributed to Frederick Beck;283 owner: Albert Bil, Scotland (Plate 43u and 425b)284

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282 This instrument is a miniature piano, with a keyboard compass of only two octaves. See text and photographs in ‘Cité de la musique, Paris, France’.

283 See photographs in Hackett, ‘(2) An Early London Square Piano Made for Longman, Lukey & Co. c. 1774’. The attribution to Beck is based largely on the absence of dampers after c3; the undamped top five notes are characteristic of Beck’s instruments (no other maker of square pianos followed this damping pattern).

284 I am indebted to David Hackett for information regarding the current owner of this instrument.
2. a piano dated 1773; owner: Pelham Galleries, London, UK (Plate 43a)
3. a piano dated 1778? (estimate); owner(s): unknown; serial number 309
4. a piano dated 1782; owner: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany
5. a piano dated ca 1790? (the nameboard inscription reads: No 2505 / F Beck et G Corrie Londini Fecerunt / No 10 Broad Street Soho; owner(s): unknown, in Germany; serial number 2505 (Plate 43r)
6. a piano dated ca 1790; owner(s): unknown; serial number 2580.

When the 26 instruments made by Frederick Beck in Clinkscales’s list—that is, excluding the instrument by Joseph Beck—are combined with the six Beck instruments not recorded in Clinkscale (including both the ca 1769–73/probably ca 1772–73 instrument made for Longman, Lukey & Co. and the ca 1790? instrument, serial number 2505, made by Beck & Corrie)—32 extant square pianos by Frederick Beck can be identified.

c. 1770
Owner: Michael Günther Collection, Homburg am Main, Germany

c. 1769–73/probably c. 1772–73
Owner: Albert Bil, Scotland

1772
Owner(s): unknown

1773
Owner: Pelham Galleries, London, UK

1774
Owner: Bachhaus, Eisenach, Germany

1774
Owner(s): unknown

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285 The 1773 Beck square piano can be heard on Claviers mozartiens (Lyrinx, 2006), CD, Lyr 2251, tracks 11–13 (inclusive); the instrument is played by the virtuoso scholar-musician Pierre Goy. Alan Rubin, of Pelham Galleries, London, UK, acquired this instrument from the widow of the eminent musicologist H. C. Robbins Landon (1926–2009). The instrument is in fine condition, and currently plays very nicely. I am indebted to Alan Rubin for this information (Email from Alan Rubin to the author, 9 April 2013). See photograph in An Early George III Square Piano by Frederick Beck, London 1773, in Pelham Galleries (London, n.d.). See also photograph in Dating Pianos.

286 See ‘Sale 6414 Lot 277’, in Christie’s The Art People (n.d.).

287 See photograph in Beurmann, Das Buch vom Klavier, Plate 110a ‘Das Tafelklavier von Beck’, p. 54.

288 I am indebted to Graham Walker for photographs of and information regarding this instrument.

289 On Thursday, 12 December 2013, this square piano was offered for sale in Conway Hall, Holborn, London, by Piano Auctions Limited, with an estimate of £2000–3000. The reserve was too high, and the instrument did not sell. The provenance of this square piano is unknown. The instrument currently requires significant restoration, especially the front right corner, which is badly cracked and requires gluing and clamping. I am indebted to Andrew Snedden, York, UK, for this information (Email from Andrew Snedden to the author, 12 December 2013).
1775 One of two instruments with exquisitely beautiful casework of astonishing quality, made by Beck in conjunction with Christopher Fuhrlohg. Owner: Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight Village, Wirral, UK

1775 Owner: Musée de la Musique, Cité de la Musique, Paris, France

1776 Owner: Michael Borgstede, Germany

1777 Owner: Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

1777 One of two instruments with exquisitely beautiful casework of astonishing quality, made by Beck in conjunction with Christopher Fuhrlohg. Owner: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada

1778 Owner: Musée instrumental de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

1778 The soundboard is dated 1777, denoting a late-year production. Owner: Thomas Strange, Easley, SC, USA

1778? Owner(s): unknown; serial number 3091 (estimate)

1780 Owner: Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin, Germany

1780/86? George Worgan’s piano. Owner: Stewart Symonds, Sydney, Australia

1782 Owner: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany

1782 Owner(s): unknown

1782/87? Owner: Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA; serial number 5008

1782/90? ‘Tangent action’ instrument. Owner: Osaka College of Music Museum, Osaka, Japan

1783 Owner: Sibeliummuseet, Turku, Finland

1784 Owner: Eberhard Brümmer, Bielefeld, Germany

1785 Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA

1786 Owner: The Stockholm Music and Theatre Museum, Sweden

1788 Owner(s): unknown; serial number 1941

ca 1790 ‘Tangent action’ instrument. Owner(s): private collection, England
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

ca 1790? Owner(s): unknown, in Germany; serial number 2505
ca 1790 Owner(s): unknown; serial number 2580
ca 1795 Owner(s): unknown (estimate)
ca 1795 Owner(s): unknown (estimate)
Date unknown Owner: Halton Henderson, Dallas, TX, USA)

Of these 32 extant Beck instruments, the owners of nine are unknown to the author.

On Saturday, 4 April 2009, a Beck square piano was offered for sale at auction by Canterbury Auction Galleries—40 Station Street West, Canterbury, Kent, UK. The instrument was described as a ‘late 18th/early 19th Century mahogany square piano by Frederick Beck of London, now converted to a dressing table, inlaid with satinwood bandings and boxwood stringings, fitted three drawers, on square tapered legs and brass caps and casters’.290 The piano was offered as Lot 562, and sold for £100. The unfortunate conversion of this instrument into a dressing table precludes its inclusion in data regarding extant Beck pianos.

Although the extant pianos made by Frederick Beck are of the square type, there is no reason to suppose that he did not also make grand pianos. An advertisement published in The Whitehall Evening Post of Thursday 14 – Saturday 16 August 1794 suggests that Beck made a grand piano: ‘Sales by Auction … a Capital Grand Piano Forte by Beck’291 (late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century newspaper advertisements were consistently specific when identifying a grand piano for sale; when appropriate, the word ‘grand’ was included). To the author’s knowledge, this is the only contemporaneous evidence that links Beck with the manufacture of a grand piano.

291 The Whitehall Evening Post, 14–16 August 1794, No. 7449, p. 1. See ‘1794’ in Appendix N, Volume 2 of this publication.
The Stands of Extant Beck Instruments

Eight of the 27 Beck instruments listed in Clinkscale have a trestle stand (pianos dated ca 1770, 1772, 1774, 1775, 1776, 1777, 1778 and 1780). Clinkscale does not describe the stands of 11 instruments included in her list; furthermore, her description of the stands of three instruments is not specific enough to allow for certainty.

Of the six Beck pianos not listed in Clinkscale, two have a trestle stand (pianos dated ca 1769–73/probably ca 1772–73, and 1773).

Nine pianos in Clinkscale’s list have a French frame (pianos dated 1782/87?, serial number 5008; 1782/90?; 1783; 1785; 1786; 1788, serial number 1941; ca 1790 [estimate]; ca 1795 [estimate]; and ca 1795 [estimate]).

Four of the six Beck pianos not listed in Clinkscale have a French frame (pianos dated 1778? (estimate), serial number 3091; 1782; ca 1790, serial number 2505; and ca 1790, serial number 2580).

In relation to the 32 extant Frederick Beck square pianos, the author is aware of the following types of stand on 29 instruments:

294 See photographs in ‘Cité de la musique, Paris, France; specifically, 194.250.19.151/media/CM/IMAGE/CMIM000030107.jpg. See also photograph in Cole, ‘Square Pianos (newly revised April 2012)’, 2nd image.
295 See Plate 43s below. See also photograph in Sachs, Das Klavier, photos on p. 13.
296 See Plate 43c below. See also photograph in Gessell, ‘Artful Blogger’.
297 See Plate 43d below.
298 See Plate 43u below. See also photograph in Hackett, ‘(2) An Early London Square Piano made for Longman, Lukey & Co. c. 1774’.
299 See Plate 43a below. See also photograph in ‘An Early George III Square Piano by Frederick Beck, London 1773’. See also photograph in ‘Dating Pianos’, first image.
300 Owner: Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA. See Plate 43b below.
301 See photograph in di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 90.
302 See Plate 43i and 43n.
303 See Plate 43j below. ‘The stand was updated when the piano was about fifteen years old. The amateur effort approximates … [a] French frame design but without an apron.’ Watson, Changing Keys, p. 51. See also photograph in Watson, Clinkscale Online, ‘Photos: EP# 408 Square Beck, Frederick’. See also Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, p. 20.
304 I am indebted to Dan Johannson, Curator of the Stockholm Music and Theatre Museum, for this information.
305 See Plate 43m. See also photograph in di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, p. 101, Figure 17.
306 Owner(s): unknown.
308 Owner(s): unknown, in Germany. See Plate 43r.
309 I am indebted to Andrew Snedden for this information (Email from Andrew Snedden to the author, 12 December 2013).
ca 1770 Trestle
ca 1769–73 (probably ca 1772–73)

1772 Owner: Mr Tidstrom, Netherlands—the original stand is missing

1773 Trestle

1774 Owner: Bachhaus, Eisenach, Germany—four freestanding, apron-less, round-tapered, fluted screw-in legs (Plates 43b and 43c)

1775 Owner(s): unknown—trestle

1776 Owner: Michael Borgstede, Germany—trestle
1777 Beck/Fuhrlohg—the legs are derived from a French frame
1777 Owner: Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada—trestle
1778 Owner: Musée instrumental de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium—the original stand is missing and has been replaced with four modern freestanding square-tapered legs

1778 Owner: Thomas Strange, Easley, SC, USA—trestle
1778? Owner(s): unknown; serial number 3091—French frame (estimate)

1780 Owner: Musikinstrumenten-Museum, Berlin, Germany—trestle
1780/86? George Worgan’s piano. Owner: Stewart Symonds, Sydney, Australia—hinged, folding cabriole legs
1782 Owner: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany—French frame
1782/87? Owner: Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA; serial number 5008—French frame
1782/90? Owner: Osaka College of Music Museum, Osaka, Japan. ‘Tangent action’ instrument—French frame
1783 French frame—the legs are original, the apron is not (Plates 43i and 43n)
1785 Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA—French frame (the stand was updated when the instrument was approximately 15 years old) (Plate 43j)
1786 Owner: Stockholm Music and Theatre Museum, Sweden—French frame

1788 Serial number 1941—French frame

c. 1790 ‘Tangent action’ instrument—French frame (Plate 43m)

(c. 1790?) Serial number 2505—French frame (Plate 43r)

c. 1790 Serial number 2580—French frame

c. 1795 French frame

c. 1795 French frame

*Of the two extant Beck square pianos dated 1772, this is the instrument currently owned by Mr Tidstrom, Netherlands. I am indebted to Stanley Hoogland for this information.

† I am indebted to Inger Jakobsson-Wärn, Director and Curator of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, for this information.

These data suggest that at some stage during the early 1780s, Beck ceased providing trestle stands for his pianos, providing instead French frames, which is consistent with the changing fashion of the time.

Plate 43a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1773).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Pelham Galleries, London.
Plate 43b Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1774).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bachhaus, Eisenach/Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V., Inv. no. 1. 4. 1. 12, I 86.

Plate 43c Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1774): round-tapered, fluted screw-in leg—the moulded circular boss lends a touch of ornament to the round capitals (a variant of the French style).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bachhaus, Eisenach/Neue Bachgesellschaft e.V., Inv. no. 1. 4. 1. 12, I 86.
Plate 43d Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1777).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa. Photo by James Park.


Source: Reproduced with permission of Carleton University, School for Studies in Art and Culture (Music), Ottawa. Photo by James Park.
Plate 43f Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1778).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange.

Plate 43g Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 43h Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?, serial number 5008).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.

Plate 43i Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1783).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, Inv. no. 0171.
Plate 43j Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1785).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA, USA. Photo by John R. Watson.

Plate 43k Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1786).

Plate 43m Tangent action square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, ca 1790 – estimate).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.

Plate 43n Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1783): French frame—the square-tapered legs are original; the apron is not.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, Inv. no. 0171.
Plate 43o Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1783): nameboard decoration—exquisite handpainted swags on either side of and around the inscription cartouche.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, Inv. no. 0171.


Source: Reproduced with permission of the Sibelius Museum, Turku, Finland, Inv. no. 0171.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Malcolm Rose. Photo by Malcolm Rose.

Plate 43r Square piano by Frederick Beck and George Corrie (London, ca 1790?, serial number 2505): sometime during the Victorian or Edwardian period, the case was painted with neo-classical decoration.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Graham Walker. Photo by Graham Walker.
Plate 43s Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1776).

Source: Reproduced with permission of Michael Borgstede.

Plate 43t Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1776): nameboard.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Michael Borgstede.
The beautiful Beck/Fuhrlohg piano of 1775 has no legs.\textsuperscript{310} Being ‘a decorative piece of furniture’ (a commode)\textsuperscript{311} as well as ‘a useful musical instrument’,\textsuperscript{312} this piano takes the form of a rectangular box that extends to the ground. ‘There are cupboard doors at either end which open sets of shelves. The lid, decorated with a bouquet of roses, is hinged at the back and lifts to reveal the piano, while the front frieze panel is removable to allow access to the keyboard.’\textsuperscript{313} James erroneously observes that there is ‘no recess for the legs of a player seated before it’;\textsuperscript{314} however, the ‘recessed section of the front plinth was … removable [in order] to make room for the player’s feet, but this is now screwed in place’.\textsuperscript{315} Nevertheless, the instrument was never player-friendly. There is no music stand nor, it would seem, has there ever been one. Also, although the central panel in

\textsuperscript{310} See James, \textit{Early Keyboard Instruments}, ‘Plate LVIII Square Pianoforte by Frederick Beck English, 1775’, p. 138. See also ‘Frederick Beck and Christopher Fuhrlohg’, below. See also photograph in ‘English Square Piano’, in \textit{Lady Lever Art Gallery}.

\textsuperscript{311} See ‘Commode’ in Appendix Q, Volume 2 this publication.

\textsuperscript{312} James, \textit{Early Keyboard Instruments}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{313} ‘English Square Piano’, in \textit{Lady Lever Art Gallery}.


\textsuperscript{315} ‘English Square Piano’, in \textit{Lady Lever Art Gallery}. 

\hspace{1cm}
the [front] plinth was originally removable to accommodate the player’s feet, no similar provision was made for the seated player’s knees ... [the] keyboard is too low to be played comfortably from a standing position.316

The cabriole legs of Worgan’s 1780/86? piano are unique for an English square piano of the time. The fact that these legs are hinged (in order that they can be folded underneath the instrument) enhances their uniqueness.

The hinged cabriole legs of Worgan’s piano represent a design element that strengthens the hypothesis that this was the instrument brought to Australia by Worgan on board the Sirius—this is because the piano’s hinged legs

1. are expedient for safe and protectively immobilised storage within the context of a shipboard journey
2. are inspired by campaign furniture—that is, predicated on the principle that the article can be ‘quickly folded up ... without the use of nails, tacks or tools’317—thereby having practical advantages in relation to moving and storing the instrument.

That Frederick Beck may have incorporated the unique folding legs into Worgan’s piano at the time of its making is suggested by the fact that

1. the iron butt hinges are typical of those used in late eighteenth-century England
2. the imperfect and rough mortices within which the hinges sit are typical of Frederick Beck’s ‘rushed cabinet-work’318 and poor-quality carving style.

Storage Box

There is no documentary evidence suggesting that Worgan took the step of having a storage box made to protect his piano. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, storage boxes specifically made for keyboard instruments were usually accurately described as such by commentators. This is because piano storage boxes were not commonly part of either a household’s or an individual’s chattels; such boxes were expensive and complex pieces of furniture. In 1798, for example, the cost of the storage box provided by Longman & Broderip for Lord Edward Clive’s (1754–1839) piano was one-fifth of the cost of the piano itself:319

316 Ibid.
317 McDonald, ‘Campaign Furniture’, p. 22.
A new patent piano forte £31 10s. 0d.
A packing case 14s. 0d.
Tuning and regulating a grand piano 7s. 6d.
A deal chest of drawer with locks and handles and lifting handles with case for piano and other instruments £6 12s 1d.
a smooth case for piano frame [that is, piano stand] 14s. 6d.

Not all piano storage boxes were as expensive as Lord Edward Clive’s, and it appears that his storage box was made for a grand piano, not a square piano, but the design of such items ensured that they were never inexpensive.

Captain Thomas Williamson describes the complex design of keyboard instrument storage boxes. While providing advice for the traveller at sea, Williamson states in his *East India Vade-Mecum*:

Ladies will derive considerable convenience and gratification from having an exterior case made to enclose the piano-forte, leaving a space of about an inch all around. This outward safeguard should be of planed deal, stained of a mahogany color, or painted; and it should open in front, so as to admit of playing the instrument, while its lid should be fixed upon hinges, that it may be thrown back at pleasure. The lower part of the frame [that is, stand] may be packed, and laid by; a spare frame of deal being substituted during the voyage, with a set of shelves below to contain music, books, &c.; all locked up by means of folding doors. Both the exterior case, and the frame, ought to be furnished with lacquered iron handles, whereby to lift them occasionally; but particularly intended to secure them to the side of the ship, and to the deck.320

The sales pitch was that a storage box would not only provide easy access to the instrument while on board, but also afford a degree of protection in stormy seas. Of course, recommended ‘extras’ raised the storage box’s selling price.321

For those oceanic travellers who were unable to enjoy the virtues and complexities of a purpose-made piano storage box, a comparatively simple alternative was available. Judge Advocate Ellis Bent322 (1783–1815), writing to his mother in England from Sydney on Friday, 27 April 1810, states:

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My first spare money should be appropriated to the purchase of a small pianoforte [that is, a square piano] by Broadwood, with pedals and additional keys, as good of its kind as can be.—To come safe it ought first to be packed in tin, soldiered down, & then put in a strong iron bound, wooden case.323

This style of piano storage box was not particularly cheap. The use of tin, however, had a surprising financial benefit for those shipping a piano to Sydney. Ellis Bent (writing from Sydney) remarks: ‘Do not be deterred by the expense of packing & shipping for the tin will sell here for treble that expence.’324

The advantage of this type of packing system lay in the airtight environment that existed within the soldered tin box. A disadvantage, however, lay in the fact that the instrument could not be accessed until the conclusion of the voyage.

Square and grand pianos benefited from the reliable protective strengths of this type of storage box. Ellis Bent observes:

Broadwood will take upon himself the whole trouble of packing and shipping, for he did so with Mrs. Macquarie, who brought out a charming grand piano, packed in this manner, without sustaining the slightest Injury, while one of Mrs. Carter’s packed in a different manner was quite spoiled.325

No documentary evidence suggests that on his voyage to Botany Bay, George Bouchier Worgan did (or did not) place his square piano in a protective storage box.

**Mahogany Veneer**

That Frederick Beck (and his piano-making English contemporaries) made lavish use of mahogany veneer for the cases of even the cheapest form of square piano seems inexplicably indulgent. In 1780 or 1786?, however, when Beck was veneering Worgan’s piano, not only was mahogany ‘the fashionable wood of choice’326 (mahogany was ‘chosen for the beauty of its grain’),327 but also good-quality mahogany was easily available in London.

324 Bent, ‘Letter to His Mother’.
325 Ibid.
English furniture makers had enjoyed unhindered access to mahogany since the early eighteenth century. From ca 1715, mahogany was shipped to England from Jamaica and the Caribbean. (During the early eighteenth century, mahogany was known as ‘right Jamaica wood’.)

Between 1723–1763, Jamaica and the British colonies in the West Indies supplied well over 90% of the large amounts of mahogany imported into England. In this respect, ‘Jamaica’s importance continued until 1790’.

Mahogany from Spanish-controlled San Domingo was regarded as being of very good quality. This mahogany was referred to at the time as ‘Spanish mahogany’.

The next grade was mahogany from Cuba. Adam Bowett dispels the myth that the mahogany used for eighteenth-century English furniture was mainly from Cuba. In 1768—and as a representative example—the Lancaster furniture makers Gillows ordered timber from one of their Liverpool suppliers. Gillows told their supplier that on no account should they send Cuban mahogany, because “it won’t do at all”. It was not until the 1850s that ‘a greater share of the British market’ was taken by Cuban mahogany.

By the time Beck was making Worgan’s square piano, mahogany from Honduras was greatly sought after by London cabinet-makers. Not only was it stable, it was also easily available in very wide boards (between 610 millimetres and 660 millimetres) and was therefore suitable for case furniture—for example, bureaus, bookcases and chests of drawers.

The quality of the mahogany veneer on the 1780/86? Beck piano suggests that the wood may have come from Jamaica, San Domingo or Honduras. Beck, as with contemporaneous London furniture makers, ‘either bought his veneer ready sawed from his timber merchant or sawed it out … himself’. Beck would have been aware of the increase in costs associated with acquiring his veneers ready sawed. As the French cabinetmaker André Jacob Roubo (1739–91) observed in 1774:

It is not the cabinet-makers who resaw their own wood, but workmen who specialize in this trade and who resaw not only for the cabinetmakers

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329 Ibid., p. 11, col. 2.
330 Ibid., p. 13, col. 3.
333 Ibid., p. 12, col. 1.
334 Ibid., p. 13, col. 1.
336 Hubbard, Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making, p. 217.
but also for the luthiers and in general all those who employ thin wood. These workmen or sawyers are paid by the pound, that is to say, by the weight of wood which is brought to them, which with the loss of wood in sawdust renders the wood nearly two-thirds more expensive, an important consideration.337

Typically for late eighteenth-century square pianos, the mahogany-veneered case of George Worgan’s Beck square piano is wax polished. The nameboard and interior are varnished ‘using the standard spirit varnish of the [contemporaneous] furniture trade’.338 (It was not until after 1830 that ‘“French polishing” was introduced’ in relation to the cabinetwork of English pianos, ‘applying layer after layer of shellac dissolved in alcohol to produce a brilliantly shining surface, with a translucent body, which revealed every bit of lustre in the timber beneath’.)339

From 1770, the plain surfaces of English pianos were commonly divided visually with lines of a contrasting colour. These lines were usually created using inlay, and formed rectangular panels. Inlaid lines were also used to follow and emphasise the form of elaborately shaped furniture.340 This characteristically English inlay is a feature of the cabinetwork on Worgan’s Beck square piano.

**Beck’s Inlay**

The beautiful inlaid casework (as well as the inclusion of elegant square-tapered cabriole legs) of Worgan’s piano may help to explain why Arthur Bowes Smyth (1750–90), surgeon on the First Fleet’s women’s convict ship, the *Lady Penrhyn*, described the instrument as being ‘very fine’.341 Some years later, in 1815 (and doubtless for the same reasons), the instrument was described as ‘very handsome’.342

The outside of the mahogany-veneered lid and case of Worgan’s piano is decorated with inlaid lines comprising a simplified form of Tunbridgeware (Plates 44–6). On Worgan’s piano, the inlaid lines seamlessly progress from the instrument’s case to the stand. The inlaid lines then follow the curved inside edge of each leg down to the leg termination (Plate 47), not only emphasising

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the sensuous form of each leg, but also providing a ravishingly beautiful and rarely encountered decorative unity. That the inlaid decoration is so perfectly and aesthetically integrated suggests not only that the stand derives from Beck’s workshop, but also that the piano and its stand may have been made together.

Beck’s use of simplified Tunbridgeware inlay is a recurring decorative characteristic of his work, and is not unique to Worgan’s 1780/86? piano. As representative examples, the cases of extant square pianos that Beck made in 1772, 1773 (Plate 43a), 1774 (Plate 43b), 1775, 1776 (Plate 43s), 1777 (Plates 43d, 43e and 429), 1778 (Plate 43f), 1782 and 1786 (Plate 43k) all contain simplified Tunbridgeware inlay. When compared with the inlaid decorative lines commonly encountered on square pianos made by late eighteenth-century English makers, Beck’s simplified Tunbridgeware design is (to say the least) both opulent and ravishing.

Plate 44 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): lockboard, decorated with a simplified form of Tunbridgeware inlay.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

344 See also photograph in ‘An Early George III Square Piano by Frederick Beck, London 1773’. See also photograph in ‘Dating Pianos’.
345 See photographs in ‘Cité de la musique, Paris, France. See also photograph in Cole, ‘A Brief History’.
346 See also Sachs, Das Klavier, photos on p. 13.
347 See also photograph in Gessell, ‘Artful Blogger’. See also photographs in ‘Making One of Canada’s Oldest Pianos Playable’, in Columns: The Link—Culture Corner (Radio Canada International, n.d.). The case and lid decoration shown in Plate 429 are particularly opulent.
Plate 45 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): outside of the lid, decorated with a simplified form of Tunbridge ware inlay running parallel with the edge—this inlay is identical to that found on the outside of the case.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 46 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): front of the case—decorated with a simplified form of Tunbridge ware inlay running parallel with the edge.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Plate 47 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): bass end of the instrument, front leg—a simplified form of Tunbridgeware inlay follows the curved inside of the leg, down to the leg termination.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

The comparatively bland decorative lines on the cases of the 1783, 1785, ca 1790 (estimate) and ca 1790? Beck square pianos do not feature a simplified Tunbridgeware design (respectively: Plates 43i, 43j, 43m and 43r); however, the nameboard decoration on these instruments compensates for any lack of ornamental character.

1. The nameboard of the 1783 instrument is embellished with handpainted swags on either side of and around the inscription cartouche (Plates 43o and 43p).
2. The nameboard of the 1785 piano has a prominent inscription cartouche comprising an elongated rectangular form with convex rounded ends (Plate 43j).\footnote{Beck’s 1780s nameboard inscription cartouches almost invariably comprise an elongated rectangular form, either with ogee pointed ends (Plate 17a) or with convex rounded ends (for example, Plates 20a, 43j and 43k). Of the 32 extant Beck pianos, 11 date from the 1780s. Of these 11, the author is aware of the form of nameboard inscription cartouche on seven instruments: 1) four of the seven 1780s instruments have a cartouche comprising an elongated rectangular form with convex rounded ends; 2) one of the seven 1780s instruments has a cartouche comprising a stylised small rectangular form (Plate 43h); 3) one of the seven 1780s instruments (1782/90?) has a plain elongated rectangular form (see photograph in di Stefano, ‘The Tangentenflügel and Other Pianos with Non-Pivoting Hammers’, Figure 8, p. 90)—this instrument is owned by the Osaka College of Music Museum, Japan; and 4) one of the seven 1780s instruments has a cartouche comprising an elongated rectangular form with ogee pointed ends (Plates 15, 17a and 43g). See ‘1782/87?, Serial Number 5008’ in Appendix L, Volume 2 of this publication.}

3. The nameboard of the ca 1790 (estimate) Beck square piano (a ‘tangent action’ instrument)\footnoteref{350} has elaborate, exquisitely detailed handpainted sprays of flowers (Plate 43q).\footnoteref{351}

4. The nameboard on the ca 1790? Frederick Beck and George Corrie piano (serial number 2505) has intricate handpainted decoration (Plate 43r).

Typically for the time, decisions regarding the decoration of an instrument were made in response to what a customer could afford. The nameboard decoration on the pianos of 1783, 1785, ca 1790 (estimate) and ca 1790? suggests that these instruments may have been made for someone who: 1) could not afford Beck’s simplified Tunbridgeware-style inlay; 2) did not desire an instrument decorated with Beck’s simplified Tunbridgeware-design inlay; or 3) elected to have the piano’s decorative focus located on the nameboard.

Some of the inlay woods that Beck used for case decoration may have been imported from Amsterdam. In 1759, Philemon-Louis Savary des Bruslons (son of the Inspector-General of Customs and Manufacturing in Paris Jacques Savary des Bruslons [1657–1716]) remarked:

\begin{quote}
Il se fait à Amsterdam un très grand commerce de toutes sortes de Bois, mais particulièrement de ce qui sont propres à la tainture, à la marqueterie & à la tabletterie.\footnote{P.-L. Savary des Bruslons, Dictionnaire universel de commerce, D;Historie Naturelle, & des Arts & Métiers ... contenant tout ce qui concerne ... le commerce qui se fait dans les quatre parties du monde, par terre, par mer, de proche en proche, & par des voyages de long cours, tant en gros qu’en détail ... Les Chambres D’Assurances, 5 vols (Copenhagen: Claude Philibert, 1759–66), Vol. 1 (1759), p. 566.}
\end{quote}

[A very extensive commerce in all sorts of wood is carried on at Amsterdam, but particularly in those species which are suitable for dyeing, marquetry and inlay work.]\footnote{Translated by Hubbard, in Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making, p. 202.}
Beck's inlaid simplified Tunbridgeware-style decoration is not particularly English, and may have been regarded as attractively exotic by Beck's British customers. It may reflect the following.

1. Beck's possible German origin: between ca 1650 and 1725, 'one striking quality in the South German style' of harpsichord decoration 'is the prevalence of inlaid materials'. During the eighteenth century, North German harpsichord decoration 'carried on the ... southern German tradition in the use of contrasting ornamental materials, showing a fondness for striking ... inlay'.


3. Beck's association with the immigrant Swedish-born, Paris-trained cabinet-maker and marquetry master Christopher Fuhrlohg, who, in 1769, set up his workshop at 24 Tottenham Court Road, London.

Frederick Beck and Christopher Fuhrlohg

In 1775 and 1777, Beck and Fuhrlohg produced two of the most beautiful square pianos in existence. Beck signed and dated both instruments. The casework of these unique pianos is so beyond the ordinary that they must have been specially commissioned; each instrument has been given—at what must have been the highest cost to the buyer—'all the luxurious treatment of Palace furniture'.

The case of the 1775 piano is

no more than a great box with a top that lifts up to disclose the keyboard and with doors at either end that enclose cabinets for storing music. The case could scarcely have been designed by a pianomaker, as ... the practical consideration of providing knee room for a seated player has been sacrificed ruthlessly to a monumental design. A plinth and the slight advance of the front corners articulate its rectilinearity.

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356 Two decades later, during the late 1780s and early 1790s, Tottenham Court Road 'became the hub of a huge instrument-making enterprise’. Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 101. See ‘Tottenham Court Road’ in Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Cm.
The 1775 Beck/Fuhrlohg instrument manifests ormulu borders and extensive inlays of coloured woods, with a herringbone pattern of harewood [that is, maple tinted greenish-gold] and wood lines dyed green … In the middle of the front panel … [within a medallion framed by a ribbon-banded metal border, a figure] seated in a landscape with tambourine … is suggested to be derived ‘from an engraving after Angelica Kauffman’s [1741–1807] “Triumph of Venus” and is made to represent the Muse Erato by the addition of a tambourine’. 360

During the 1770s, Angelica Kauffman’s compositions proved to be ‘popular subjects for painted decoration on English furniture’. 361 Marquetry translations of Kauffman’s designs were, however, something quite new. In London during the 1770s, there were only a limited number of cabinet-makers who could execute furniture incorporating elaborate marquetry. 362 ‘Christopher Fuhrlohg’s painterly handling of marquetry represents an important intermediary step in the evolution of English taste, lying between the stylized floral marquetry of Peter [Pierre] Langlois [fl. 1759–81], and the naturalistic flowers and scenes painted on furniture in the 1790s.’ 363

John Hardy accurately describes the figure in the middle of the front panel as representing the ‘Muse Erato by the addition of a tambourine’ 364 (Erato, the muse of lyric poetry, especially love and erotic poetry, was frequently depicted playing either the kithara 365 or the tambourine). James 366 and Clinkscale 367 erroneously identify the muse as Thalia (the muse of comedy and pastoral poetry, who was commonly depicted holding a comic mask). Erato is also depicted in each of two single corner panels located at either end of the front panel; the corner panel at the left portrays Erato playing a kithara, while the corner panel at the right shows Erato dancing with tambourine and cymbals. 368 The designs for Erato are derived from the several ancient Hellenistic sources that were ‘widely copied and adapted for various media in the eighteenth century’. 369

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362 Ibid., p. 427.
363 Ibid., p. 428.
365 An ancient Greek musical instrument in the lyre family.
366 James, Early Keyboard Instruments, p. 138.
367 Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano 1700–1820, p. 19.
Fuhrlohg has discreetly draped the muse’s arm and bosom. As Josiah Wedgwood said in a 1790 letter, ‘none either male or female, of the present generation, will take or apply’ works of the ancients ‘to furniture, if the figures are naked’.370

When judged against contemporaneous artistic standards, Wedgwood’s attitude appears to be somewhat puritanical. In late eighteenth-century painting:

Baroque woman was replaced by women that were less sensual but more free in their habits, unencumbered by suffocating corsetry and elaborate hair styles. At the end of the eighteenth century it was fashionable not to conceal the breasts, which were at times openly revealed above a band that supported them and emphasised the waistline.371

It is reasonable to assume that the lavish cabinetwork of Beck’s 1775 piano was intended to function not only as an ecstatic decorative opulence, but also as a display of wealth and social status.

A spur to the creation of Beck’s 1775 piano may have been provided by a design (dated 1774) by Robert Adam (1728–92). This was published in 1775 as an engraving entitled ‘Design of a Harpsichord, executed in London, with different Coloured Woods, for the Empress of Russia.’ The commission must have caused a stir among London’s musical instrument makers even before the publication of the engraving.372

Gadd suggests that the second of the extant Beck/Fuhrlohg instruments (dated 1777)373 represents ‘a high water mark of the Neo-Classical movement and is amongst the most important furniture designs of the period’.375 The most striking visual characteristic of the 1777 Beck/Fuhrlohg piano is its pervasive, exquisite and elaborate marquetry.

‘Marquetry … was reintroduced into England from France late in the 1750s, but taken up by comparatively few craftsmen. In 1777, the [Beck/Fuhrlohg] instrument’s marquetry-embellished casework would have been at the forefront of fashion, suggesting that Beck sometimes catered to the avant-garde taste of an extremely wealthy clientele.’376

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370 Ibid., p. 422.
373 See photographs in ‘Piano; Rectangular Piano’, in Royal Ontario Museum.
374 See ‘Neo-Classical’ in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
At first sight, the instrument appears to be a commode, and is part of the beginning of a fruitful tradition of pianos disguised as commodes made for the very rich.

‘By 1790, the piano making firm of Longman and Broderip was offering “Piano Fortes in Commodes, Side Boards, and Dressing Tables for convenience of small rooms” at prices that could be afforded by the “middle class”.’

The notion that a piano could be regarded as ‘wooden furniture that happened to make music’ has its roots in Saxony. That late eighteenth-century English square pianos reflect this notion (when closed, English square pianos functioned as side tables) ‘may not be a coincidence, considering that many eighteenth-century English builders were trained in German-speaking Europe’. During the late eighteenth century, machines, including musical instruments, ‘were celebrated for their rational efficiency, which was also a Neoclassical criterion of Beauty’.

The case of the 1777 Beck/Fuhrlohg piano takes the form of a rectangular commode with canted corners on straight, tapering legs. Behind the more obvious influences of the Adam manner—rectilinearity and strictly confined decoration—a hint of contemporary French design can be detected in the presence of a central panel that overlays the front; here it drops down to reveal a cabinet [beneath the keyboard] for storing music. Beneath the goat’s-head mounts, the corners are inlaid to simulate fluting and the legs to imitate panelling.

The front of the case is prominently decorated, and has a large central marquetry medallion within which there is a Classical figure [either the muse Erato, or the muse Polyhymnia—the muse of sacred poetry] playing the lyre. This medallion is amongst the most ambitious and successful pictorial marquetry surviving from 18th century England.

The marquetry that decorates the instrument’s mahogany case principally comprises satinwood, harewood, amaranth, rosewood and sycamore. The 1777 Beck/Fuhrlohg piano is certainly among the most beautiful furniture ever made.

377 Ibid., p. 422.
379 Ibid., p. 74.
380 Eco, On Beauty, p. 393.
384 See ibid., p. 424. ‘Sycamore: the English name for Acer Pseudoplanatus, the prevalent maple species in England.’ Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 120.
In 1775, at one of the annual exhibitions of the Free Society of Artists of Great Britain, Fuhrlohg’s half-brother and business partner, Johann Christian Linning (1706–79), exhibited ‘The Muse Erato in different coloured wood’. Linning gave his address as being ‘At Mr Fuhrlohg’s, No 24, Tottenham Court Road’. Perhaps Linning was involved in the crafting of the elaborately inlaid figures on the cases of Beck’s 1775 and 1777 square pianos, or perhaps there was ‘cross-pollination’ of ideas between Fuhrlohg and Linning.

It is possible that a third Beck piano with casework of extraordinary quality and exquisite beauty has been lost. The specially created Inventaire of confiscated instruments made by the French revolutionary government provides estimates of the monetary value of 20 pianos. Of the 64 pianos listed, five are by Frederick Beck (Inventaire numbers 99, 106, 111, 207 and 322); three of these are given a monetary value (Inventaire numbers 106, 207 and 322):

99.—Un forte-piano de Fredericus Beck, année 1779.
[A piano by Fredericus Beck, year 1779.]386
(Owned by Brignard.)

106.—Un forte-piano de Fredericus Beck, Londini fecit, année 1779, estimé 600 francs.
[A piano by Fredericus Beck, made in London, year 1779, estimated 600 francs.]387
(Confiscated from Maison Égalité.)

111.—Un forte-piano, de Fredericus Beck, année 1774.
[A piano by Fredericus Beck, year 1774.]388
(From the administrative offices of the Menus-Plaisirs du Roi.)

207.—Un forte-piano de Fredericus Beck, estimé 1 500 francs.
[A piano by Fredericus Beck, estimated 1500 francs.]389
(Confiscated from Jean-Louis-Marie le Bascle, Count of Argenteuil, Maison de Bascle D’Argenteuil.)

322.—Un forte-piano de Beck, fait en 1788, appartenant à Debrange, émigré, rue de Sèvres, estimé 5 000 francs.
[A piano by Beck, made in 1788, belonging to Debrange, emigré, rue de Sèvres, estimated 5000 francs.]390

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385 Erato is the muse of lyric poetry.
386 'XXVIII Inventaire du 26 Fructidor l’an II' in Bruni, Un Inventaire sous La Terreur.
387 'XXXI Inventaire du 14 Vendémiaire l’an III', in ibid.
388 'XXXIV Inventaire du 17 Vendémiaire l’an III', in ibid.
389 'LXX Rue de Thorigny, 539', in ibid.
390 'C Inventaire du 13 Prairial l’an III', rue du Regard', in ibid.
The extraordinary estimate of 5000 francs for piano number 322 (Debrange's 1788 Beck piano) is exceeded only once in the entire Inventaire—by a piano made by Sébastien Érard (Inventaire number 356):

356.—Un forte-piano d’Erard, fait en 1787, estimé 8 000 francs.
[A piano by Érard, made in 1787, estimated 8000 francs.]\(^{391}\)

(Confiscated from Antoine Doria.)

The casework of this particular Érard instrument must have been utterly beautiful.

With a considerable margin of 3000 francs, the nearest estimate to Beck’s 1788 piano (5000 francs) is for a piano combined with an organ (claviorganum, piano organisé, fortepiano organisé or forte-piano organisé) made by Érard (2000 francs) (Inventaire number 219):

219.—Un forte-piano organisé de Sébastien Erard frère et Cie, fait à Paris, 1791, estimé 2 000 francs.
[A claviorganum by Sebastien Érard Brother & Co., made in Paris, 1791, estimated 2000 francs.]\(^{392}\)
(Confiscated from Louis-Alexandre-Céleste d’Aumont, Duke of Villequier.)

The success of the claviorganum ‘in the upper ranks of society was prodigious; the Queen commanded one to be made for her own use, and in the construction of it Érard introduced several novel contrivances, which at that time awakened much interest’.\(^{393}\)

Érard’s claviorganum receives the same estimate (2000 francs) as the two highest-valued harpsichords (Inventaire numbers 151 and 154):

151.—Un clavecin anglais de Thoaner, année 1772, estimé 2 000 fr.
[An English harpsichord by Thoaner, year 1772, estimated 2000 francs.]\(^{394}\)
(Owned by Count Fernan-Nunez, the Spanish ambassador.)

154.—Un clavecin anglais, en acajou, tout neuf, fait par Johannes Broadwood, Londini fecit, année 1789, estimé 2,000 fr.

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\(^{392}\) ‘LXXIV Inventaire du 29 Nivôse l’an IIIe, rue des Capucines’, in ibid.
\(^{394}\) ‘XLIX Inventaire du 12 Brumaire l’an IIIe, rue de l’Université’, in Bruni, Un Inventaire sous La Terreur.
[An English harpsichord, in mahogany, perfectly new, made by Johannes Broadwood, in London, year 1789, estimated 2000 francs.]\textsuperscript{395}
(Confiscated from the stables of Philippe-Égalité Louis-Philippe, Duke of Chartres, the future King of France.)

Érard’s claviorganum is one of two listed in the Inventaire as being made by him.
In total, the Inventaire lists six claviorgana. Apart from Érard’s claviorganum (Inventaire number 219, valued at 2000 francs), only one other of the six claviorgana is given a value (Inventaire number 150):

\textit{150.—Un forte-piano organisé d’Adam Berger, Londini fecit, année 1775, estimé 1,200 francs.}
[A claviorganum by Adam Berger, made in London, year 1775, estimated 1200 francs.\textsuperscript{396}]
(Confiscated from Count Fernan-Nunez, the Spanish ambassador.)

(Note that the clerk has mistakenly transcribed the maker’s name as ‘Adam Berger’. This is not surprising, given the sometimes confusingly elaborate calligraphic style found on the nameplates of pianos made by Adam Beyer.)

The only possible explanation for the astonishing 5000-franc valuation of the 1788 Beck piano confiscated from Debrange is that it must have had inlaid casework manifesting levels of intricacy and quality similar to the two extant Beck/Fuhrlohg instruments of 1775 and 1777. Sadly, Debrange’s piano no longer exists.

The quality and beauty of the simplified Tunbridgeware inlay on the 1780/86? square piano by Frederick Beck currently housed in the Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney, suggest (at the very least) the affirming influence of Fuhrlohg’s refined aesthetic on Beck’s decorative sense, if not Fuhrlohg’s participation at some stage in the decorative design and/or making process. In short, the inlay is in extremely good taste, and proves that ‘within the quiet restraint of tones of ivory … and rich woods combined, English [pianos] … were often among the most beautiful furniture ever made’.\textsuperscript{397}

It appears that, like Frederick Beck, George Bouchier Worgan also had good taste (at least in relation to decorative casework). Furthermore, the date of Worgan’s Beck piano (1780 or 1786?) and the unique design of its stand allow for the hypothesis that this was the instrument that Worgan brought with him to Sydney Cove in 1788, while serving on board the \textit{Sirius}.  

\textsuperscript{395} ‘\textit{L Inventaire du 12 Brumaire l’an III}’, in ibid.
\textsuperscript{396} ‘\textit{XLIX Inventaire du 12 Brumaire l’an III, rue de l’Université}’, in ibid.
Dampers

The design of Beck’s pianos replicates that of Zumpe, with the exception of damping. Beck’s square pianos have dampers only to $c^3$. No other maker of square pianos used this damping pattern.

Undamped strings will sympathetically vibrate in response to any other vibrating strings that are close by. Sympathetically vibrating strings enhance the sound with a background ‘glow’ of overtones. In late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England, the simultaneous sounding of struck and sympathetically vibrating strings was regarded as the equivalent of resonance, and was greatly desired. Commonly, this background ‘glow’ of overtones was enhanced by (or, in the absence of sympathetically vibrating strings, created by) an intentionally inefficient damping system. Damper design, and therefore the degree of damping inefficiency, differed from maker to maker.

English piano makers were capable of incorporating an efficient damping system into their instruments (one based, for example, upon the ultra-efficient damping of ‘Viennese’ pianos). That they did not leads one to conclude that the typically ‘resonant’ sound of English pianos (both square and grand) had its basis in aesthetic and musical considerations. The sound produced by inefficiently damping English pianos is far removed from the ‘highly articulated delivery that was the ideal of the … Viennese piano and its composers’, and highlights a fundamental difference between the aesthetic values represented by the two schools of piano making: Viennese pianos ‘speak’, and English pianos ‘sing’.

Frederick Beck’s idiosyncratic exclusion of dampers for the top-five notes of his square pianos represents an innovation inspired by the contemporaneously desirable English aesthetic of overtone-rich, ‘background’-resonant piano sound.

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398 See Cole. Beck’s tangent action instrument of ca 1790 (estimate) has dampers throughout the compass—that is, up to and including $f^3$. The dampers are located below the strings. Each damper compartment comprises red woven cloth, positioned like an open book with the pages facing upwards. See Plates 447 and 448.

399 For example, following the attack of a loud staccato chord in the bass, and after the dampers have fallen onto the strings, the dampers of a restored Broadwood grand piano of 1796 (serial number 875, in the author’s possession) allow the strings to resonate for approximately five seconds as the sound dies away. By way of comparison, following the attack of a loud staccato chord in the bass, and after the dampers have fallen onto the strings, the dampers of Joseph Haydn's restored Longman & Broderip grand piano of ca 1795 (part of the Cobbe Collection, Hatchlands, UK) allow the strings to resonate for approximately one to two seconds as the sound dies away. ‘Richard Burnett … describes a restored 1823 Broadwood grand in which the tone takes eight seconds to die out after a staccato chord in the bass, and a ‘massive concert grand’ of 1848 by Broadwood, in which it takes ten seconds.’ Van Oort, *The English Classical Piano Style and its Influence on Haydn and Beethoven*, p. 30, fn. 75.

400 The type of piano commonly referred to as ‘Viennese’ had its origins in Germany, as the brainchild of Johann Andreas Stein. The design, sound and touch of Viennese pianos are dissimilar to English pianos.

401 van Oort, *The English Classical Piano Style and its Influence on Haydn and Beethoven*, p. 34.
Beck’s Absorption of Zumpe’s Ideas

Beck adopted Zumpe’s basic design, the most important elements of which are the action (which, being identical to Zumpe’s, has no escapement), bridge design and the underlying principles of soundboard ribbing. Beck’s absorption of Zumpe’s ideas is not the result of a lack of inventiveness, nor is it mere opportunism; rather, it shows that Beck was capable of mature creative reasoning. The principle described in 1920 by the poet Thomas Stearns (‘T. S.’) Eliot (1888–1965) could well apply to Frederick Beck: ‘Immature [artists] … imitate; mature [artists] … steal; bad [artists] … deface what they take, and good [artists] … make it into something better, or at least something different.’

Frederick Beck’s pianos, which are modelled so closely on those of Zumpe and represent the creative thinking of a ‘mature’ and ‘good’ artist, call to mind the rhetorical question posed by Horace Walpole (1717–97): ‘Ought one man’s garden to be deprived of a happy object, because that object has been employed by another? The more we exact novelty, the sooner our taste will be vitiated.’

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402 See ‘Soundboard and Bridge’ in Appendix A, Volume 2 this publication.
Chapter 3

George Bouchier Worgan: The owner of the first piano to be brought to Australia

During the 1770s and 1780s, Frederick Beck was one of the most prestigious piano makers in London. His clientele would have ranged from those who wished to buy an instrument simply because it was fashionable to do so, through those for whom playing the piano was an essential skill associated with the attainment of genteel accomplishment, to those who were musical connoisseurs. One such musical connoisseur took his newly purchased Beck piano to Botany Bay on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*. This musical connoisseur was George Bouchier Worgan.

George Bouchier Worgan was christened on Tuesday, 3 May 1757, at St Andrew’s, Holborn Hill, London.¹ His father, Dr John Worgan (1724–90), was an eminent virtuoso organist and composer.

On several occasions, George’s father moved his family to a new abode.² In 1823, the English journalist and musician Richard Mackenzie Bacon (1776–1844) elaborated: ‘Till a few years before his death’, Dr John Worgan (and his family) ‘enjoyed the alternation of town and country … [Dr Worgan’s] first residence in [London] … was at No. 7 in Milman [Millman, or Millmans]³ Street, [near] Bedford Row: his next, at No. 40, Rathbone Place.’⁴

Dr Worgan’s country house was in Richmond. Rate books dating from 1780 and 1790 reveal that the Worgan family occupied number 1 Maids of Honour Row, Richmond. This was one of four adjacent three-storey terrace houses, each of which was five windows wide.⁵ George Worgan referred to the family’s Richmond house when writing from Sydney Cove to his younger brother Richard: ‘when it is the Depth of Winter with Us, you are enjoying Richmond Hill.’⁶ This remark suggests that in summer, the Worgans occupied their country

² See ‘Close Proximity’ in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
residence at Maids of Honour Row, Richmond. This was one of two dwellings that the Worgan family accessed as their country retreat. Dr Worgan’s ‘first and favourite country house was on Richmond Hill; his second was at No. 2, on Richmond Green’—approximately half a mile [approximately 0.8 kilometres] north-west of Richmond Hill. Dr Worgan named his abode at Richmond Green ‘Nightingale Lodge’.

It is not surprising that Dr Worgan selected Richmond as the location of his country house; apart from the natural beauty and serenity of the place, access from London had been improved (in 1777) by the construction at Richmond of an ‘elegant stone bridge of five semicircular arches … built over the Thames’.

From the late 1770s, however, George Bouchier Worgan would not have been able to enjoy the delights of Nightingale Lodge, nor the fine walnut tree, under the shade of which the family often took their tea, and gazed on the streamers that waved on the Thames beneath, while music swelled, and died away on the breathless air of a glowing evening, illuminated by golden gleams, darting through the dark foliage of the towering elms, and glimmering through the graceful poplars that … decorate the foot of Richmond Hill.

This is because in 1775, at the age of 18, George Worgan joined the British Navy. In a letter dated Monday, 16 February 1807, written to Arthur Young (1741–1820), the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, George confessed that although he had always been drawn towards agriculture, his father had determined that he should pursue a career in medicine: ‘My very earliest inclinations and propensities led me to the study and pursuit of agriculture … but I had a dear and honoured Father, whose wish was to bring me up to the defective Art of Physic, his will, was mine!’

As a novice medic, George had little time to accustom himself to the realities of war. During the American War of Independence (1775–83), he served as a Surgeon’s Mate on board the hospital ship Tiger. This would have involved an

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11 Arthur Young was involved in the commissioning of George Worgan to carry out an agricultural survey of Cornwall. See ‘George Worgan, the Published Author’, in Chapter 11, this volume.
12 Arthur Young Papers, British Library, Ad. MSS 35129. I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for his forthcoming PhD dissertation (Working the Forge. The Lives of William Dawes, Watkin Tench and George Worgan, The Australian National University).
13 See C. M. Pole, ‘No. 26. The Examination of Mr. George Bouchier Worgan, Surgeon in His Majesty’s Navy, and Late Surgeon’s Mate of His Majesty’s Hospital Ship Le Caton; Taken Upon Oath, 8th November 1803’, in *The Seventh Report of the Commissioners of Naval Enquiry. Naval hospital at East Stonehouse*. Le
apprenticeship-like context within which Worgan served under an established navy surgeon. From February 1778, George Worgan served as Surgeon's Second Mate. In 1779, Worgan was certified as a Surgeon Fifth Rate. According to Rogers, this resulted in Worgan's 'gazetting' as a naval surgeon in March 1780—that is, an announcement regarding his appointment and qualification was published in *The London Gazette*. Rogers provides no evidence for his assertion that in March 1780 *The London Gazette* announced George Worgan's appointment as a naval surgeon, and unfortunately no issue of *The London Gazette* for March 1780 mentions George Worgan. The period between George Bouchier's joining the navy in 1775 and his certification in 1779, however, represents the customary three to five-year apprenticeship served under a surgeon-apothecary.

Following his certification, George Worgan was assigned to the (moored) hospital ship *Pilote* for two years—that is, between 1780 and 1782. The *Pilote* was a two-masted (a foremast and a main mast) 'brig-sloop' of 218 tonnes, 14 guns, which had been captured from the French in 1779. A brig-sloop was smaller than a sailing frigate and was (by virtue of having too few guns) outside the rating system. In general, a sloop … would be under the command of a master and commander rather than a post captain, although in day-to-day use at sea the commanding officer of any naval vessels would be addressed as 'captain'.

Surgeon Worgan is unaccounted for between 1783 and 1785. It is likely that he continued to work as a naval surgeon. On the other hand, he may, for a period, have been on some sort of detached list (naval surgeons did not enjoy retirement on half-pay at the time, so if George Worgan was not working, his income would have been severely restricted).

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14 Company of Surgeons, *Examinations Book 1745–1800*, p. 339. I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for his forthcoming PhD dissertation, *Working the Forge*. See also D. Steel, ‘Surgeons: With the Year of their First Warrants, by Which they are Intitled to Half-Pay’, in *Steel's Original and Correct List of the Royal Navy, Improved: To Which are Added their Stations, and a List of the Ships Lost or Destroyed Since the Commencement of the War, with their Commanders. Likewise a List of the Enemies Ships Taken or Destroyed Since the Commencement of the War. And an Alphabetical List of the Navy-Agents. Corrected to April 30, 1782* (London: D. Steel, January 1782), p. 31.


19 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for his forthcoming PhD dissertation, *Working the Forge*. **
In 1786 Worgan ‘had been serving … on the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges*’. On Wednesday, 1 November 1786, at 29 years of age, he was discharged from the *Ganges* to the *Sirius*. Perhaps one of the motivating factors that led Worgan to pursue this post was a desire to widen his experience. In 1786, the excitement, peril and wonder associated with making the journey to Botany Bay would have been equivalent to that now associated with making a journey to the Moon. It is reasonable to assume that Worgan was eager to serve as a surgeon on board the *Sirius*.

Three surgeons were assigned to the *Sirius*:\(^{21}\) George Bouchier Worgan was the senior surgeon; Thomas Jamison (ca 1753–1811) was the Surgeon’s First Mate\(^{22}\) (Jamison, an honourable man with a strong personality, hailed from the Lake District and had qualified in London);\(^{23}\) and a Mr Lowes, ‘a very genteel young man’\(^{24}\) (albeit without a Christian name), was Surgeon’s Mate.\(^{25}\) Lowes carried with him some of the writings of the mystic, scientist and philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772): Alternative religions were of some interest to men who saw the Church of England as little more than a ceremonial and suasive arm of government.\(^{26}\)

George Worgan was among the 12 surgeons whom the ‘[g]overnment had appointed at the public expense to go to Botany Bay’.\(^{27}\)

**The Life of a Surgeon**

As a late eighteenth-century surgeon, Worgan’s life was laden with what now may appear to be peculiarities. At that time, a careful distinction was made between physicians and surgeons. The most significant difference lay in their education: physicians were university educated; surgeons were apprenticed.

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23 ‘The term ‘Mate’ was used as a formal Royal Navy rank, there being such formal positions as Boatswain’s Mate, Carpenter’s Mate and Surgeon’s Mate.’ J. Pearn, ‘Surgeon’s Mate Lowes of H.M.S. Sirius’, in *Health and History* (Sydney: Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine, 1998), Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 69.
Physicians were ‘only permitted to examine patients, diagnose disease, and prescribe medications’. 28 In 1747, R. Campbell observed: ‘The physician, in the discharge of his profession, is frequently obliged to grope in the dark, to act by guess and bare conjecture, and depends (in many cases) more upon chance and the strength of the patient’s constitution, than upon any infallible rules in his art.’ 29

The archetypal physician was dignified and aloof, sagacious and capable of forming a diagnosis without actually touching the patient. 30 Even as late as 1850, physicians ‘were content to enquire about previous illness and present appetite: to feel the pulse, and to observe the appearance of the eyes, tongue, urine, and faeces, in that order of interest’. 31 Physicians were not permitted to act as surgeons.

Unlike physicians, surgeons

performed operations, set broken bones, and treated accident cases and skin disorders. The nature of a surgeon’s work separated him from a physician in that a surgeon had to cut, manipulate, and treat disorders on the outside of the body. A surgeon was considered a skilled craftsman … his work ‘demanded speed, dexterity, and physical strength, as well as expertise’. 32

The archetypal surgeon was muscular and practical, a man who did not mind blood and gore, and was handy with a saw, knife and stitching needle. 33 In 1747, R. Campbell remarked:

To a solid judgement, quick apprehension, and a good memory … [a surgeon] must add a kind of courage, peculiar to himself. It is vulgarly said, that a surgeon should have a lion’s heart, a hawk’s eye, and a lady’s hand; by the lion’s heart is not meant savage ferocity, a cruel inhuman disposition, or want of sympathy for the sufferings of man-kind: he is not to have the heart to tear, lacerate, and mangle his patient wantonly; but he must have the courage to go through the most severe necessary operation, without being so much affected by the patient’s sufferings, as to shake his hand, or hinder him from performing the amputation with

29 Campbell, The London Tradesman, p. 47.
33 See Rosen, Australia’s Oldest House, p. 15.
ease and dexterity. Womanish tenderness is very improper for a surgeon; and it requires a strong command of temper, not to give way to pity and compassion, in some ... operations ... to preserve ... [a] soft sympathy of soul, without being outwardly affected by it, is expressed in having a lady's hand, or finger; that is, to be able to touch the patient so gently, as he may scarce feel you; at least, no more than is necessary to perform the operation. A quick eye is necessary to a surgeon ... especially in amputation, to discern the arteries, and other minute blood vessels, that are to be sewed up, to prevent a too great effusion of blood: it requires like-wise a good and quick eye, to discern the several changes in a wound under cure; he must be able to observe the smallest alteration in the colour of the part and consistence of the matter, the degrees of suppuration, and the most distant approach of a mortification.34

Eighteenth-century surgery was done without anaesthetic or antiseptic. It was brutal, agonising and often fatal. It is reasonable to assume that post-traumatic stress disorder was, for those patients who survived, a corollary of undergoing surgery without anaesthesia. Usually, surgery was undertaken only to save a life that would clearly otherwise be lost. The general perception of physicians (compared with surgeons) was that they were much ‘cleaner’ and ‘nicer’, even though physicians were quite less effective.

Surgeons did not enjoy the status afforded to physicians, being frequently satirised as ‘sawbones’.35 The ambition of naval surgeons was often blighted by the irksome status associated with their profession. Surgeon William Redfern (ca 1774–1833) acerbically noted that, during the 1790s and before,

it was not quite so fashionable to be dubbed M.D. from St. Andrew, where I might for the customary fee have procured one for my horse; nor to throw away the fees for a surgeons diploma, when a certain length of service in the army or navy entitled them all or nearly all the privileges external to the college or company.36

In order to assess the background, training and competency of would-be naval surgeons, the board in charge of the naval medical service would conduct viva voce examinations. No practical demonstration of surgical skills was required. If judged satisfactory, ‘candidates received a letter addressed to the’ Company of Surgeons (formerly the Company of Barbers and Surgeons), ‘requesting that they

be examined in their competence in surgery’.37 The Company of Surgeons ‘was the professional gatekeeper for naval surgical positions and apprenticeships’,38 and had the right to license surgeons for the navy, army, and [British] East India Company … Having passed the examination in surgery, the applicant had to take another in physic. Until 1799 this was conducted by the physician of Greenwich Hospital …

The examiners’ ability to judge an applicant’s competence … was not based on lengthy enquiry, for the oral examinations in physic and surgery, though testing, seldom lasted more than an hour … the occasion was one of dignified informality …

Once qualified, the new recruit received from the Board his certificate and warrant, then awaited his first posting.39

‘When transportation to Australia started, the supervision and management of … medical arrangements and surgeons was in the hands of the quaintly named Commissioners of Sick and Wounded, a body noted neither for its energy nor its effectiveness.’40

As surgeon on board the Sirius, George Worgan’s duties would most likely have consisted of visiting the sick twice a day, presenting a daily sick list to the captain, organising a daily sick muster in order to treat minor injuries and ailments, and keeping a log of his activities. These duties were outlined in the Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty’s Service at Sea.41

Naval pay ‘was around half that paid by merchantmen, and lower than that paid to a farm labourer. Astonishingly, it had been set in 1653 and was not to be increased until April 1797.’42 R. Campbell observed in 1747: ‘The salary of a surgeon of the navy is but inconsiderable, that is, the pay he immediately receives from the Crown is but small.’43

Compared with that of their army counterparts, the pay of naval surgeons was poor. Army surgeons were automatically employed as commissioned officers with the rank of Captain; they earned 10–12s a day (reckoned in today’s monetary values, approximately A$55–67),44 and were guaranteed retirement on half-pay.

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38 Rosen, Australia’s Oldest House, p. 15.
40 Brooke and Brandon, Bound for Botany Bay, p. 190.
41 See Brockliss et al., Nelson’s Surgeon, p. 6.
43 Campbell, The London Tradesman, p. 56.
44 Currency conversion using the National Archives; Universal Currency Converter.
Contrastingly, naval surgeons were ranked as Warrant Officers; they were paid a flat salary of 3s a day (reckoned in today’s monetary values, approximately A$18). This represents one-third to one-quarter the salary of an army surgeon. Only the senior 320 surgeons were eligible for retirement on half-pay.\(^{45}\) To add insult to injury, ‘surgeons had to purchase their own’ medical equipment ‘and medicines, the latter supplied at high prices by the Navy Stock Company, an offshoot of the London Society of Apothecaries’.\(^{46}\)

Service as a naval surgeon was not, however, without its financial enticements.

Even if the … pay … was poor, it was supplemented … by various ‘extras’. To begin with, every surgeon received a supplementary lump sum, known as Queen Anne’s Free Gift, which varied from £16 to £62 per annum\(^{47}\) dependent on the size of the ship and whether the country was at peace or war. In addition … the surgeon received 2d. a year\(^{48}\) from each man on board from his annual contribution to the Chatham Chest [a charitable foundation supported by a charge of 6d per month\(^{49}\) on the wages of every man in the navy], and a further £5 per annum for every 100 men treated for venereal disease.\(^{50}\) This was intended to cover the cost of medicines, but on large ships could be a serious boost to income. Moreover … medical officers lucky enough to be based on shore had the opportunity to moonlight by building up a civilian practice. Finally, as the officers and crew were entitled to share the sale value of any enemy vessels captured at sea, on a sliding scale according to rank, the surgeon … could look forward to a modest amount of prize money.\(^{51}\)

Naval surgeons were usually well educated (at least according to the standards of the late eighteenth century).

Many recruits … enjoyed a sound introduction to modern and classical languages and literature. Otherwise so many could not have [written so articulately, as did surgeon George Worgan, or] gone on to publish their observations and experiences …

Most … [navy] surgeons … served the customary three-to-five year apprenticeship with a surgeon … in order to learn the medical ropes,

\(^{45}\) See Brockliss et al., _Nelson’s Surgeon_, p. 15.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^{47}\) Reckoned in today’s monetary values, £16–62 is approximately £1000–3900 (approximately A$1800–6900).
\(^{48}\) Reckoned in today’s monetary values, 2d is approximately 52d (approximately A$0.89).
\(^{49}\) Reckoned in today’s monetary values, 6d is approximately £2 (approximately A$4).
\(^{50}\) Reckoned in today’s monetary values, £5 is approximately £314 (approximately A$560).
\(^{51}\) Brockliss et al., _Nelson’s Surgeon_, p. 24. See also Appendix F, Volume 2 of this publication.
a move that would easily have cost their parents the not-insignificant sum of £50 to £100,\textsuperscript{52} or even more if the practitioner was a fashionable London doctor.

[This] … was not usually, however, the sum of their studies … a large proportion of [army] … surgeons spent a further one or more years at the burgeoning medical schools in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin … Navy surgeons … do not seem to have done so in such great numbers as their army counterparts.

… [T]he cost to the family of sending a son to medical school was again appreciable … most six-month courses would cost 20 guineas.\textsuperscript{53} When account is taken of the cost of [medical] instruments, books, clothes, and entertainment, the average medical student could expect to spend £200 a year,\textsuperscript{54} much the same as a young gentleman at Oxford or Cambridge … Their parents had clearly marked them out for a medical career, invested heavily in their training, and presumably sanctioned or even intended their entry into the service …

The choice between the army and navy must have depended largely on family connections … Where a surgeon had made the decision off his own bat, then his preference was probably determined by people whom he encountered during his education.\textsuperscript{55}

In 1747, R. Campbell wrote: ‘Thus I have said as much of surgery as is sufficient to give the parent a tolerable notion how to prepare his son for such a charge. It appears, that it requires a good genius and liberal education, which can be attained but by great expense.’\textsuperscript{56}

Of course, once literacy had been acquired, the possibility for self-education emerged (if so inclined, even a tradesman’s son would have had access to the world of novels, plays, history and foreign literary masterworks in translation).\textsuperscript{57}

There can be little doubt that surgeon George Worgan was well educated. The quality of prose in his letters and journal attests to this fact. His letters and journal give clear insights into his personality and professionalism, and show him to be an intelligent, articulate man with keen observational powers and a pleasant wit.

\textsuperscript{52} Reckoned in today’s monetary values, £50–100 is approximately £3100–6300 (approximately A$5600–11 100).

\textsuperscript{53} Reckoned in today’s monetary values, 20 guineas is approximately £1300 (approximately A$2300).

\textsuperscript{54} Reckoned in today’s monetary values, £200 is approximately £12 600 (approximately A$22 000).

\textsuperscript{55} Brockliss et al., Nelson’s Surgeon, pp. 20–3.

\textsuperscript{56} Campbell, The London Tradesman, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{57} See Jordan, The Convict Theatres of Early Australia 1788–1840, p. 90.
What Did George Worgan Look Like?

No portrait of George Worgan exists. There is, however, a picture drawn in 1789—that is, two years before George Worgan returned from Sydney Cove to London—which appears as an engraved vignette on the title page of Captain John Hunter’s (1737–1821) An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island. The vignette depicts Governor Phillip (1738–1814), John White (1756?–1832), the colony’s principal surgeon, and George Worgan (among others) visiting a young Aboriginal woman who is recovering from an illness (Plate 48). The event portrayed transpired during an expedition to the Hawkesbury River, in July 1789.

The vignette is based on a sketch drawn by John Hunter (Second Captain of the Sirius). Of Hunter’s artistic skills, John White wrote: ‘Captain Hunter has a pretty turn for drawing.’ (‘The experienced and respected captain Hunter was regarded as a “man devoid of stiff pride … most accomplish’d in his profession”.’)

It is reasonable to conclude that Hunter’s original sketch, and the vignette that was based on it, contains reasonable likenesses of the individuals represented—even though the original sketch was subsequently ‘copied and reworked by a professional artist in order to provide’ an improved and more suitable ‘basis for the engraver’.

Unfortunately, John Hunter does not specifically identify each of the men represented in the vignette. We know that the expedition comprised Governor Phillip, Captain David Collins, John Hunter, marine First Lieutenant George [John] Johnston, John White, George Worgan, Newton Digby Fowell (1768–90; a ‘gregarious, optimistic and well-connected’ midshipman on the Sirius, ‘destined for … a fatal encounter with the Batavia fever’), and marines. Captain Hunter described the expedition

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58 J. Hunter, An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island, with the Discoveries which Have Been Made in New South Wales and in the Southern Ocean, Since the Publication of Phillip’s Voyage, Compiled from the Official Papers; Including the Journals of Governors Phillip and King, and of Lieut. Ball; And the Voyages from the First Sailing of the Sirius in 1787, to the Return of that Ship’s Company to England in 1792 (London: John Stockdale, 1793).
63 Groom, First Fleet Artist, p. 11.
as comprising ‘the governor, Captain Collins (the judge-advocate), Captain Johnston, of the marines, Mr. White, principal surgeon of the settlement, Mr. Worgan, Mr. Fowell, and myself, from the Sirius, and two men, all armed with musquets’.

Contemporaneous portraits reveal that Governor Phillip ‘had a high forehead, a long nose, dark eyes and an olive complexion. He had a slight figure with sloping shoulders.’ In Plate 48, the long nose and sloping shoulders of the figure standing second from the right suggest that this may be Governor Phillip. The figure’s ‘appearance and bearing … suggest’ calm, dignity and authority; in short, ‘sensibility—a key feature of the Enlightenment period. It was an attitude reflected in moderation and rationality. Discussion was preferred to disputation, conversation to controversy and politeness to pedantry. In polite society at least, machismo was vulgar and unfashionable. It was certainly not Phillip’s style.’

Surgeon John White (seated) ministers to the Aboriginal woman. White ‘was considered a conscientious and humane man, whose care … was attentive and as caring as was possible in the circumstances’. (White’s interest in the Aboriginal race extended to his adopting Nan-bar-ray, an Indigenous boy from Sydney.)

The figure standing between the tree and the back of the shelter—that is, the figure with the brimmed hat standing third from the right/third from the left—may be George Worgan. Like that of his seated medical colleague, surgeon John White, Worgan’s gaze is intently fixed on the Aboriginal woman. As far as can be seen, the build of Worgan’s shoulders and upper arms is similarly muscular to that of surgeon John White; for both surgeons, this muscularity not only appears to be greater than that of their colleagues, but is also consistent with the strength required by an eighteenth-century surgeon.

The figure standing behind the shelter (second from the left) whose hat has no brim, and whose attention is fixed upon Governor Phillip, may be Captain David Collins. Collins’ hat resembles one that is depicted in an engraving of a similar, if not the same, event, published in 1793 in Michael Adams’ (fl. 1793) The New

66 Ibid., p. 6.
68 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 68.
70 See ‘The Life of a Surgeon’, above.
Royal System of Universal Geography (Plate 49). In the Adams engraving, not only is Collins specifically identified, he is also depicted as the only member of the party wearing a hat with no brim.

In the vignette (Plate 48), the person standing behind the shelter on the extreme left, looking into the distance and supporting his gun on his shoulder, may be John Hunter. In the foreground on the right, John Johnston, in marine uniform (presenting his back to us), looks on.

Plate 48 Unknown artist, engraved from a sketch by John Hunter (1737–1821): Governor Phillip, John White and George Worgan (?) Visiting an Aboriginal Woman, Who is Recovering from Illness.


John Hunter described the event depicted in the vignette; he records that near Pittwater:

[O]ur tents etc were no sooner up than we went to visit our young female friend, whom we now found in a little bark hut upon the beach …

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71 M. Adams, The New Royal System of Universal Geography. Containing a Complete, Full, Particular, and Accurate History and Description of all the Several Parts of the Whole World … Including Every Interesting Discovery and Circumstance in the Narratives of Captain Cook’s Voyages Round the World. Together with all the Recent Discoveries Made in the Pelew Islands, New Holland, New South Wales, Botany-Bay, Port-Jackson, Norfolk-Island … Carefully Written and Compiled from the Late Journals of the Voyages and Travels of Captain Phillip, King, Ball, Hunter, White … The Whole Forming a Complete, Authentic, Copious, and Real New Geographical Library (London: Alexander Hogg, 1793), Plate facing p. 19.
Chapter 3

She had with her a female child about two years old and as tiny a creature of that age as I ever saw, but upon our approach, the night being cold and rainy and the child terrified exceedingly, she was laying with her elbows and knees on the ground covering the child from our sight with her body, probably to shelter it from the wet, but I rather think on account of its terrors.

On our speaking to her, she raised herself up and sit on the ground with her knees up to her chin and her heels under her, and was at that moment I think the most miserable spectacle in the human shape I ever beheld. The little infant could not be prevailed on to look up, it lay with its face upon the ground and its hand over its eyes. We supplied her … with birds, fish and fuel to keep her fire in with. We pulled a quantity of grass to make her a comfortable bed and covered her little miserable hut so as to keep out the weather.72

George Worgan makes no mention of this event in his journal. On Monday, 28 April 1788—a little more than 14 months prior to the event depicted in the vignette—Worgan expressed his hope that he might obtain Governor Phillip’s ‘[p]ermission to accompany him’ in a proposed future expedition.73 The intention of the proposed expedition was to investigate ‘very high mountainous land, which … the Governor means to visit’.74 Forty-five days later, on Thursday, 12 June 1788, Worgan writes: ‘The Governor intends to visit these mountains shortly, and i have his permission to accompany him in this excursion.’75 The proposed expedition never took place. Nevertheless, Worgan was a member of several expeditions, including to the Hawkesbury River, Broken Bay and the upper Nepean (where the Worgan River was named after him).76

Worgan does not mention his participation in any expedition comprising the personnel depicted in the engraved vignette. As the version of Worgan’s journal that has survived is not his ‘fuller & more accurate’77 version, we have no record written by Worgan that describes his involvement in the July 1789 expedition to the Hawkesbury River. It may be that Captain John Hunter’s 1789 sketch, subsequently transformed into the engraved vignette (Plate 48) on the title page of his An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island, contains the only known representation of George Worgan. Of the seven men depicted in the engraving, however, Governor Phillip is the only person who can be identified with any certainty.

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72 Quoted in Egan, Buried Alive, p. 124.
73 See Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan, p. 43.
74 Ibid., p. 43.
75 Ibid., p. 10.
The subject matter of the vignette shown in Plate 48 is strikingly similar to that of an engraving found in Michael Adams’ (fl. 1793) *The New Royal System of Universal Geography*: this engraving is entitled ‘Captains Hunter, Collins & Johnston, with Governor Phillip, Surgeon White, etc Visiting a Distressed Female Native of New South Wales, at a Hut near Port Jackson’ (Plate 49).

Plate 49 Unknown artist: Captains Hunter, Collins & Johnston, with Governor Phillip, Surgeon White, etc Visiting a Distressed Female Native of New South Wales, at a Hut Near Port Jackson.


Using the order of personnel listed in the title as a means to identify those depicted, the engraving depicts (from right to left):

1. an unidentified person presenting his back to us, walking into the bushland; this person holds a gun in his left hand, and may be guarding the party
2. Captain Hunter (second on the right, the first whose face is visible) holding the barrel of a gun
3. Captain Collins (wearing a hat with no brim) wielding an axe

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4. Captain Johnston supporting a gun on his left shoulder

5. Governor Phillip standing in the foreground; his right hand is placed upon his left, and his gun leans against his torso

6. Surgeon White (on the left, standing behind the shelter) looking down upon the Aboriginal woman.

Perhaps George Worgan, who, when in the company of such colonial luminaries was not regarded as being of equivalent importance, is represented by the title ‘etc’.

George Worgan’s Father, Dr John Worgan

It is reasonable to assume that George gained a knowledge of (if not also a passion for) music from his father, Dr John Worgan. Dr Worgan, having sanctioned his son’s entry into the navy, enjoyed a reputation and abilities as a professional musician that would have enabled him to earn an income that was more than sufficient to pay for George’s medical training. Dr Worgan was organist and composer at Vauxhall Gardens between 1751 and 1761, and later, a composer there between 1770 and 1774. At Vauxhall Gardens, Dr Worgan had to compete ‘with fireworks, tightrope dancers, and parachuting balloonists for his audience’s attention’.

John Worgan was born on Monday, 29 May 1724. Approximately five months later, on Thursday, 2 November, he was baptised at the church of St Botolph, Bishopsgate. Following the death of both his parents, John (a musical child prodigy) was educated by, and learned the organ from, one of his older brothers, James (1713–53), who was a friend of Händel.

James was … organist at both St Botolph Aldgate and St Dunstan-in-the-East. He has been cited as the first organist at Vauxhall Gardens, but there is conflicting evidence: Charles Burney asserted that Thomas Gladwin was the first organist, from about 1737–38, when the organ was installed, to about 1745, when [James] Worgan was appointed.

80 Isaacoff, A Natural History of the Piano, p. 61.
81 Entry ‘P2119’, in Tom Hodgkinson’s Ancestors. See Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Gz, Reference Number 23 (on the western side of Bishopsgate Street, opposite Houndsditch).
82 See ibid., Grid Reference Hn, Reference Number 22 (on the northern side of the intersection of Houndsditch and White Chapel).
83 See ibid., Grid Reference Go, Reference Number 29 (on the eastern side of Mincing Lane, off the southern side of Tower Street, near to the south-western side of the Tower of London).
James’s [musically gifted] sister Mary (bap. London, 23 April 1717—after 1768) succeeded James as organist at St Dunstan-in-the-East, being elected on 11 May 1753.  

Mary Worgan was also a composer. During the mid-eighteenth century, her song ‘The Dying Nightingale’ (1740) was extremely popular. Its anonymous lyric, ‘Set to Musick by Miss Worgan’, includes a voice that purports to be that of the nightingale. In the last verse, following a farewell to Arcadia … the nightingale offers her mate the bittersweet reflection that although she is dying and he too may soon succumb to the ‘supream Decree of Fate’ … there is no delight in lingering where their lyrical gifts are no longer valued:

Yet let it not disturb our peace,  
These times no more to see,  
When hooting owls, & gabbling geese,  
Are priz’d as much as we.

What has seemed a sedate neoclassical pastoral metamorphoses into … allegory. Musical pedants (‘hooting owls’) and those who flock to new musical trends (‘gabbling geese’) have mobbed the cultural field previously occupied by those musical artists (nightingales) with a refined, educated, and historical sense of music’s social purpose and its affective potential. The lyricist uses the ostensibly apolitical neoclassical pastoral to launch a subversive attack on the current direction of musical aesthetics.

On the strength of this song alone, it is reasonable to assume that Mary Worgan was not only a musician who knew her own mind, but also one who possessed unwavering integrity in relation to her philosophy of musical art.

Like his older brother James, another of John Worgan’s older brothers, Charles Worgan (bap. Thursday, 14 February 1726), was also a musician. Charles, a merchant, settled in Port Royal, Jamaica, where he was an organist.

84 P. McGairl, ‘Worgan’ (n.d.).  
87 Ibid., p. 146.  
Following tuition by his brother James, John Worgan studied under the composer and organist Thomas Roseingrave (1688–1766), who was a passionate advocate of the scintillating keyboard music of Domenico Scarlatti. John Worgan also studied under the Italian composer and violin virtuoso Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762). Geminiani, who came to London in 1714, had studied under the famed violinist and composer Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713) and the celebrated composer Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725).89

John Worgan gained a Bachelor of Music degree from Cambridge University (at St John's College)90 in 1748. Five years later, on Saturday, 1 September 1753, he married Sarah Mackelcan at the Church of St Peter le Poor, London91 (Sarah was a music pupil of John Worgan’s older brother James).

John Worgan was slightly less tall than ‘the common standard, and somewhat squarely … framed’; he was ‘dark, handsome and expressive’.92 In late April 1780, _The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser_ described John Worgan as a ‘gentleman of the most respectable character … and of the first rank in the profession of music’.93

In 1755, John Worgan published his _Trio for Three Voices. With Instruments. Sung by Miss Burchell, Miss Stevenson, and Mr. Lowe in Vaux Hall Gardens_. The publication inscription contains details of Worgan’s address at the time: ‘Printed for the author and sold at his house in Millman Street, facing St. John’s Chapel, Bedford Row, Holborn.’94

Eight years later, Mortimer’s _London Directory_ of 1763 erroneously gives John Worgan’s address as St John’s Square, near Clerkenwell Green (in the then northern outskirts of the city).95 _The Public Advertiser_ of Tuesday, 27 March 1764, however, provides (by not confusing the whereabouts of the relevant St John’s) a correct address: ‘Mr. Worgan’s House, facing St. John’s Chapel, Millman-street, Bedford Row, Holborn’96 (in 1760, John Worgan became

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90 See Bacon, ‘Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan’, p. 114, fn. †.
91 See ‘Entry P2119’, in *Tom Hodgkinson’s Ancestors*. See also Bowles, Bowle's Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Gn, Reference Number 69 (on the northern side of Broad Street, near the intersection of Throgmorton Street).
96 _The Public Advertiser_, 27 March 1764. Quoted in *Handel Reference Database 1764*. 
organist of St John's Chapel, Millman Street, Bedford Row). 97 Millman Street lay one block south-east from the Foundling Hospital (it seems that Millman Street was regarded as insignificant enough to warrant its exclusion from any London map until 1795). 98 In Millman Street, John Worgan lived at number 7. 99 The Public Advertiser describes John Worgan’s house as ‘facing St. John’s Chapel, Millman-street’. 100 It is reasonable, therefore, to propose that the Worgan family lived in a house situated on the eastern side of Millman Street, at the southern end, presumably either near, or on the corner of, Chapel Street. 101

It seems that Dr John Worgan called 7 Millman Street home for approximately 20 years (in 1780, Dr Worgan’s son Joseph [1768–1825] enrolled at Eton College; as part of Joseph’s particulars, the Eton College Register records Dr John Worgan’s address as ‘Milman Street, London’). 102

There is a discrepancy between the address of the Worgan family as given in the 1780 Eton College Register and that published three years earlier in The Daily Advertiser of Monday, 13 January 1777. Announcing the death of Dr Worgan’s second wife, Eleanor, The Daily Advertiser remarks:

> On Saturday [11 January 1777] at her house at Rathbone-Place, Mrs. Worgan, wife of Dr. Worgan, one of the most amiable of her sex. If the affectionate wife, the tender parent, the good Christian, the sincere friend, and agreeable companion, were ever united in one character, they most happily were in this lady’s; consequently her family sustain a real loss, and her friends must ever remember her with regret. 103

The mention of Rathbone Place in The Daily Advertiser suggests that the Worgan family had left their previous address at 7 Millman Street, Holborn, by late 1776 (at the very least). If The Daily Advertiser is correct, John Worgan and his family did not reside in Millman Street in 1780. For some unknown reason, the Eton College Register entry is incorrect.

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99 See McGairl, ‘Worgan’.
100 See The Public Advertiser, 27 March 1764. Quoted in Handel Reference Database 1764.
101 On Cary’s map, St John’s Chapel is designated with the number 52.
103 The Daily Advertiser, 13 January 1777, No. 14375, p. 1.
The author is aware of three sources that associate Dr John Worgan with an address in Berners\textsuperscript{104} (Berner\textsuperscript{105} or Berner’s)\textsuperscript{106} Street (off the northern side of Oxford Street), London:

1. Mollie Gillen claims that Dr John Worgan ‘had lived in Berners Street, London, not far from the residence of James Bradley’ (1693–1762), astronomer royal from 1742 until his death), ‘a friend of Evan Nepean’ (1752–1822)\textsuperscript{107} and ‘later under-secretary at the India Board, whose brother Henry became superintendent of the Dunkirk hulk at Plymouth’\textsuperscript{108} (unfortunately, Gillen does not cite her sources).

2. An assertion made by Alec Worgan (a descendant of one of George Bouchier Worgan’s brothers).\textsuperscript{109} Regrettably, Alec Worgan gives no evidence to substantiate his assertion.

3. A single-page printed document in Brian Jack Barrow’s (b. 1946)\textsuperscript{110} possession, comprising a map (taken from Google Maps, dated Monday, 15 March 2010) showing ‘Berners St Westminster, London W1 UK’. The document contains the following handwritten statement at the bottom of the page: ‘The Worgan family lived in Berners St / within walking distance of the Haymarket / shop, Longman & Broderip, where the / piano may have been purchased.’ The statement is signed underneath with the initials ‘BB’—that is, Brian Barrow.

No late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century evidence links Dr John Worgan with an address in Berners Street.

In 1746, Berners Street was the short, first named street westward from Rathbone Place. On the northern side of Oxford Street, travelling westward from Rathbone Place, streets and entrances were:

\textsuperscript{104} See Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Cm. See also Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 27.

\textsuperscript{105} See A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Map Section: left-hand quadrant; northernmost extent Mary le Bon and southernmost extent Tothill Fields.


\textsuperscript{107} Evan Nepean was involved with arrangements made for the dispatch of the First Fleet, and the administration of the newly established penal colony in New South Wales during its early years. See V. Parsons, ‘Nepean, Evan (1752–1822)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.

\textsuperscript{108} Gillen, The Founders of Australia, p. 393.

\textsuperscript{109} See ‘Close Proximity’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{110} Brian Jack Barrow is an antiques restorer, fortepiano aficionado and current owner of the Longman & Broderip square piano dated 1785/86? discussed in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
1. Rathbone Place
2. a relatively long, narrow entrance to a stable yard
3. Marybone Pass (a narrow lane linking Oxford Street with uncultivated land)
4. a wide unnamed entrance to the same uncultivated land accessed by Marybone Pass
5. Berners Street.\textsuperscript{111}

Twenty-one years later, in 1767, Berner Street was the first named street westward from (and running parallel with) Rathbone Place.\textsuperscript{112} Berner Street and Rathbone Place were linked (halfway down their length) by a relatively wide unnamed cross street,\textsuperscript{113} making it possible to describe Berner Street as being ‘off Rathbone Place’ (ca 20 years later, during the mid-1780s, Dr John Worgan resided at 40 Rathbone Place).

By 1775, Berners Street had become the second street westward from Rathbone Place. On the northern side of Oxford Street, travelling westward from Rathbone Place, named streets and entrances were

1. Rathbone Place
2. Newmans Street
3. Berners Street.\textsuperscript{114}

In 1775, Berners Street and Rathbone Place were no longer connected by a cross street; consequently, Berners Street could not be described as being ‘off Rathbone Place’.

In 1795, Berners Street was the third street westward from Rathbone Place. On the northern side of Oxford Street, travelling westward from Rathbone Place, named streets and entrances were

1. Rathbone Place
2. Perrys Place
3. Newmans Street
4. Berners Street.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{111} See ‘Berners St.’, in Rocque, \textit{A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, and Borough of Southwark}, [B] (seq. 7), Map Reference I-12/B-7.
\textsuperscript{112} See ‘Berner Str.’, in \textit{A Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster}, Map Section: left-hand quadrant; northernmost extent Mary le Bon and southernmost extent Tothill Fields.
\textsuperscript{113} See ibid.
In 1795, no cross street connected Berners Street with Rathbone Place; Berners Street could not be regarded as being ‘off Rathbone Place’.

Between 1754 and 1768, nine children were born to John and Sarah at their home in Millman Street. Of these nine children, George Bouchier Worgan was the second son and third child.

In June 1768, ‘John divorced Sarah for adultery’ (committed with some of John’s music students: ‘Mr. Rowe, Mr. Langshaw, and others.’ As a result of her infidelity, Sarah communicated ‘to her husband a disgraceful and disagreeable disease’). A few years later, John married Eleanor Baston(?), with whom he had two children, Thomas Danvers (1773–1832) and Michael (bur. Friday, 17 November 1775). Following the death of Eleanor in 1777, he married Martha Cooke (d. Monday, 11 May 1812), a widow, on Saturday, 12 June 1779.

After gaining his Doctorate in Music from Cambridge University in 1775, Dr Worgan ‘virtually retired from public life, apart from his [extensive] duties as an organist’.

In 1823, Richard Mackenzie Bacon, in his ‘Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan, Mus.D’, provided the following summary:

Dr. Worgan married three times. By his first wife he had nine children, of whom three sons [including George Bouchier] and two daughters are now living. By his second wife he had two sons, of whom one [Thomas Danvers] is living. By his third wife, who was a widow when he married her, he had no offspring.

Dr John Worgan died on Friday, 20 August 1790, aged 66, ‘at 22 (now 65) Gower Street’. Gower Street, off Bedford Square, is approximately four blocks to the north-east of Dr Worgan’s second-last address, Rathbone Place.

Plate 50 shows the house in Gower Street in which Dr Worgan died (the entrance is the door on the left). The house currently serves as the Ridgemount Hotel.

116 See McGairl, ‘Worgan’.
118 Ibid.
119 McGairl, ‘Worgan’.
120 Ibid.
121 Bacon, ‘Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan’, p. 133.
Plate 50 Dr John Worgan’s house, in which he died on 20 August 1790.

Source: Photo by the author.

When ill, the middle class ‘did not go to the hospitals (which were for the poor) but were tended to at home and visited there by a physician’. Burney provides us with information concerning Dr John Worgan’s demise. He says that Dr Worgan

had the misfortune to labour under two dreadful calamities: a bad wife and the stone [that is, bladder stones]. He got rid of the former, after great mortifications and expense, by divorce; but in too early wishing to abridge his sufferings from the latter, he lost his life in the torture of an operation.

123 Riding, *Mid-Georgian Britain 1740–69*, p. 73.
Techniques for the surgical treatment of bladder stones did not change from the 1500s through to the mid-nineteenth century. An anonymous sixteenth-century commentator remarked: ‘The cure itself is something horrible, grave, and perilous. The mind recoiled at the thought of so frightful a remedy.’125 During the eighteenth century, 80 per cent of patients who endured the excruciating procedure for the removal of bladder stones died;126 a prayer often uttered was: ‘Lord, take me not through the bladder.’ Because the malady was so agonising, many people were willing to take a chance that the operation would be successful (such as Dr John Worgan), and this despite the high risk of death either during the operation itself or resulting from ensuing septicemia. Most surgeons hesitated to perform the operation because of the high mortality rate. Eleven people were required for the procedure: the surgeon, his assistant, plus nine people to immobilise the patient (two to hold the right leg, two to hold the left leg, two to hold the right arm, two to hold the left arm, and one to hold the head).

Dr Worgan was buried on Tuesday, 31 August 1790, 11 days after his death, in the church of St Andrew Undershaft (St Mary Axe)127 opposite the left side of the communion table.128 During the late sixteenth century, the church of St Mary Axe was demolished, and its parish merged with that of St Andrew Undershaft (Plate 51). At Dr John Worgan’s funeral service, one of his favourite pupils, the musical genius Charles Wesley, jr (1757–1834)—the eldest son of Charles Wesley (1707–88), who was the younger brother of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley (1703–91)—played the ‘Dead March’ from Händel’s oratorio ‘Saul’ on the organ. On the same day Dr Worgan’s body was interred, his will was proven.129

On Saturday, 13 October 1906, the memory of Dr John Worgan was honoured by the unveiling of a brass plaque in the church of St Andrew Undershaft (Plate 52). Expenses associated with the plaque and its installation were met by

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126 This statistic, and ensuing information concerning bladder stones, comes from an engaging public lecture presented by Dr Alan Turner at the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, London, on Friday, 15 April 2011.
the London section of the Incorporated Society of Musicians.\textsuperscript{130} The unveiling took place within the context of ‘a special choral service, in which several of Worgan’s compositions were sung’\textsuperscript{131}

 Appropriately, the plaque is situated on a wall immediately next to the treble-side back of an organ made by that great genius of English organ builders Renatus Harris (ca 1652–1724) (the organ was opened on Thursday, 31 May 1696, when the Reverend Dr Towerson preached a sermon on vocal and instrumental music).\textsuperscript{132}

\textbf{Plate 51 The Church of St Andrew Undershaft.}

Source: Photo by the author.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p. 238.
\textsuperscript{132} See ‘16.—S. Andrew Undershaft’, in ibid., p. 80.
\end{flushright}
Plate 52 Brass plaque commemorating Dr John Worgan in the Church of St Andrew Undershaft.

Source: Photo by the author.

The inscription on the plaque reads:

To the glory of God and in memory of
John Worgan Mus. D. Cantab.
Organist of this church from 1749 to 1790
Buried near this spot.
This brass is erected by the
Incorporated Society of Musicians London 1906

Of Dr John Worgan’s five surviving sons, three became professional musicians:

2. James Worgan (bap. London, Saturday, 27 November 1762 – d. after 1801)
3. Thomas Danvers Worgan (1774–1832).

Dr John Worgan appears to have paid heed to the advice provided by R. Campbell in 1747 concerning a parent’s response to the educative needs of a musically gifted child: ‘If a parent cannot make his son a gentle-man, and finds, that he has got an itch of music, it is much the best way to allot him entirely to that study.’133 Unfortunately, not much is known about the lives of Richard, James and Thomas Danvers Worgan.134

About 1795, James Worgan compiled three volumes of organ music by his illustrious father.

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133 Campbell, The London Tradesman, p. 93.
Thomas Danvers Worgan called himself ‘Professor of Music’ and taught and lectured in London in addition to composing music and writing essays. His three collections *Vocal Sonatinas forming a Coalition of Vocal and Instrumental Harmony* (1816–1820) include arrangements as well as his own compositions (rounds, canons, glees etc.). He also composed a motet in ten vocal and 35 instrumental parts, *The Heroes’ Welcome* (1824), and published *Rouge et noire de musique, or Harmonic Pastimes*, described as ‘Games of Cards constructed on the Principles of Music’ (1807). He published three collections of ‘Essays in Poetry and Music’, as *Monthly Minstrelsy* (1807) and *The Composer or Contrapuntist, with Explanatory Notes* (1826). A further collection of essays, *The Musical Reformer* (1829), included a list of his own works (published and unpublished) and some of his father’s. (All of his printed works were published in London.)

George Worgan’s Father, Dr John Worgan, the Harpsichordist

Charles Burney mentions Dr John Worgan’s ‘reverence’ for the works of Domenico Scarlatti. ‘He became a great collector of [Scarlatti’s] … pieces, some of which he had been honoured with from Madrid by the author himself … few have now perseverance sufficient to vanquish their peculiar difficulties of execution.’

In 1752, Dr Worgan obtained a licence, lasting 14 years, allowing him sole printing rights of several new keyboard sonatas by Scarlatti; a second licence was issued in 1771.

The keyboard sonatas of Scarlatti are consummately virtuosic works. In England, from 1738 through to the end of the eighteenth century, Scarlatti’s sonatas were not only immensely popular (to the extent of having a cult following), but also the most difficult keyboard works in print, representing the benchmark for skillful execution at the keyboard. (Oddly, in Italy, ‘Domenico Scarlatti...
was hardly more than a name. Little enough of his music was circulating there in manuscript and nothing of his was published in Italy during the eighteenth century."

Charles Burney wrote of his admiration for ‘the original fancy, boldness, delicacy & fire of Domenico Scarlatti [sonatas], so different from all keyboard music … before & since!’

Dr John Worgan’s technique, musical intelligence and style of harpsichord playing must have suited the uncompromising technical and artistic demands made by Scarlatti’s keyboard music. It is reported that as a harpsichordist, Dr Worgan evidenced a ‘bold and full manner of playing’. The evaluation of Worgan’s playing as ‘bold’ may refer to any one or more of several performative issues, ranging from, for example, musico-rhetorical gesturalism, through improvised ornamental passagework, to harmonic adventurousness within the context of improvisation. Worgan’s ‘boldness’ may also be associated with his performances of Scarlatti’s unpredictable, evocative and astonishingly imaginative keyboard sonatas. That Dr Worgan revealed a ‘full manner’ of playing suggests that he used an Italian continuo style, which at the time was characteristically manifested by a preponderance of thick chordal textures and rhythmically prominent patterns. The remark also suggests that Worgan’s tone was inherently rich, indicating that he knew how to draw high-quality sounds from the instrument.

In 1772, the London Evening Post of Saturday, 29 February – Tuesday, 3 March described Dr Worgan as a ‘most excellent original harpsichord-composer and performer’.

In 1823, Richard Mackenzie Bacon published the following anecdote related to Dr Worgan’s expertise as a harpsichordist:

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143 Continuo (basso continuo, thoroughbass) is ‘a largely practical discipline of music … in which’ a keyboardist—or within some contexts, a player of a strummed instrument such as a guitar or theorbo, or a bowed string instrument such as a viola da gamba or violoncello—plays (or ‘realises’) ‘chords … encoded in figured-bass notation … One of the most salient features of thoroughbass is that it asks us to think of music in terms of a series of successive chords. These chords are encoded in a notation of Arabic numerals … that indicate their interval structure above a … continuo bass line.’ T. Christensen, ‘Thoroughbass as Music Theory’, in T. Christensen, R. Gjerdingen, G. Sanguinetti and R. Lutz, Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and in Practice (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2010), pp. 9–10.
144 ‘To all Harpsichord Performers’ [Advertisement], London Evening Post, 29 February – 3 March 1772, No. 6889.
Soon after [Giovanni] Manzoli [1720–82], the [castrato] singer, had arrived in England [ca 1764–65], he was invited to a musical meeting, where several eminent performers displayed their powers at the harpsichord. Manzoli listened to them with polite attention, and complimented them on their exertions. It so happened that Dr. Worgan [then about 24 years old], who was present, was the last person requested to go to the harpsichord. He had scarcely touched the instrument when Manzoli, who sat by the fire at some distance, turned towards him with a look expressive of surprise and delight. As the Doctor proceeded in his performance, the Italian drew nearer and nearer the harpsichord; and at length, unable to repress his feelings, threw himself into the enchanter’s arms.

According to Richard Bacon, Dr Worgan’s ‘hands were delicately formed’ and ‘he deserved some credit for reaching octaves’. Dr Worgan’s small handspan, however, did not hinder the effectiveness of his playing, which was so overtly virtuosic that once, when Dr Worgan’s creative powers ‘stormed, an electrified listener exclaimed, “Zounds! the man has three hands”’.

**George Worgan’s Father, Dr John Worgan, the Organist**

In London, between 1750 and 1850, of the 971 organists for whom documents survive, 71 percent were employed primarily as organists, although they usually had other employment, particularly as teachers … the majority of organists worked for churches, cathedrals, or royal chapels.

Organists also performed in a few secular settings such as the … [late eighteenth] century London pleasure gardens, Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Even London concerts sometimes employed organists. For example, Samuel Wesley [1766–1837] (the nephew of John Wesley …)

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145 Charles Burney described Manzoli’s voice as ‘the most powerful and voluminous soprano that had been heard on our stage since the time of Farinelli’. Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, Vol. 2, p. 868. During October and November 1771, Manzoli (aged 58) sang as *primo uomo* in W. A. Mozart’s *Ascanio in Alba*. See J. A. Rice, *A Dispute Involving the Musico Giovanni Manzoli and Mozart’s Ascanio in Alba* (n.d.).
146 Bacon, ‘Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan’, p. 121.
147 Ibid., p. 120.
148 Ibid., p. 120.
150 See ‘Ranelagh’, in ibid., Map Reference 50.
‘received six guineas a night … for playing the organ at the oratorio concerts at Covent Garden Theatre with an additional four guineas for playing a concerto ‘between the Acts’.151

Appointment to a position as a church organist had an implied tenure of office … [Dismissal was usually] due to gross negligence of duties, never to musical inadequacy. [For example, in 1771 at Lincoln Cathedral] … the organist was ‘arraigned and reproved for playing one Anthem while Mr. Binns was singing another’ and for ‘insolence’ … in contrast to theatre musicians, whose association with the stage made them morally suspect, organists’ association with religion enhanced their status and respectability, making them more eligible for private patronage as teachers.152

Dr Worgan was something of a child prodigy. At the age of 11 (as an applicant for the post of organist at Christ Church Spitalfields),153 he was referred to as ‘the ingenious Mr. Worgan’.154

On Saturday, 8 April 1752 (almost a year and a half before his first marriage), Dr John Worgan was appointed as organist at the Church of St Andrew Undershaft (St Mary Axe).155 He remained the church’s organist until his death in 1790. (Church documents reveal that on Monday, 28 March 1785, Dr Worgan was censured because ‘he very seldom attended, and … the performance of his duties was very indifferent’.)156

The organ in the Church of St Andrew Undershaft (Plate 53) is mentioned in the 12 questions forming Queries about St Paul’s Organ; this document was written by the organ builder Renatus Harris, or some of his friends, its aim being to disparage the knowledge and skill of a rival organ builder Bernard Smith (ca 1630–1708). The eighth and ninth queries read:

153 See ‘Wood Street’ and ‘Silver Str.’, in Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 29. On Cary’s map, Christ Church Spitalfields is designated with the number 29.
155 See T. F. Bumpus, London Churches Ancient and Modern (London: T. B. Bumpus, 1883?), Vol. 1, p. 154. See also ‘Leaden Hall Street’ and ‘St. Mary Axe’, in Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 30. On Cary’s map, the Church of St Andrew Undershaft (St Mary Axe) is designated with the number 10.
VIII. Whether there been’t organs in the City, lowder, sweeter, and of more variety than St Paul’s (which cost not more than one-third of the price) and particularly, whether Smith at the Temple has not outdone Smith of St Paul’s. And whether St Andrew Undershaft has not outdone them both?

IX. ‘Whether the open diapason of metal that speaks on the lower set of keys at St Andrew Undershaft be not a stop of extraordinary use and variety, and such as neither St Paul’s has or can have?’\textsuperscript{157}

Plate 53 Organ by Renatus Harris in the Church of St Andrew Undershaft.

Source: Photo by the author.

On Monday, 14 May 1753 (only four months before his first marriage), the 29-year-old Dr Worgan was elected as the organist at the medieval Church of St

\textsuperscript{157} Quoted in ibid., p. 153.
Botolph, Aldgate\textsuperscript{158} (on the corner of Houndsditch and White Chapel Road),\textsuperscript{159} a job for which he was paid £25 a year.\textsuperscript{160} When Dr Worgan began his duties there, the organ at St Botolph's would have been 48 years old. The organ was made by Renatus Harris, and dates from ca 1704–05 (Plate 54).

This instrument is now England’s oldest working church organ. Although older pipes and cases exist elsewhere, the organ of St Botolph’s contains the oldest collection of pipes in their original positions on their original wind chests.

The instrument was rebuilt in 1886, 1898 and 1966. Between 2005 and 2006, the organ was restored to its original ca 1704–05 condition, including the case (if he were alive today, Dr John Worgan would recognise the instrument immediately).

The pitch of the organ is $a^1 = 445.6 \text{ Hz}^{161}$ at 18ºC. Throughout the life of the instrument, this common seventeenth and eighteenth-century English church pitch has never been altered.

The organ is currently tuned according to Renatus Harris’s own tuning instructions, published as \textit{Harris the Organ Makers Way of Tuning His Organs by Imperfect 5ths & True Octaves}, which appears as a postscript in Godfrey Keller’s (d. 1704) \textit{A Compleat Method for Attaining to Play a Thorough Bass Upon Either Organ, Harpsichord, or Theorbo-lute}.\textsuperscript{162}

Through Dr Worgan, the congregation at St Botolph’s ‘would have had the opportunity to hear some of the most up-to-date church music of the day’,\textsuperscript{163} played by one of England’s finest organists.

\textsuperscript{159} See Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Hn, Reference Number 22.
\textsuperscript{161} ‘Hz is the International Standard symbol for Hertz, the unit of frequency, defined as the number of cycles per second of a periodic phenomenon … Sound is a travelling wave which is an oscillation of pressure. Humans perceive frequency of sound waves as pitch.’ Each note (sounding pitch) in music ‘corresponds to a particular frequency which can be measured in Hertz’. ‘Hertz’, in \textit{Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia} (n.d.). See ‘Hz (Hertz)’ in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
\textsuperscript{162} G. Keller, \textit{A Compleat Method for Attaining to Play a Thorough Bass Upon Either Organ, Harpsichord, or Theorbo-lute}, by the Late Famous Mr. Godfrey Keller. With a Variety of Proper Lessons and Fugues … and a Scale for Tuning the Harpsichord or Spinnet, All Taken from His Own Copies which He Did Design to Print (London: John Cullen, 1707).
\textsuperscript{163} Gwynn, \textit{The Renatus Harris Organ at St Botolph Aldgate}, p. 6.
In 1760, Dr Worgan was appointed organist at St John’s Chapel, Millman Street, Bedford Row, Holborn. Dr Worgan held this position concurrently with the posts he occupied at St Andrew Undershaft and St Botloph’s.

In 1779, upon the death of the composer and organist William Boyce (1711–79), Dr Worgan may have applied for the position of ‘Master of the King’s Musick’. The organist John Langshaw (1725–98) ‘contemplated the unseemly spectacle of rival organists jockeying for the vacant post, and had written to’ Reverend Charles Wesley (the younger brother of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley): ‘Now for the whipping between Dr. Worgan & Dr. [Benjamin] Cooke [1734–93], for the King’s Plate.’ (Boyce’s job as Master of the King’s Musick went to the blind organist Charles John Stanley [1712–86].)

Dr John Worgan’s abilities as an organist were so finely developed that some of his contemporaries compared him with the then greatest organist in England,

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164 See ‘Millman Str’, in Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 20. On Cary’s map, St John’s Chapel is designated with the number 52.
165 Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, p. 213.
Georg Frederic Händel. The outstanding English composer of church music and organist Jonathan Battishill (1738–1801) went so far as to make the following remark: ‘In my opinion, Worgan was the greater performer of the two.’ The English clergymen, writer and amateur musician Martin Madan (1726–90) in a satirical song entitled ‘The Organ Laid Open, or, the True Stop Discovered’, implies that as organists, John Worgan and Georg Händel were famous equals: ‘For let Handel or Worgan go thresch at the organ.’

Charles Burney, having described Dr Worgan as one of England’s ‘great organists’, wrote that Worgan was ‘a very masterly fughist on the organ, and as a concerto player a rival of [Charles John] Stanley … His organ playing, though in the style of Handel than of any other school, is indeed masterly, in a way quite his own’.

In his Recollections (1828/29?), the organist of St Michael’s, Cornhill, Richard John Samuel Stevens (1757–1837), described Dr John Worgan as being ‘unquestionably’ among ‘the greatest organists of the English School’. He also described him as ‘a musician of a most eccentric mind’, and ‘a man of the greatest genius, and a most admirable organ player’.

Stevens recalls that in 1773, as a student, he was frequently sent ‘to the Church of St. Andrew Undershaft in Leadenhall Street, to hear Doctor Worgan (then Mr. Worgan,) play the organ: his voluntaries were always extempore; and they were in general the sublime efforts of a great genius.’ (Voluntaries were used ‘to beguile and settle the congregation … before and after the service, and before or after the lesson at morning and evening prayer.’ On the other hand, ‘Psalm tunes … were … ornamented with preludes and interludes’.)

It was reported that when Dr Worgan improvised at the organ, ‘his imagination was of that original and captivating kind, [so] that his audience often looked on each other with significant astonishment, and remained open-mouthed and breathless for several seconds after the organ had ceased’.  

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166 Bacon, ‘Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan’, p. 116. See also ‘16.—S. Andrew Undershaft’, in Pearce, Notes on Old London City Churches, p. 82, fn.
167 Martin Madan was godfather to Charles Wesley jr’s son, Samuel, as well as a drinking companion of Charles Wesley jr. Charles Wesley jr was the eldest son of Charles Wesley (who was the younger brother of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley). See D. Milton, ‘Charles Wesley’s Son was a Polygamist’, in Christian Marriage: Preaching and Teaching Biblical Marriage (2006).
168 Olleson, Samuel Wesley, p. 56. See also Edwards, ‘Worgan, John (DNB00)’, Vol. 63, p. 28.
170 Quoted in Gwynn, The Renatus Harris Organ at St Botolph Aldgate, p. 6.
171 See Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 30. On Cary’s map, St Michael’s, Cornhill, is designated with the number 91.
173 Ibid., p. 57.
175 Gwynn, The Renatus Harris Organ at St Botolph Aldgate, pp. 5–6.
176 Charles Burney, quoted in Bacon, ‘Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan’, p. 120.
In 1790, Dr Worgan was described as ‘a celebrated performer on the organ’.\(^{177}\) ‘Whenever [Dr Worgan] … played, crowds … resorted to hear him.’\(^{178}\) As organist at London’s Vauxhall Gardens, Dr Worgan was ‘surrounded by professors, and the cognoscenti’ who afterwards ‘followed him in throngs’ to hear him play the organ in ‘his churches’.\(^{179}\) Many of the visitors to Vauxhall Gardens, however, were not sufficiently educated to appreciate the levels of sophistication inherent in Dr Worgan’s organ playing. A contemporaneous caricature appeared in which ‘Apollo was represented as kicking [Dr Worgan] … out of heaven, for wasting celestial energies on the profane vulgar’.\(^{180}\)

The leading evangelical Anglican clergyman Richard Cecil (1748–1810) confessed to experiencing a state of ravished bewilderment when he heard Dr Worgan play the organ during a church service. Reverend Cecil writes:

> Admiration and feeling are very distinct from each another. Some music and oratory enchant and astonish, but they speak not to the heart … Dr. Worgan has so touched the organ at St. John's [Chapel, near Bedford Row], that I have been turning backward and forward over the Prayer Book for the First Lesson in Isaiah, and wondered that I could not find Isaiah there!\(^{181}\)

It was said that when John Worgan was ‘in the vein’—that is, inspired—his organ improvisations were ‘not a puerile show of single stops, nor a continuous ramble of Gargantuan chords; but a perpetual excitement of intense interest in the bosom of taste … so that, as it was related of Handel, he was the worst organist in the world for playing a congregation out of church’.\(^{182}\)

‘For most keyboardists in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, improvisation was an essential part of being a musician. As most auditions [for church organists] at that time consisted primarily of improvisation, organists in particular practiced improvisation as regularly as most professional musicians now practice repertoire.’\(^{183}\)

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John Worgan was often engaged to give the opening recital on newly built organs; these included the instruments at St Mary’s, Rotherhithe, on the southern bank of the Thames (29 September 1765); St Martin’s, Ludgate (26 January 1766); the chapel of the Asylum for Female Orphans (25 November 1766); St Mary’s, Islington (1772); and ‘the Collegiate Church of St. Catherine, near the Tower’ (27 September 1778).

At the Church of St Mary Axe with St Andrew Undershaft, Dr Worgan consistently attracted a congregation of listeners into the middle aisle, who avidly listened to his improvising at the conclusion of the service.

On one occasion an admirer of Worgan’s, hastening to the church to be in time for the Doctor’s [improvisation] … found the doors open, and the place silent and deserted … with the exception of one stranger who stood ruminating by the fire. The hurry, the disappointed look of the new comer and his late arrival at church made his [intention] … easily understood. Without any introduction, therefore, the stranger accosted him, ‘The Doctor was very great, to-day, Sir.’

He, himself, had evidently been enjoying [Dr Worgan’s playing] … and the admirer, though vexed that he had arrived too late for the feast, could not help noticing the incident as a pleasant illustration of the … brotherhood of musical amateurs.

George Worgan’s Father, Dr John Worgan, the Teacher

Dr Worgan insisted that his children should have a thorough musical education regardless of the profession they intended to pursue. As a teacher, Dr Worgan did not apply his pedagogical insights and expertise only for the exclusive benefit of his own children. In 1780 (seven years before his son George Bouchier

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184 See Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Kp, Reference Number 94. See also Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 47. On Cary’s map, St Mary’s, Rotherhithe, is designated with the number 87.
185 See Cary, Cary’s New and Accurate Plan of London and Westminster, Map Reference 29. On Cary’s map, St Martin’s, Ludgate, is designated with the number 68.
departed for Sydney Cove), Dr Worgan published his *Pieces for the Harpsichord, Composed Purposely for Forming the Hands of Young Pupils to that Instrument*¹⁹¹ (Plate 55).

Plate 55 Dr John Worgan: title page from *Pieces for the Harpsichord, Composed Purposely for Forming the Hands of Young Pupils to that Instrument, with the Help of a Proper Instructor* (London: W. Owen, 1780).

Source: Geoffrey Lancaster Collection, Perth. Photo by the author.

Unusually for the time, ‘the works in this pedagogical collection contain many notated articulation markings (most commonly, slurs), as well as specific instructions for *cantabile, legato, tenuto, and marcato*.’¹⁹² (Dr Worgan’s use of the term ‘*marcato*’ is intriguing, as one would reasonably expect the term to occur in piano music rather than in repertoire specified for the harpsichord.) The influence of Domenico Scarlatti’s keyboard works is suggested by occurrences of hand crossing.

¹⁹¹ J. Worgan, *Pieces for the Harpsichord, Composed Purposely for Forming the Hands of Young Pupils to that Instrument, with the Help of a Proper Instructor* (London: W. Owen, 1780).

That works calculated for students were commercially viable is suggested by the title page of a harpsichord concerto composed by John Worgan and published two years prior to George Bouchier’s departure for Sydney Cove: *A New Concerto for the Harpsichord, with the Parts of Accompaniment, Consisting of Two Violins and a Violon-Cello Composed by Dr. Worgan Purposely for the Practice and Improvement of his Pupils, and Others Who are Attaining a Command of that Instrument.*

As an organist, John Worgan’s association with religion would have enhanced his status and respectability, and made him more eligible for private patronage as a teacher. As one of London’s most fashionable and gifted teachers, Dr Worgan taught music to the prodigiously talented Charles Wesley, jr; Charles studied thorough-bass and composition under Dr Worgan. (Dr Worgan told Charles Wesley, sr, that his son ‘would become an “eminent master” … if he was not sidetracked by other studies’.) Like Dr John Worgan, Charles Wesley, jr, ‘became specially distinguished as a performer of Scarlatti’s [keyboard] sonatas’.

The following anecdote, published in 1827, suggests that Dr John Worgan was not only an uncompromising educator in relation both to his standards and to his expectations, but also that he could adapt to new and challenging teaching contexts. Dr Worgan taught Samuel Jarvis (1742–84), organist at the Foundling Hospital (an institution closely connected with Händel) and at the Churches of St Sepulchre and St Botolph. Jarvis was inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians on 6 January 1765. Samuel Jarvis was blind.

‘The extraordinary playing of Dr. Worgan determined him [Jarvis] *inter silvas avademi quaerere verum*’ (to seek truth among the woods—that is, to seek truth among the pipes of an organ).

The doctor had never before instructed the blind, and was naturally rather averse from the undertaking; but when he heard Jarvis play, he resolved to try the experiment; and said Mr. Jarvis, ‘I thought my performance not despicable, yet how great was my astonishment and mortification when the doctor said to me, ‘Sir, you do very well, but

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193 J. Worgan, *A New Concerto for the Harpsichord, with the Parts of Accompaniment, Consisting of Two Violins and a Violon-Cello Composed by Dr. Worgan Purposely for the Practice and Improvement of His Pupils, and Others Who Are Attaining a Command of that Instrument* (London: Published by the Author, 1785).
198 See ‘Snow Hill’, in Bowles, *Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster*, Grid Reference Fn. On Bowles’s map, the Church of St Sepulchre is designated with the number 70.
you have been wrongly taught, and if you come to me, you must begin
your practice all over again.’ Accordingly,’ added Jarvis, ‘he began
with me as if I had been a child, making me play my five notes up and
down and saying, ‘There, sir, you must work much in that way before
we proceed any farther.” The master-pupil went away in dudgeon, but
wisely determining not to lose the benefit of instruction by neglect,
adhered strictly to the doctor’s injunctions. He had not done so long
before he exclaimed, ‘The doctor’s right, and I have been practicing in
a wrong way all my life.’ This conviction was followed by immediate
reformation, the master and pupil were soon satisfied with each other,
and Jarvis became a distinguished ornament to a school which no such
pupil ever deserted.199

In 1823, Richard Mackenzie Bacon observed:

Provincial organists, during the vacations, flocked to hear … [Dr John
Worgan], and astonished at his powers, frequently applied to him for
instruction. ‘They come to me,’ said he, ‘for a few lessons, in which they
require me to do for them what has cost me the labour of forty years’
… Yet many of these become fashionable masters. ‘These gentlemen,’
said the Doctor, ‘dress well, bow politely, pocket the money, and music
is their very humble servant; but I am music’s very humble servant.’200

George Worgan’s Father, Dr John Worgan, the Composer

Richard Mackenzie Bacon, in the Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review of
1823, wrote: ‘the bulk of Dr. Worgan’s compositions are neglected manuscripts;
enriched with science, and illuminated with genius.’201 Bacon, by way of summary,
continues: ‘In a word’, Dr John Worgan ‘is a sound and original classic, a pillar of
his art, an honour to his country, and the victim of unjust neglect.’202

‘Very little of John Worgan’s music was published during his lifetime, and
unfortunately most of his manuscripts have been lost.’203 Some indication of the
scope of Worgan’s compositional output can be gained from comments made by

201 Ibid., p. 113.
202 Ibid., p. 128.
his son Thomas Danvers Worgan, who was a composer and music theorist. In his *The Musical Reformer*, Thomas states that his father composed ‘oratorios, anthems, organ concertos, and voluntaries, vocal harmony, sonatas’. 204

In the main, Dr John Worgan’s compositions are written in what at the time was called the ‘ancient’ style.

**The ‘Ancient’ Style**

In London during the late eighteenth century, there were two prominent and warring musical factions. Conflict between these two factions was manifested in a public war of words. Each faction supported a particular style of music.

The first (conservative) faction supported the so-called ‘ancient’ style. In 1776, at the instigation of John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich (1718–92), this faction founded a musical institution called the ‘Concert of Ancient Music’ (also known as the ‘King’s Concert’). The Concert of Ancient Music was a socially exclusive organisation, whose members did not like any music that was ‘modern’, and consistently supported performances of repertoire composed more than 20 years earlier—that is, music including, and written before, Händel. For some members of the Concert of Ancient Music, ‘this involved reviving the works of’, for example, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (ca 1525–94) and William Byrd (ca 1540–1623); ‘for others it meant merely reasserting the virtues of Corelli and Geminiani and composers of their generation’. 205 When the Concert of Ancient Music was first formed, it explained that ‘by ye Compositions of the Ancients is meant of such as lived before ye end of the sixteenth century’. 206

The founders saw themselves not only as protectors of the national taste, but also as perpetuators of national values based on ‘a conservative political consensus, the Anglican church, the aesthetic doctrine of the sublime—and therefore, in the gender-coded world of British aesthetics … masculinity’ (and, by extension, an appeal to British patriotism). 207 The Concert of Ancient Music also saw themselves as providers of a focal point for the cohesion of the aristocracy through ‘a deliberate and self-conscious closing of ranks. More subtly, the Concert of Ancient Music attempted to link taste for great music of the past with the social elite, creating the powerful social myth of the congruence of class and

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205 Southey et al., *The Ingenious Mr Avison*, p. 122.
taste.’ By the final decade of the eighteenth century, having been faced with ‘threats to their authority posed by the American and French Revolutions … [the aristocracy] attempted to bolster their position by posing as the arbiters of good taste and the protectors of traditional values. In music this meant support for so-called “ancient” music.”

The social and political conservatives inhabiting the ranks of the Concert of Ancient Music imagined that they were saving English music from a newly emergent and degenerate style ‘produced by an attempted musical insurrection carried out by foreigners who were determined to subvert the manly native music of England through the introduction of effeminate, Italian-inspired decadence’.

Italy had long been associated with effeminacy and male homosexuality—for example, a poem published in London in August 1708 links Henry Sidney, First Earl of Romney (1641–1704; a famous and handsome English libertine), effeminacy and male homosexuality with Italy:

Thus pretty Sidney reigns among the Fair.
And passes for the bright Idalian star,
The men are apt to take him for a she,
And pay false homage to the deity.
’Tis pity Nature so mistook her way,
To make at once both sexes go astray,
That when she did the masculine create,
He should turn tail, and prove effeminate.
But this in camps may of more service prove,
Where male with male are forc’d to kindle love.

Fear of the deleterious effects on English society of ‘effeminate’ Italian music (especially opera) had been present in England from the early 1700s. In 1732, for example, Händel received a letter from Aaron Hill (1685–1750), the manager of the Queen’s Theatre. In his letter, dated Tuesday, 5 December, Hill urges Händel to cast aside Italian opera (especially Italian castrati) in order to ‘deliver us from our Italian bondage’. Hill writes:

209 Southey et al., The Ingenious Mr Avison, p. 122.
210 Irving, ‘Haydn and the Consequences of Presumed Effeminacy’, p. 103.
211 Almonds for Parrots: Or, a Soft Answer to a Scurrilous Satyr, Call’d, St. James’s Park. With a Word or Two in Praise of Condoms (London, 1708). Quoted in R. Norton (ed.), ‘Almonds for Parrots, 1708’, in Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century England: A Sourcebook (5 June 2004, updated 15 June 2008). This poem is one of the first written in English that mentions the condom (‘condon’).
212 Quoted in van Til, George Frideric Handel, p. 98.
Male and female voices may be found in this kingdom, capable of every thing, that is requisite; and, I am sure, a species of dramatic opera might be invented, that, by reconciling reason and dignity, with musick and fine machinery, would charm the ear, and hold fast the heart, together.\textsuperscript{213}

In 1747, R. Campbell wrote: ‘As Italian Music, and the Love of it, has prevailed in these Islands [that is, in England], Luxury, Cowardice, and Venality has advanced upon us in exact Proportion.’\textsuperscript{214}

[A] refinement of our taste into a love of soft Italian music, is debasing the martial genius of the nation; and may one day be a means to fiddle us out of our liberties. I would chuse, if we are to be improved in music, that the composers would keep to the old British key, and let us sing English as well as speak it.\textsuperscript{215}

Not only was Italian music suspect, but also Italian food; concerning a ‘macaroni’—that is, a fop or dandy—the Oxford Magazine stated:

There is indeed a kind of animal, neither male nor female, a thing of the neuter gender, lately started up amongst us. It is called a Macaroni. It talks without meaning, it smiles without pleasantry, it eats without appetite, it rides without exercise, it wenches without passion … Apparently, the condition was caused by too much of a liking for pasta.\textsuperscript{216}

Members of the Concert of Ancient Music believed that

the effeminate [Italian] opera threatened the masculine basis of British culture and ‘questioned and threatened the stability of those gender distinctions essential to maintaining stable social institutions.’\textsuperscript{217}

An aristocracy spending large sums of English money to import homosexuality, castrati, Catholicism, and [degenerate] music into London threatened masculine, Protestant ‘British sense, reason, wit, and virtue.’\textsuperscript{218}

In 1784, the Reverend William Jones of Nayland (1726–1800), in a book dedicated ‘[t]o the Right Honourable, &c. the Directors of the Concerts of Antient Music’, complains that modern composers

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{213} Quoted in ibid., p. 98.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Campbell, \textit{The London Tradesman}, p. 90.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Ibid., p. 92.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Paxman, \textit{Empire}, p. 47.
\item \textsuperscript{218} The English critic and dramatist John Dennis (1657–1734), \textit{Essay on the Operas After the Italian Manner} (1706), cited in McGeary, ‘‘Warbling Eunuchs’’, p. 5; Rohr, \textit{The Careers of British Musicians 1750–1850}, pp. 18–19.
\end{enumerate}
have introduced many improvements into melody, and some into harmony; but by no means such as will compensate for their corruptions. Novelty and custom, two overbearing tyrants, have given a sanction to degenerate harmony, wildness of air, effeminacy, tautology and affected difficulties, inconsistent with the powers of expression …\textsuperscript{219}

Had it not been for the Concerts of Antient Music, some of the finest compositions, and the manly entertainment arising from the superior manner in which they have been performed, would probably have been lost to this country. The stream of fashion would have carried on its surface what is light and frothy; while that which is more solid and valuable would have sunk to the bottom.\textsuperscript{220}

The Concert of Ancient Music’s links with social and political conservatism, and … with an evangelical piety [ultimately] … led to the mighty Handel commemoration celebrations of 1784, held over five days in Westminster Abbey with a choir and orchestra of over five hundred, an unprecedented number for England. These celebrations were so successful that they were repeated in 1785–87, 1790, and in 1791, the last with over one thousand performers, and in the presence of George III.\textsuperscript{221}

The aristocratic directors of the Concert often planned programs in conjunction with King George III; the Concert’s programming often reflected a capitulation to the King’s predilection for Händel. Young provides the following pertinent observation:

The King was no passive patron. He was ready to express his views and to exert his influence. Thus he sent a memorandum to Lord Carmarthen regarding a programme submitted to him from the Ancient Concerts:

‘Lord Carmarthen’s List of Musick for next Wednesday is very excellent and meets with the approbation of those whose opinion on the subject he wished to know.’\textsuperscript{222}

\textsuperscript{219} William Jones, \textit{A Treatise on the Art of Music; In which the Elements of Harmony and Air are Practically Considered, and Illustrated by an Hundred and Fifty Examples in Notes Many of them Taken from the Best Authors: The Whole being Intended as a Course of Lectures, Preparatory to the Practice of Thorough-Bass and Musical Composition} (Colchester, UK: W. Keymer, 1784), ‘Introduction’, p. iv.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., ‘Dedication’, p. i.
\textsuperscript{222} P. M. Young, \textit{A History of British Music} (London: Ernest Benn, 1967), p. 342. Young takes the quotation from: Egerton MS 2159, f. 57, held in the British Library.
The concert’s blatant conservatism does, however, represent one expression of an evolving musical canon, reflecting the ‘remarkable breadth of thinking [that] … existed in England concerning the very new idea that music from the past might be preserved as a corpus of great works’. 

**The ‘Scientific’ Style**

The second of the two dominant musical factions in late eighteenth-century London supported music that was written in the so-called ‘scientific’ style. This style of music comprised anything that was contemporary. According to the English composer and organist William Crotch (1775–1847), the musical aesthetic of the scientific style allowed for the inclusion of ‘eccentric passages, varied rhythm, wild melody & violent contrasts’. Music written in the scientific style was also characterised by the inclusion of abrupt structural and/or harmonic transitions, orchestral crescendi (modelled on the Mannheim device) as well as an overt sense of playfulness. The minuet commonly featured in works composed in the scientific style.

The eighteenth-century English music theorist Sir John Hawkins was not enamoured of the scientific style. In his *An Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music* (published in 1770), he passes harsh judgment:

> For reasons, which no one is willing to avow, adagio music is exploded, and we are content to forego the majesty and dignity of the largo and andante movements, with all the variety arising from the interchange of various airs and measures, for the noise and rattle of an unisonous allegro, to which no name can be given, or the intoxicating softness of that too-often iterated air, the minuet.

Hawkins ‘dismissed’ music written in the scientific style as ‘noise without harmony … the frittering of passages into notes … trash’. Other censorious voices echoed Hawkins’ sentiments: ‘it becomes a mechanical art, it dazzles, but cannot affect the mind.’ Even as late as 1823, Richard Mackenzie Bacon remarked: ‘All insects are attracted by the brilliancy of modern composition; but

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225 W. Crotch, Manuscript lecture notes (Norfolk Record Office, n.d.), MS Col/7/43.
226 Quoted in Hogwood, Liner notes for *Johann Christian Bach*, p. 2.
227 Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 183.
the rainbow of today is but a transient offspring of the ancient sun; and should a taste for ancient music become totally extinct, the rest would be “but leather and prunella”.229

Scientific composers were musicians such as Carl Friedrich Abel, Johann Christian Bach, Christian Ernst Graf (1723–1804), Joseph Haydn, Ignaz Jacob Holzbauer (1711–83), Josef Mysliveček (1737–81) and Ignaz Joseph Pleyel (1757–1831). As with the performances of the ‘degenerate’ Italian Opera in London, which were so disparaged by members of the Concert of Ancient Music, ‘concerts comprising scientific music were often attended by aristocratic and middle-class elites jockeying for social status’.230

The organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens describes the scientific style as ‘the modern German style’.231 In 1791, Stevens regularly attended the professional concert, at which Pleyel presided; and Haydn’s twelve concerts, at which he presided; in order to hear the modern German style of music, and the method of conducting it, by two of its most eminent composers. Haydn had his benefit [concert on] May the 17th 1792, when I was astonished at the amazing effects of some of his instrumental compositions, and particularly of those written for a full orchestra.232

Haydn’s symphonies were jointly directed by Johann Peter Salomon (the first violinist) and Haydn (at the keyboard). In London, such joint direction was a commonly encountered performance convention in relation to symphonies. That Stevens attended ‘Haydn’s twelve concerts … in order to hear … the method of conducting’ attests not only to his curiosity concerning the distribution of joint direction (first violin and keyboard), but also to his interest in interpretative aspects (such as accentuation, articulation and tempi).

The flourishing in London of concerts given by the two warring musical factions does not, however, indicate the emergence of a large and musically inquisitive middle-class audience.

The aristocracy controlled taste, and ensured that subscription tickets (rather than individual tickets) were sold, prices for tickets were kept high and subscription lists were carefully controlled—all purely to maintain aristocratic

232  Ibid., p. 79.
exclusivity. The aristocracy cultivated concert-giving not so much for its commercial potential as for its role in defining a less tangible cultural status and leadership.233

Compositional Output

Dr John Worgan was composer and organist at Vauxhall Gardens234 (on and off) between 1751 and 1773. During this time, he wrote at least 13 published volumes of ‘Vauxhall Songs’,235 as well as numerous other songs that were published singly or in anthologies.236 The emphasis at the Vauxhall Gardens was on entertainment, with the music tending to be a mere background to strolls, chatting with friends and partaking of supper. As a result, much of the music performed in the gardens was vocal music—songs, short cantatas and other slight pieces often performed by attractive and engaging young actresses … [The music often represented] a pandering to popular taste with little regard for … quality.237

When compared with repertoire performed at aristocratic subscription concerts, music heard at the Vauxhall Gardens was decidedly popularist.

In 1823, Richard Mackenzie Bacon wrote:

[A]t a late period of Dr. Worgan’s life, a friend told him that he had just bought a complete collection of his Vauxhall Songs. ‘Then’ replied the Doctor, ‘you have bought a great deal of trash, for many of them were penned either when I was fatigued with business or straitened for time, or from some cause or other not at all in the humour for composition’.238

‘Vauxhall Gardens programmes for the 1786 and 1787 seasons identify some orchestral works by John Worgan. These works however, may have been in the Vauxhall repertory for some years, and cannot be accurately dated from these performances.’239

233 McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn, p. 12.
235 See ‘Close proximity’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
236 See ibid.
237 Southey et al., The Ingenious Mr Avison, p. 92.
Sadly, many of Worgan’s manuscripts were lost after his death. ‘[A]ll that survive of his sacred works are those that were published during his lifetime, namely the anthem We Shall Rejoice in Thy Salvation from 1759 (at least five anthems were part of John Worgan’s sacred music output), and the oratorio Hannah.’

‘Dr. John Worgan’s oratorio Hannah (published in 1764 as his opus 1) was given its premiere performance at the King’s theatre, Haymarket, on 3 April 1764.’ It failed miserably. ‘A second oratorio, Manasseh (now lost) was first performed at the chapel of the Lock Hospital on 30 April 1766.’

A third oratorio is also lost.

In 1811, not long after Dr Worgan’s death, the English composer, musician and writer Thomas Busby summarised the history of the oratorio in England. He judged Dr Worgan as being the equal of several of England’s finest composers:

The first Oratorios performed in England were those produced by Mr. Handel, with the excellence of which the English public are well acquainted. Since that great master, Mr. [John Christopher] Smith [1712–95], Mr. [Charles John] Stanley, Dr. [Thomas Augustine] Arne [1710–78], Dr. Worgan, and Dr. [Samuel] Arnold [1740–1802], have tried their powers in this higher walk of composition: but though some of their respective productions possessed a degree of merit highly honourable to British talent, yet so inadequately were they encouraged, that from about the year 1771, no new work of the kind appeared for nearly thirty years, i.e. till the spring of 1799.

During his lifetime, Dr Worgan’s compositions were not widely appreciated, attracting only ‘a little circle of intelligent admirers’. Forty-four years after Dr Worgan ‘descended to the grave to await the tardy and barren retribution of posthumous justice’, Clarke remarked that Dr Worgan’s compositions abounded in ‘taste, learning, and genius’.

241 See Bowles, Bowles’s Reduced New Pocket Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster, Grid Reference Co. On Bowles’s map, the theatre is designated with the letter ‘m’.
246 Ibid., p. 315.
Three books of psalms and hymns composed by Dr John Worgan were published between 1767 and 1769. ‘Worgan is persistently credited with having composed the Easter hymn. As a matter of fact the tune appeared (anonymously) in “Lyra Davidica” (1708) sixteen years before Worgan was born.’

A moment of conspicuous opportunism (and an indication of a predilection for compositional conservatism) is revealed by a concert held in 1787 at Dr John Worgan’s home. At this concert, a selection of Worgan’s own sacred compositions was performed. The concert was attended by ‘most of the directors of the Concert of Ancient Music’.

Members of the Concert of Ancient Music felt that the incursion of the scientific style into church music threatened to destroy its traditional and characteristically English beauty. In the face of what was regarded as a particularly heinous threat, Bishop George Horne (1730–92), as one of several contemporaneous irate clergics, inveighed from the pulpit against ‘the light movements of the theatre, with the effeminate and frittered music of modern Italy’, which ought to be banned from the church in favour of ‘our English classics in this sacred science’.

That Italian music and musicians were regarded as a threat to the English character for much of the eighteenth century is evidenced in 1743, when the entrepreneur responsible for a series of outdoor concerts in Clerkenwell let it be known that he would only engage English instrumentalists because their ‘manly vigour [is] … more suitable to the ear and heart of a Briton than the effeminate softness of the Italian’.

The style of the sacred works composed by Dr Worgan that were performed at the concert held in his home in 1787 would doubtless have reflected the musical biases of the attending Directors of the Concert of Ancient Music. The concert itself appears to have been Dr Worgan’s attempt to exploit (and/or to strengthen) social connections with members of that particular and exclusive faction. According to the organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens, who was ‘taken by [his] … friend John Dyne, to Doctor Worgan’s concert, to

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247 Edwards, ‘Worgan, John (DNB00)’.
lead the tenor chorus',\textsuperscript{251} the Directors of the Concert of Ancient Music 'seemed exceedingly gratified with the doctor's compositions, and the manner in which they were performed'.\textsuperscript{252}

Twenty-seven years earlier, on Saturday, 31 May 1760, \textit{The London Chronicle} described Dr John Worgan's conservative compositional style as an outgrowth of Händel's:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Handel} may be said as justly as any man ... to have founded a new school of music. When he first came into England, his music was entirely Italian: he composed for the opera; and though, even then, his pieces were liked, yet did they not meet with universal approbation ... in his Oratorios he is perfectly an original genius. In these, by steering between the manners of Italy and England, he has struck out new harmonies, and formed a species of music different from all others. He has left some excellent and eminent scholars, particularly \textit{Worgan} and \textit{Smith}, who compose nearly in his manner; a manner as different from \textit{Purcel’s} as from that of modern Italy.\textsuperscript{253}
\end{quote}

In 1823, Richard Mackenzie Bacon defended Dr John Worgan's 'established predilection, or prejudice, as many would have it, in favour of the antients':\textsuperscript{254}

\begin{quote}
As Dr. Worgan was decidedly a composer of the old school, it may not be amiss here to animadvert on an expression commonly applied to the antients, by those oracles whose mouths are filled with 'wise saws and modern instances.' It is usual with these hypercritics to 'damn with faint praise' an antient composer, by saying, 'Aye, it was very well for the time when it was composed, but it would not do now ... O shame! where is thy blush?' Will the philharmonist, will the professor, graze with the vulgar herd, and speak profanely of Corelli, the father of harmonists, and of Purcell and Handel, the Shakspeare and Milton of music? Did they dishonour their art? A homogeneous question.—Handel they revered. Had they not, never would they have risen above the level of their foolish admirers.\textsuperscript{255}
\end{quote}

Charles Burney was of the opinion that John Worgan's compositional style had been wrecked through his studying with the virtuoso Italian violinist Francesco Geminiani, who 'taught him that originality was the only virtue'.\textsuperscript{256}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{254} Bacon, 'Memoir of the Life and Works of John Worgan', p. 126.
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid., p. 125.
\end{flushright}
remark, however, does not support the general lack of originality evidenced in the majority of Worgan’s compositions, let alone the musical conservatism of Geminiani’s works. Burney writes:

At length [Dr John Worgan] … got acquainted with Geminiani, swore by no other divinity, and on consulting him on the subject of composition, he was told he would never be acquainted with all the arcana of the science without reading *El porque della Musica*, a book written in Spanish by Andres Lorente [1624–1703], in Alcala [de Henares], 1672.257

The value of Lorente’s music treatise is described ‘by Sir John Hawkins … This book, of which … Mr. Geminiani said it had not its fellow in any of the modern languages, is questionless a very learned work: it is in truth a musical institute, and may be said to contain all that is necessary for a practical composer to know’.258

Although Burney disparaged Geminiani for (supposedly) teaching Worgan that ‘originality was the only virtue’,259 the English composer Charles Avison (1709–70) regarded Geminiani in a much more favourable light:

In later life … [Avison] paid a poignant and unstinting tribute to his teacher [Geminiani] in a letter written to the *Newcastle Courant* in September 1768. Geminiani, he said, ‘spoke all the European languages, and his conversation was lively and entertaining … He had seen many courts, many men, many customs … He loved the arts, and assisted many artists.’ This cosmopolitan man, according to Avison, loved music, painting and sculpture and advised his pupil not to accept praise if he knew it to be undeserved, nor to get down-hearted if his merits were neglected. Above all, he recommended truth and simplicity as being of paramount importance, in music and in life.260

There can be little doubt that part of Geminiani’s notion of ‘truth in music’ involved a large degree of performative spontaneity. When Geminiani first worked in Naples,

he was placed at the head of the orchestra; but … he was soon discovered to be so wild and unsteady a timist, that instead of

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257 Charles Burney, in Rees, *The Cyclopaedia*. Quoted in ibid., p. 106. See Andrés Lorente, *El porqué de la música: en que se contiene los quatro artes de ella, canto llano, canto de organo, contrapunto y composición: y en cada uno de ellos nuevas reglas, razon abreviada, en utiles preceptos, aun en las cosas mas dificiles, tocantes a la harmonia musica: numerosos exemplos con clara inteligencia, en estilo breve, que al maestro deleitan, y al discipulo ensenan, cuya direccionse verá sucintamente anorada antes del prologo [The Precepts of Music] [Alcalá de Henares: Nicolás de Xamares, 1672].


260 Southey et al., *The Ingenious Mr Avison*, p. 31. Southey et al.’s quotation is taken from the *Newcastle Courant*, 17 September 1768.
regulating and conducting the band, he threw it into confusion; as none of the performers were able to follow him in his tempo rubato, and other unexpected accelerations and relaxations of measure. After this discovery … he was never trusted with a better part than the tenor [that is, the viola], during his residence in that city.  

If Burney’s account is to be believed, it reveals the limitations of the Neapolitan orchestra as much as Geminiani’s unconventional and imaginative ideas concerning musical gesturalism and meaning. Unfortunately, Burney ‘is a far from impartial source about Geminiani, not so much because he did not rate the man or his music, as because Sir John Hawkins, his arch music-historiographical rival, did’. Similar reports of the effect of Geminiani’s directorial unpredictabilities arise during his later years in London. There is, for example, the instance of a concert ‘that included song passages to be conducted by Geminiani’ as first violinist: ‘it ended in a disaster and was interrupted.’

As a solo violinist, however, Geminiani was highly esteemed. Geminiani’s performing style reflected his Italian temperament and training. His contemporaries described him as ‘the furious one’. The French author and priest François Raguenet (ca 1660–1722), in his Paralèle des italiens et des françois, en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéra [Comparison of the music and opera of Italy and France], compared French with Italian music: the dissertation ‘caused a lively controversy because of its author’s manifest preference for Italian music’. Raguenet’s words are well suited to what must have been Geminiani’s performing style:

Since Italians are more vivacious than the French, they are also more sensitive than the French to passion and besides this they express passion with more vigour in all of their works … Everything … is so vivacious, so intense, so penetrating, so impetuous and so touching that the imagination, the senses, the mind and the … body are dragged by

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264 See G. Nasillo, Liner notes for Sonatas Pour le Violoncello a Basso Continuo Par Monsieur Geminiani (Symphonia, 2000), CD, SY 00182, p. 8.
265 F. Raguenet, Paralèle des italiens et des françois, en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéra (Paris, 1702; English translation, London, 1709).
a common impetus … the violinist … cannot fail to be swept away …
to torment his violin, his body; he has lost all self control, he gets as
excited as a mad person, he is powerless to do otherwise.267

Given the likelihood that Geminiani’s violin playing was compelling, capricious
and passionate, it is odd that his works frequently lack the equivalent in
compositional terms. As a composer, Geminiani appears not to have been able
(or willing?) to constantly exercise the full extent of his stated aesthetic beliefs:
‘The intention of musick is not only to please the ear, but to express sentiments,
strike the imagination, affect the mind, and command the passions.’268

Geminiani, as a composer, and (one assumes) as a teacher of composition, upheld
the conservative musical ideals of the Concert of Ancient Music—so much so,
that in 1746, he dedicated his last set of concerti grossi, Opus 7, ‘alla celebre
Accademia della buona ed antica musica [to the celebrated Academy of good and
ancient music]’. The influence of the scientific (modern) style on the musical
life of London led Geminiani to complain that ‘the hand was more considered
than the head; the performance than the composition … instead of labouring to
cultivate a taste—the publick was content to nourish insipidity’.269 Somewhat
unenthusiastically, Sir John Hawkins summed up Geminiani’s traditionalist
compositional style (in the process, dammingly linking Geminiani’s music with
the public’s lack of musical discernment):

Notwithstanding the fine talents which as a musician Geminiani
possessed, it must be remarked that the powers of his fancy seem to
have been limited. His melodies were to the last degree elegant, his
modulation original and multifarious, and in their general cast his
compositions were tender and pathetic; and it is to the want of an active
and teeming imagination that we are to attribute the publication of his
works in various forms.270

Geminiani taught composition to Dr John Worgan. It is reasonable to assume
that Geminiani’s preference for the ancient style—along with a cultural context
in London that was defined, for the most part, by a musically unsophisticated
public—was responsible for Worgan’s compositional conservatism.

267 Quoted in Nasillo, Liner notes for Sonatas Pour le Violoncello a Basso Continuo Par Monsieur Geminiani,
p. 8.
268 F. Geminiani, The Art of Playing on the Violin Containing All the Rules Necessary to Attain to a Perfection
on that Instrument, with Great Variety of Compositions, which will also be Very Useful to those who Study
the Violoncello, Harpsichord &c … Opera. IX. (London, 1751; facsimile edn London: Travis & Emery Music
270 C. Bartlett, Liner notes for Geminiani: La Folia and Other Concertos and Sonatas (Hyperion, 1988), CD,
CDA66264, p. 6.
Keyboard Music

Although Dr John Worgan’s organ improvisations were startlingly original, his published keyboard music does not reflect the same spirit of adventurousness.

Much of John Worgan’s music presents a somewhat learned style and looks backwards to the Baroque;\(^{271}\) the [three volumes of] organ pieces selected and published after John Worgan’s death by his son James … capture the typical 18th century character of English voluntaries, with [conventional] echo effects and ‘trumpet tune’ melodic lines.\(^{272}\)

In their lack of daring and innovation, Worgan’s ‘Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord’\(^{273}\) (Plate 56) are similarly disappointing. ‘Figural clichés and the simplicity of harmonic schemes invite modern musicians (whose sensibilities are formed by the mature works of Haydn and Mozart) to approach these works with a certain amount of disdain.’\(^{274}\) Worgan’s ‘Six Sonatas’ border on the vacuous: fast movements tend to be emotionally empty and noisy;\(^{275}\) slow movements often begin with beautiful and pleasingly tuneful ideas, but these are ultimately not developed and, as a result, movements become all too often predictable and directionless. This critique flies in the face of pronouncements made, in 1823, by Richard Mackenzie Bacon, who remarks that Dr Worgan’s ‘sonatas … are happy blendings of the “utile dulci”’, excellently qualified to steady the finger, and prominently characteristic of an original style’\(^{276}\) (Bacon’s recurrent hagiolatrous attitude in relation to the works of Dr Worgan is reflected in his typically favourable comments). Regrettably, Worgan’s rather pallid ‘Six Sonatas’ reveal a surprising absence of sophistication and ingenuity.

\(^{271}\) In a widely accepted and commonly encountered periodisation schema of Western civilisation’s music history, the ‘Baroque’ era is defined as the period between ca 1600 and ca 1750.


\(^{275}\) Especially, for example, ‘Sonata No. 2’ in C major, movements 1 and 3. See also the ‘Sonata No. 3’ in F major, movement 3.

One ray of light, however, pierces the bleakness. Redemption for Dr Worgan is offered in what may be described as a healthy disdain for compositional propriety: the first full bar of the opening Larghetto from the Sonata No. 5 in E-flat major contains a series of descending, ‘prohibited’ consecutive fifths!\textsuperscript{277} These would have scandalised the players and listeners in polite musical circles; knowing this, Worgan (somewhat cheekily) writes at the top of the first page of the sonata: ‘Lest the consecutive fifths at the beginning of the theme of this movement should escape the critic, the author here apprises him of them’ (Plate 57).\textsuperscript{278}

\textsuperscript{277} A ‘consecutive fifth’ is the ‘simultaneous duplication of the melodic line … by another at the interval of a perfect fifth’, the resultant interval (comprising two musical parts) being immediately followed, within the same two musical parts, by another simultaneous duplication of the melodic line at the interval of a perfect fifth. W. Drabkin, ‘Consecutive Fifths, Consecutive Octaves’, in S. Sadie (ed.), \textit{The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians} (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 4, p. 666. During the eighteenth century, consecutive fifths were strongly discouraged. See ‘Consecutive Fifths’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{278} J. Worgan, \textit{Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord}, p. 22.
Worgan’s textures and accompanimental figurations are reminiscent of those found in the (far superior) late harpsichord music of the French composer Jacques Duphly (1715–89). In Worgan’s ‘Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord’, however, ‘there is certainly no need to make room for Dr. John Worgan on Parnassus if the qualifications are grandeur of musical thought and technical virtuosity’.279

Worgan’s single harpsichord concerto was composed when he was aged 63, and is his last published work. According to Richard Mackenzie Bacon, it is ‘replete with spirit, unblemished by senility or infirmity. The name of Haydn would have given this composition that celebrity which the worshippers of a name conspire to establish.’280

In his published keyboard works, Worgan appears to have been careful never to offend or to ‘tax’ the tastes of the London public.281 The melodic lines of his keyboard music sometimes have an almost folksong quality about them. In some instances, Dr Worgan’s melodies contain a ‘shaping’ derived from ‘melodic peaks’, where ‘the melody, after soaring to what sounds like the highest [note] … or peak, then soars still higher’.282 Perhaps this is what the eighteenth-century German organist and music theorist Georg Joseph Vogler (1749–1814) perceived as being the ‘bracing’ quality of some English melodic lines.283 Contemporaneous English ears would have been charmed by the inclusion of such a compositional device within Dr Worgan’s musical landscape.

282 Heartz, Music in European Capitals, p. 918. See, for example, the third movement of the ‘Sonata No. 1’ in G major. See also the first movement of the ‘Sonata No. 2’ in C major.
283 Quoted in ibid., pp. 918–19.
The nineteenth-century Romantic view of the tormented composer does not fit either Dr John Worgan or eighteenth-century musical reality. Rather than being a suffering, autobiographically motivated artist, struggling in isolation against the world, seeking to express the deepest personal feelings, a typical eighteenth-century English composer worried ‘less about the meaning of art’ and ‘strove [only] to touch’ a listener’s ‘sentiments’.284

The notion that a sad piece … was about the composer’s sadness would have seemed just as strange as the idea that a tart sauce prepared by [a] … chef was about the chef’s tartness … [Eighteenth-century] composers lived the life of a musical craftsman … [producing] music for immediate consumption … with a view toward keeping up with [musical] fashion.285

As a composer, Dr Worgan was simply a man of his time.

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285 Ibid., p. 7.
Chapter 4

Surgeon George Worgan Purchases a Square Piano

There can be little doubt that the domestic life of Dr John Worgan’s family was played out against a less than ordinary setting. The activities of the Worgan household would have been geared primarily towards music. The sounds of music-making, arising from practising, teaching and composing, would have filled the home. Within such a context, and from their earliest days, Dr John Worgan’s children (George Bouchier Worgan among them) would have been surrounded by music; George ‘was taught music, played music, and probably wrote music as soon as he was able’.¹

Although there are no extant critiques of George Worgan’s pianistic abilities, it is not surprising that, having been raised in a musically stimulating environment (and being financially self-sufficient as a navy surgeon), he purchased a piano and brought it with him on his voyage to Botany Bay.

When Did George Worgan Purchase His Piano?

It is not known exactly when George Worgan purchased his square piano. Unfortunately, the sales records of Frederick Beck have been lost.

Nor do we know exactly when Worgan’s instrument was completed² (the piano’s original nameboard reveals that it was made in 1780 or 1786?).³ The date of the instrument’s manufacture is a vital element in the formulation of any hypothesis regarding the date Worgan purchased his piano. This is because Worgan’s career path has ramifications in relation to his ability to afford to buy an instrument.

- 1775: George Bouchier joins the British Navy, and serves as a Surgeon’s Mate on the hospital ship Tiger.⁴
- 1778–79: George Bouchier serves as a Surgeon’s Second Mate.
- 1779: George Bouchier is certified as a Surgeon Fifth Rate.⁵

² See Appendix C, Volume 2 of this publication.
³ See ‘Date’ in Chapter 2, this volume.
⁴ See Pole, ‘No. 26. The Examination of Mr. George Bourchier Worgan’, p. 631.
⁵ Company of Surgeons, Examinations Book 1745–1800, p. 339. I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge. See also Steel, ‘Surgeons’, p. 31.
• 1780–82: George Bouchier serves on board the hospital ship *Pilote*.  
• 1783–85: George Bouchier is unaccounted for; perhaps he worked as a naval surgeon (‘on the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges*’), or was on some sort of detached list (naval surgeons did not enjoy retirement on half-pay at the time, so if Worgan was not working, his income would have been severely restricted).  
• 1786: George Bouchier serves ‘on the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges*’.  
• Wednesday, 1 November 1786: George Bouchier is discharged from the *Ganges* to the *Sirius*.  
• Sunday, 13 May 1787: George Bouchier departs Portsmouth for Botany Bay on board the *Sirius*.

If the Instrument Dates from 1780

If Worgan purchased the instrument new, he would have had to part with possibly one-third to one-fifth of his annual income—a not inconsiderable proportion of his earnings. Perhaps he celebrated his 1779 certification as a Surgeon Fifth Rate by purchasing a new piano in 1780. From 1780 through to 1783, Worgan’s serving on the moored hospital ship *Pilote* (rather than working on the high seas) represented a context within which he could visit piano makers in London (in order to select an instrument) with relative ease. The same could be said when, in 1786 (if not also between 1783 and 1785), he served ‘on the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges*’. Frederick Beck would have run his business as a typical craftsman’s atelier of the period. He worked with a small team of assistants, doing ... [the most important] work on site, and selling almost every instrument directly to an end user. Most clients who were able to get to London came in person to choose an instrument from among the finished examples on display. Those who could not, generally sent a proxy to select one on their behalf.

Given George Bouchier’s limited financial means, it is possible that he purchased a second-hand piano. At a cost of one-tenth to one-seventeenth of his normal

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7 Gillen, *The Founders of Australia*, p. 393.  
8 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for *Working the Forge*.  
10 See ibid., p. 393.  
11 See ‘How Much did George Worgan’s Piano Cost?’, below.  
13 Ibid., p. 393.  
annual income, even the price of a second-hand instrument represented a fairly high level of expenditure. If so, he could have purchased the instrument at any time between 1780 and his joining the *Sirius* on Wednesday, 1 November 1786.

Worgan may have purchased a second-hand instrument during the period between his joining the *Sirius* in November 1786 and the departure of the First Fleet in May 1787 (although, because of his work commitments, his location at Portsmouth and the relatively small time frame, this seems unlikely). It seems unlikely that the instrument would have been purchased second-hand if the instrument’s unique frame was made: 1) specifically for the journey to Botany Bay, and 2) at the same time as the piano was made.

**If the Instrument Dates from 1786**

If Worgan purchased the instrument newly made in 1786, he may have acquired it between its completion (at the earliest) in January 1786 and Wednesday, 1 November 1786 (when he joined the *Sirius*).

On the other hand, Worgan may have purchased the instrument second-hand prior to his joining the *Sirius* on 1 November 1786 (if so, the piano’s owner would have had the instrument in his or her possession for only 10 months—or less—before selling it).

It is also possible that Worgan purchased the second-hand piano during the period between his joining the *Sirius* in November 1786 and the departure of the First Fleet in May 1787 (although, because of his work commitments, his location at Portsmouth and the relatively small time frame, this seems unlikely).

**How Much Did George Worgan’s Piano Cost?**

Well into the early nineteenth century, English square pianos remained relatively cheap to buy. In London during the 1780s, ‘a prosperous tradesman’s family lived well on £350’ (approximately A$56 000). ‘People with incomes of between £50 [A$8000] and £200 [A$32 000] a year who could afford some of life’s pleasures constituted about a quarter of the population.’

During the late eighteenth century, ‘life was in a material sense incomparably different from life today. But if blessed with decent health, the average … middle class [person] can scarcely be said to have been less happy than his or her counterpart today.’

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15 Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 146.
16 Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, pp. 203–4.
With a usual cost ranging between 15 and 20 guineas\(^{17}\) (approximately A$2200 and $3700), a square piano made in London during the mid-1780s represented approximately one-fifteenth of an annual middle-class income (analogously, the current equivalent of the cost of a good-quality home entertainment system).

The approximate cost of a new Beck square piano can be deduced from the financial records of the illustrious Parisian harpsichord maker Pascal Taskin, who, on 19 April 1777, owed ‘Mr. Beck in London 660 \(\text{livres}\) … Taskin’s debt arose from the purchase of pianos’.\(^ {18}\) In 1777, 660 livres was the equivalent of 48 guineas (14 livres equals 1 guinea).

Taskin’s financial records reveal that he bought five pianos from Beck, each piano costing him 14 louis.\(^ {19}\) Each instrument therefore cost 336 livres (1 louis equals 24 livres), or 24 guineas. At the time, the usual cost of a plain square piano made in London was between 15 and 20 guineas. Assuming that Beck did not inflate his price for Paris, and that the instruments he sold to Taskin were representative and without elaborate casework,\(^ {20}\) his price of 24 guineas per instrument sits above contemporaneous London norms.

A precedent had been set, however, for inflating the price of a newly made English square piano destined for a Parisian buyer. Whilst brokering the sale of a Zumpe piano to the French essayist and philosopher Denis Diderot,\(^ {21}\) Charles Burney quoted a price of 28 guineas (at the time, in London, a Zumpe square piano usually cost only 16 guineas). This represents an unscrupulously opportunistic mark-up of 75 per cent.\(^ {22}\) (‘Before they learn there is a God’, said a contemporaneous German describing the Georgian English, ‘they learn there are Frenchmen to be detested’.)\(^ {23}\)

Given that the cost of a square piano made in London during the mid-1780s lay between 15 and 20 guineas, and assuming that Frederick Beck charged a premium rate—that is, 20 guineas—to his London buyers,\(^ {24}\) Beck’s mark-up on the pianos that he sold to Taskin (24 guineas each) amounts to 20 per cent.

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\(^{19}\) Battault, ‘Les premiers pianoforte français’, p. 105, fn. 76.

\(^{20}\) In London, pianos with plain cases constituted the majority of sales. Beck’s price of 24 guineas for the instruments he sold to Taskin would normally have been associated with more decorative, inlaid pianos. See Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos*, pp. 48–9.

\(^{21}\) See Diderot, *Correspondence*, pp. 197, 213. Reckoned in today’s monetary values, 28 guineas is the equivalent of approximately £1800 (that is, approximately A$3300). Currency conversion using *The National Archives*: Universal Currency Converter.

\(^{22}\) I am indebted to Anne-Marie O’Brien, Manager of The Australian National University School of Music, for her mathematical erudition and assistance in relation to the calculation of this percentage.


If, on the other hand, Beck’s normal London price was the 24 guineas that he had charged Pascal Taskin, how might George Worgan have regarded such an outlay for the purchase of a new square piano?

According to Brockliss et al., Worgan, as a surgeon, would normally have received an annual basic salary of approximately £70–116. This comprised, at the very least:

- Flat salary (3 shillings per day) £54 15s 0d
- Queen Anne’s Free Gift £16 0s 0d
- Total £70 15s 0d

At the most, Worgan’s normal annual basic salary comprised:

- Flat salary (3 shillings per day) £54 15s 0d
- Queen Anne’s Free Gift £62 0s 0d
- Total £116 15s 0d

In addition, Worgan may have received an extra 12s 6d per year, comprising:

- Chatham Chest (that is, 2d per year from each man on board the *Sirius*, assuming a crew of 30) 5s 0d
- Treatment of venereal disease (£5 per year for every 100 men treated, assuming one-quarter of the crew of the *Sirius* was infected—a probable underestimation) 7s 6d
- Total 12s 6d

This brings Worgan’s usual annual earnings to between about £71 7s 6d and £117 7s 6d—that is, between 68 and 112 guineas.

At 24 guineas, the cost of a new square piano by Frederick Beck corresponds with a possible one-third to one-fifth of Worgan’s normal annual income.

During the time Worgan spent on board the *Sirius*, as well as during his stay at Sydney Cove, his annual salary increased to £182 10s—that is, 174 guineas. This figure is specified in a document entitled ‘Staff Establishment for the Settlement at New South Wales’, prepared on Tuesday, 15 August 1786, by Evan Nepean (1752–1822; a senior administrator at the Home Office, London). A new Beck piano, at 24 guineas, represents only about one-seventh of the increased annual earnings that Worgan would have received as a result of his participation in the colonial adventure.

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25 See Brockliss et al., *Nelson’s Surgeon*.
26 See ibid., pp. 15, 24. See also ‘The Life of a Surgeon’ in Chapter 3, this volume.
If Beck charged his London customers an uninflated, yet premium rate of 20 guineas, Worgan would have had to part with a possible one-third to one-sixth of his normal annual income in order to acquire an instrument. Regardless of whether or not Beck charged his London customers a premium (20 guineas) or inflated (24 guineas) price, for George Worgan the purchase of such an instrument would have represented a significant level of expenditure.

During the 1780s in London, an ordinary second-hand square piano cost approximately £7—that is, 6 guineas. On Monday, 15 March 1779, The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser announced the sale of a second-hand Frederick Beck piano. At approximately £10, the asking price for the instrument lay on the high side of the London average for preloved square pianos: ‘Henry Thorowgood, No. 6, North Piazza, Royal Exchange. Where may be had an excellent second hand Forte Piano by Beck, price ten guineas [that is, approximately £10].’

At a little less than half the price of a new Beck piano, this instrument may have been regarded as good value (especially given the consistent high quality of Beck’s pianos). On the other hand, given the average cost of second-hand square pianos in London (£7—that is, 6 guineas), the asking price may have been seen as opportunistic.

At the very least, a price range of £7–10 represents a possible one-tenth to one-seventeenth of George Worgan’s normal annual income (even the average price of a second-hand instrument represented a fairly high level of spending); however, the cost of a square piano made by Frederick Beck (either new or second-hand) lay within Worgan’s purchasing power.

In 1782, David Steel published the pay scale for navy surgeons. Steel’s figures differ from those detailed by Brockliss et al. In 1779, Worgan was certified as a Surgeon Fifth Rate. According to Steel, the flat annual salary of a Surgeon Fifth Rate was, at £5 per month, £60.

This brings Worgan’s early 1780s annual earnings (at the very least) to:

- Flat salary £60 0s 0d
- Queen Anne’s Free Gift £25 19s 6d
- Total £85 19s 6d

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30 Steel, ‘Surgeons’, p. 32. See Appendix F, Volume 2 of this publication.
31 Brockliss et al., *Nelson’s Surgeon*, pp. 15, 24.
32 Company of Surgeons, *Examinations Book 1745–1800*, p. 339. I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for *Working the Forge*.
33 See Appendix F, Volume 2 of this publication.
Chapter 4

Assuming that George Worgan’s piano was made in 1780, that he purchased the instrument in 1780 new rather than second-hand, and that he was able to save during the years prior to 1780, a new Beck piano would have cost him approximately one-quarter of his annual salary. It appears that, with thrift, George Worgan managed to afford what would have been (for him) the considerable expense associated with the purchase of a new Beck square piano.

If Worgan’s instrument was made in 1786, he may have been encouraged to buy the piano knowing that his impending ‘all-expenses-paid’ trip to Sydney Cove would provide a context within which he would be forced (by circumstance) to save his increased colonial salary, easily recouping his outlay as time passed. After all, at the new colony the possibilities for spending were limited, and, as Elizabeth Macarthur remarked (writing from Parramatta in 1798 to her friend Bridget Kingdom in London), ‘shops there are none’.34

Despite the intricate decorative casework found on Worgan’s piano,35 the calligraphic style of the instrument’s nameboard inscription (Plate 17a) is not particularly fine-lined. The nameboard inscription of a square piano by John(?) Simpson (fl. 1767–95) represents an example of what was possible in relation to the most extreme degree of calligraphic intricacy and elaborative decoration (Plate 17c).

When compared with Beck pianos dated 1778 (Plate 20e), 1783 (Plate 20g), 1786 (Plate 20a) and ca 1790 (estimate) (Plates 20j and 43q), the nameboard of Worgan’s piano lacks the intricate decorative infills and fine penwork scrolls and dots found on the 1778 (Plate 20e) and ca 1790 (estimate) (Plate 20j) instruments; it also lacks the exquisite handpainted swags on either side of and around the inscription cartouche of the 1783 instrument (Plates 20g, 43o and 43p), and the handpainted sprays of flowers on either side of the inscription of the ca 1790 (estimate) instrument (Plates 20j and 43q). Furthermore, it lacks the extravagantly decorated upper-case letters of the 1783 (Plate 20g) and 1786 (Plate 20a) instruments.

Ornamental elaboration ‘was the chief visual reminder of the quality that owners had paid for’.36 The relatively modest style of the nameboard inscription on Worgan’s piano is in keeping with the type of instrument that may have been not only commissioned by, but also found in the possession of, a person with fairly limited financial means—a person such as George Bouchier Worgan.

Following Zumpe’s invention of the square piano, innovations in piano design and piano playing represented a significant and influential part of London’s music culture. By the 1780s, several makers in London had become ‘key figures

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34 Quoted in Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. xvii.
35 See ‘Inlay’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
in the further development of the English square piano, and, to judge from the qualities of the surviving instruments, their craftsmanship was generally of a higher standard than that of [Zumpe].

During the 1780s there were at least 31 piano makers in London from whom George Worgan may have purchased a square piano:

1. George Astor (fl. 1785–1810)
2. James Ball (fl. ca 1787–1819)
3. Frederick Beck (fl. 1756–98)
4. Adam Beyer (fl. 1768–1801)
5. Lorence Beyer (d. 1789)
6. Thomas Bradford (fl. 1784–89)
7. John Broadwood (fl. 1771–1812)
8. Gabriel Buntebart (fl. 1768–95)
9. Thomas Culliford (fl. 1777–98)
10. Sébastien Érard (1786)
11. George Fröschle (fl. 1776–1800)
12. Christopher Ganer (fl. 1774–1809)
13. Thomas Garbutt (fl. ca 1770–80s)
14. George Garcka (fl. ca 1778–92)
15. John Geib (fl. ca 1777–97)
16. John Goldsworth (fl. 1784–93)
17. John Crang Hancock (fl. 1779–94)
18. Henry Holland (fl. 1783–98)
19. Jacob Kirckman (fl. ca 1772–92)
20. William Le Blond (fl. 1780–92)
21. James Longman and Francis Broderip (fl. 1773–95)

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37 See ibid., p. 70.
38 The following list is substantially based on that found in James, Early Keyboard Instruments, pp. 63–80. James lists keyboard instrument makers (excluding the organ) working and/or selling in England up to the year 1820. James does not claim that his list is complete. See Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
39 In 1775, Christopher Ganer insured his stock and utensils for £400. See Barnett, The Structure of Industry in London 1775–1825, p. 236.
22. George Pether (fl. 1775–94)
23. Johannes Pohlmann (fl. 1767–93)
24. John Preston (probably only a dealer)
25. William Rolfe (fl. ca 1785 – ca 1808)
26. Frederick and Christian Schoene (fl. 1780s)
27. John Henry Schrader (fl. ca 1768–1802)
28. John and James Simpson (fl. ca 1767–95)  
29. William Southwell (1736/37?–1825)  
30. Robert Stodart (fl. ca 1770–96)

These makers ‘were solely concerned with manufacturing pianos. In earlier decades no [craftsman] … had ever earned his living in this way.’

Although the English square piano developed in complexity during the late eighteenth century, it consistently remained compact and portable. By the 1790s the piano had grown in popularity to such an extent that at least 45 piano makers were flourishing in London. (‘At this time London was a vibrant city, reaping the early advantages of the Industrial Revolution … piano makers’ were commercially engaged with ‘a market that must have seemed limitless’.) Some of these made grand pianos as well as square pianos. The demand for square pianos was so great that in 1798, for example, the piano maker James Shudi Broadwood ‘had to write apologetically to an irate customer’ in relation to the delivery of a new instrument that had been ‘delayed: “Would to God we could make them like muffins … many others have been waiting as long, or longer than you have”’.  

Why did George Worgan select Frederick Beck from among the myriad expert piano makers in London? We may never know.

If the instrument was made in 1780, Worgan may have bought his square piano (newly made) in that year; if it was bought second-hand, Worgan may subsequently have had modifications made to the instrument’s stand.

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41 In 1769, John and James Simpson insured their stock and utensils for £1000. See Barnett, *The Structure of Industry in London 1775–1825*, p. 236.
42 See Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, p. 45, fn 2, 95.
44 Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, p. 54.
If the instrument was made in 1786, perhaps it was Beck’s willingness to provide the instrument with a unique stand—either in response to Worgan’s specific request or as Beck’s response to knowledge of the instrument’s imminent shipboard journey—for a certain price.

It may have been the quality and attractiveness of the inlaid casework of Beck’s pianos (a suitable beauty befitting Worgan’s naval and social status). It must, at the very least, have been the fine musical qualities of Beck’s instruments.

**When was George Worgan’s Piano First Brought on Board the *Sirius*?**

It is not known precisely when Worgan brought his piano on board the *Sirius*. It is reasonable to assume that he had his piano with him on Wednesday, 1 November 1786, when he joined the *Sirius* (perhaps he already had the instrument with him during his period of service that same year on the *Ganges*).46 Three weeks later, news came from the town of Portsmouth that ‘apartments are fitting up for the reception of some of the principal officers who are going to Botany Bay, they being expected in a fortnight to arrive here, to see that all things they are to take over with them are safely put on board’.47 By the time *The Hampshire Chronicle* had published this observation, Worgan may already have placed his piano safely on board the *Sirius*.

**Why Did George Worgan Purchase a Piano to Bring with Him to Botany Bay?**

Broadwood company records show that on Thursday, 10 April 1783, a ‘Mr Worgan’ purchased one of their square pianos.48 Was this George Bouchier Worgan? Unfortunately, no information substantiates the notion.49 If George Bouchier purchased the Broadwood square piano on 10 April 1783, was this instrument the one that he took with him on board the *Sirius* four years later, bound for Botany Bay? Attractive as an affirmative answer to this question may be, no evidence exists that unequivocally proves this to be the case.50

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49 See Appendix C, Volume 2 of this publication.
50 See ibid.
George Worgan’s decision to purchase a square piano may have been influenced by factors such as price, the square piano’s compact dimensions (ideal for the cramped conditions on board ship) and the contemporaneous rage for square pianos.

Given the nature of Worgan’s upbringing, it is reasonable to assume that music was a prominent part of his life. That George brought his piano with him to Botany Bay strongly suggests that he valued music. (He may even have been, at heart, a musician.) In his journal (the extant version51 of which takes the form of a letter to his younger brother Richard52 in England), he states: ‘Oh, now I think of it, you are a musician so Volti Subito.’53 Richard (who was a professional musician) had been raised in the same musically oriented home environment as George. George’s remark suggests that camaraderie existed between he and his younger brother, arising perhaps, not only from brotherly affection, but also from the fact that both had enjoyed a lifelong experience of, and felt a love for, music.

Perhaps Worgan thought that because he was travelling to ‘a land barely touched by European civilisation, there was an urgent need to assert European [aesthetic] values’, especially through the musical riches of ‘European culture’54—a high-minded purpose indeed.

Perhaps Worgan also regarded his piano, as well as its presence on board the ship, as a source of comfort (both in a material and a musical sense). The fact that he took such a valuable personal item with him on the long and dangerous journey to an alien land reveals his confidence in the officers and sailors with whom he worked to get the First Fleet (including his piano) safely to its destination.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century in England, instrumental music underwent a ‘revaluation … which reversed the long-standing hierarchy that figured vocal music, both in sacred genres and in opera, as superior to instrumental’.55 Worgan’s association with the piano, both as an owner and as a player, connects him with this ‘revaluation’, and may help to explain why, after having been provided with what must have been a consistent (if not also rigorous) musical training by his father, he chose to bring his piano to Botany Bay.

Worgan would doubtless have felt the atmosphere of nationalistic and cultural confidence that attended the notion of Britain establishing a colony in New South Wales. After all, ‘the settling of eastern Australia was a startlingly costly

51 In his journal, ‘Worgan makes references to a fuller journal which he is keeping and also to his ‘rough’ journal from which … entries have been copied out but these have not been located’. ‘George Bouchier Worgan (1757–1838)’, in Discover Collections (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, n.d.).
52 Richard Worgan was born when George was two years old.
53 Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan, p. 27.
54 Crisp, ‘The Piano in Australia, 1770 to 1900’, p. 25.
solution to the [problem of] crowded British prisons’. The cost of ‘the New South Wales colony between October 1786 and the end of 1789’ was in excess of £200,000 … the raw cost per convict per year was £82, or between 2.5 and 4.5 times the cost of keeping them at home’. Major Robert Ross (1740?–94) caustically commented that ‘it would have been cheaper to have fed the convicts on turtle and venison at the London Tavern’.

‘Why the First Fleet was sent when it was and not before, and why convicts were used … [were matters] intimately related to … issues of imperial and home policy bearing on the continuing security of the eastern empire of trade and commerce based in India,’ Rather than functioning purely as a dumping ground for England’s convicts, ‘a port so capacious and secure as Port Jackson’ created distinct advantages. First,

according to European notions of international law prevailing at the time, by transferring some of their population and at least a portion of their laws to New South Wales, the British made actual the preliminary right to possess this territory that they had acquired as a consequence of [Captain James] Cook’s having been its first discoverer, and of his having claimed it on behalf of the King.

Second, the British Government also

wanted the southern whalers and the Nookta Sound fur traders to be able to … operate anywhere in the Pacific Ocean east of the latitude of Canton (113ºE)—that is, to be able to trade not only among the Pacific Islands and to Korea and Japan, but also to the Philippines, among the Molucca Islands, and along the coasts of New Guinea and New Holland.

57 Frost, The First Fleet, p. 194.
58 Ibid., p. 194.
61 If the Dutch mariner Jacob Le Maire (ca 1585–1616), who circumnavigated the globe between Sunday, 14 June 1615 and Friday, 28 October 1616, ‘had kept a westerly course after rounding Cape Horn in 1616, the Dutch would have had a chance of discovering Australia 150 years before James Cook’. Derek McDonnell, director of antique booksellers Hordern House, Sydney. In D. McDonnell, ‘Nautical Treasures’, in Ocean (Pyrmont, NSW: Ocean Media, 2011), No. 38 (July–August), p. 48.
63 Ibid., p. 196.
Such trade was prohibited not only by the East India Company’s monopoly (the British East India Company ‘ran much of South Asia as a private fiefdom’), but also by the Navigation Acts that prevented British colonies from trading with foreign ships. Britain stood to benefit from a colony at Port Jackson. The harbour lay near one of only three viable routes into the Pacific Ocean. This advantage provided the justification for spending huge amounts of money on establishing the colony.

The voyage was therefore carefully prepared, and at an enormous cost. Worgan was probably aware of these facts, and may, as a result, have felt that the piano would remain safe during its journey to Botany Bay. That Worgan brought his piano with him on the voyage reflects, at the very least, a substantial optimism.

The **Sirius**

In relation to Australia’s musical and cultural heritage, the inherent importance of George Worgan’s piano far exceeds the quality of its mode of transport from Portsmouth to Sydney Cove aboard the **Sirius**.

The **Sirius** was built in 1780, at Whitby, by Christopher Watson & Co. of Rutherhithe. Whitby—a late eighteenth-century centre for the whaling industry—is on the north-east coast of England, at the mouth of the River Esk.

The navy bought the ship, which was originally known as the **Berwick**, in 1781.

The **Berwick**

The **Berwick** ‘had been sent once to America as a storeship during’ the American War of Independence, and ‘once after the peace’ to the West Indies.

In their book **Sirius Past and Present**, Graeme Henderson and Myra Stanbury prove that frequently occurring descriptions of the **Berwick** as an ‘East Indiaman’ are the result of a misunderstanding. The ship’s construction reveals that it was

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67 See ibid.
originally built for the ‘Eastern’—that is, Baltic—trade.\footnote{Frost, The First Fleet, p. 4.} This is because ‘it had a spar deck, so that mast timber might be rolled on board. It is reasonable to speculate that [the Berwick] … was chosen [for the First Fleet] because of the service it was to perform at Norfolk Island.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 84.} This service was inspired by the pronouncements of Captain James Cook (1728–79), who, having named the island in honour of the Duchess of Norfolk, had placed

great hope in the worth of the Norfolk Island pine as a marine timber: a mast made from a single trunk was preferable to one composed of several, and the pines … [he] had seen were tall and straight. Exploitation of these trees, and of the island’s flax plants for sailcloth and rope, was the only commercial or strategic imperative in the final 1786 plan to settle ‘Botany Bay’. However, on closer inspection the colonists found the trees ‘unfit for large masts’ and too brittle even for an oar.\footnote{D. Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales: From its First Settlement in January 1788 to August 1801: With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, to which are Added, Some Particulars of New Zealand; Compiled, by Permission, from the Mss. of Lieutenant-Governor King; And an Account of the Voyage Performed by Captain Flinders and Mr. Bass (London: A. Strahan for T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1804), Vol. 1, p. 63; Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 59.}

‘The native flax could not be processed and the pine was hollow.’\footnote{Macintyre, A Concise History of Australia, p. 30.} It was assumed that ‘the recent problems of the Royal Navy in acquiring masts and canvas from the Baltic, and under the French blockade of the American colonies during the recent revolution in America, might be solved by Norfolk Island’.\footnote{Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 118.} This plan conformed with the British Government’s overall initiative

to exploit or encourage the exploitation of the resources of the Pacific region generally … the government, for pressing reasons of commercial and naval strategy, could not afford to see the island occupied by or left available for the use of a foreign power (especially France). Although it was some one thousand miles by sea from Port Jackson, it was adjacent to the sailing route to Canton from that port, as well as being strategically situated in relation to New Zealand.\footnote{Swan, To Botany Bay, p. 165.}

Alan Frost identifies the source of the erroneous and oft-repeated notion that the Berwick plied East Indian waters. He states: ‘This characterization was evidently first made by M. Barnard Eldershaw (the \textit{nom-de-plume} of Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw) in \textit{Philip of Australia} in 1938.\footnote{M. B. Eldershaw, \textit{Philip of Australia: An Account of the Settlement of Sydney Cove, 1788–92} (London: Harrup, 1938), p. 34.} It was thereafter frequently repeated.’\footnote{Frost, The First Fleet, p. 4.}
Lieutenant Philip Gidley King (1758–1808),80 second lieutenant of the *Sirius*, reports that a catastrophic fire burnt the ship down ‘to her wales’.81 One can only wonder how the ‘ambitious and energetic King’82 came to this conclusion, because the Deptford dockyard officers who inspected the ship before purchase by the navy in 1781 ‘found it to be “building” in Mr Watson’s yard, and made no mention of any fire-damage’.83

The *Berwick* was a ‘full, round build’ and ‘all together a very capacious and convenient vessel’.84 ‘In order to address the wear and tear resulting from 5 years of service, the *Berwick* underwent repairs and alterations in 1786–87 which put it in excellent condition.’85 The *Berwick* cost the Navy Board almost £6000 to restore.86

Immediately following these repairs, further alterations were made (at the request of the Navy Board) to fit the ship out ‘for a voyage to remote parts’.87 Among the repairs and alterations, ‘major interior work was undertaken including enlarging storerooms, and fitting them with bins, shelves and lockers as well as building a sailroom and two more storerooms on the lower deck’.88 The Admiralty ordered that the ship be ‘supplied with a camp forge and copper oven, and to have their coppers fitted with Mr Irving’s apparatus for rendering salty water fresh, and to furnish them with Lieutenant Orsbridge’s machine for rendering stinking water sweet’.89 ‘Twenty guns were … hoisted aboard to give her the appurtenances and force of a warship.’90

80 A portrait of Philip Gidley King by an unknown artist, dated ca 1800–05, on ivory (in an oval-shaped gold frame with a glass front and a loop at the centre top for hanging), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call No. Min 62; Digital Order No. a830002).
81 King, *The Journal of Philip Gidley King*, p. 19. The ‘wale’ or ‘gunwale’ is the strengthening band added to the upper edge of the side of a ship.
82 Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 10.
83 Frost, *The First Fleet*, p. 4.
87 Admiralty instructions quoted in ibid., p. 86.
After Refurbishment

Following its refurbishment, the ship was renamed by the navy (with an uncharacteristically poetic flair) Sirius, ‘so called from the bright star in ye Southern constellation of the Great Dog’.91

At first sight, the Sirius would have appeared new. The Sirius had three masts, and ‘was painted bright yellow with a broad black band near the waterline’.92 Lieutenant King, however, was not impressed with the ship. He described the Sirius as ‘the refuse of the yard’,93 and recorded in his journal entry for Friday, 28 September 1787: ‘on inspection we found that not only the top Timbers were rotten, but also that many of the futtocks [the lower part of the ribs in the frame of the ship] were in the same condition.’94 Since the futtocks are the ribs, and the keel is the spine, it is not surprising that Lieutenant King was concerned. Some of the rotten timbers were below the waterline; potentially, the Sirius could fall apart.

The Sirius was clearly affected by dry rot … Ships left unused for a period of time, such as the Berwick and other navy storeships, were susceptible to dry rot, and the quality of dockyard inspections in the late eighteenth century was not sufficient to ensure detection of dry rot … It was a routine maintenance matter on all ships for accessible areas of rot to be attended to by the carpenter.95

Rotten timbers, however, were not enough to hinder the Sirius’s voyage to Botany Bay. Unfortunately for the First Fleet, however, in ‘favourable conditions, the Sirius’s best speed was about 10 knots’.96 The ship always held the First Fleet back. For example, ‘where the north-east trades blew, ships were capable of making good time … the Friendship logged a refreshing 174 nautical miles to the Sirius’s 163 … on a bad day … [the] Friendship made 29 nautical miles to Sirius’s 25’.97 On board the Sirius, the American sailor Jacob Nagle (1761–1841) observed that during the voyage to Botany Bay the ship was ‘so deep with stores’, and had such ‘large buttocks, we could scarcely steer her until we got better acquainted with her’.98

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91 King, The Journal of Philip Gidley King, p. 5.
94 Ibid.
95 Henderson and Stanbury, Sirius Past and Present, pp. 71–2.
97 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 71.
The Wreck of the *Sirius*

As fate would have it, the *Sirius* did not survive any longer than two years after the establishment of the colony at Sydney Cove. In February 1790, Phillip had only five months’ supplies left to feed the settlement at Sydney Cove.\(^9\) The *Sirius* was ordered to undertake a critical voyage ‘to China to purchase … supplies’. On the way to China, the *Sirius* took convicts to Norfolk Island (1676 kilometres north-east of Sydney Cove) ‘in an endeavour to reduce the strain on the dwindling supplies in Sydney’.\(^1\)

Even convicts knew that Norfolk Island presented difficulties in relation to anchorage. An anonymous First Fleet female convict who was employed in sewing wrote on 24 July 1790: ‘Norfolk Island [is] … very bad for shipping; there is no place to land but in fine weather.’\(^2\)

‘Norfolk Island has no natural harbour and it is necessary for sailing ships to dodge the wind, using either Cascade Bay on the north side or Sydney Bay on the south.’\(^3\)

Cascade Bay was selected as the safest place to anchor; the wind blew south-westerly. Landing the marines and convicts involved rowing them to a projecting rock and (when the waves allowed) having them jump on to it.\(^4\) After 270 people had been landed,\(^5\) the subsequent offloading of supplies was thwarted by a change in wind direction (to an easterly). For four days the *Sirius* (and the *Supply*) sailed back and forth waiting for winds that favoured a landing. On Friday, 19 March 1790, the wind changed to the south-east. This made a landing in Sydney Bay (on the opposite side of the island) possible.\(^6\)

Sydney Bay is a trap for sailors who lack local knowledge—its two rocky arms coax ships towards scattered reefs that lie parallel to the shore. The … *Sirius* anchored in the bay … The crew … began unloading provisions into boats. At first, all seemed well …

The danger came, however, not from wind or wave but from an unnoticed current.\(^7\)

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13. See ibid., p. 32.
15. See Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, pp. 32–3.
Captain John Hunter and the *Sirius* had never been to Norfolk Island before, and ... despite [his] best efforts, and a complicated series of manoeuvres with sails and helm, *Sirius* was blown stern-first howling and creaking onto the reef, where the surf began to batter her to pieces.\(^{107}\)

Sailors began cutting away the masts and rigging and throwing them over the side in the hope that the loss of weight might refloat her.\(^{108}\)

In his journal, marine officer First Lieutenant Ralph Clark (1755?–94) reveals his despair at seeing the *Sirius* run aground upon the reef:

> [G]racious god what will become of us all, the whole of our provisions in the ship now a wreck before us. I hope in god that we will be able to save some if not all, but why doe I flatter myself with (s)uch hopes ... There is at present no prospect of it except that of starving ... what will become of the people that are on board for no boat can goe along side for the sea ... I who has nothing more than what I stand in and not the smales hope of my getting any thing out of the ship for every body expects that she will goe to pices when the tide comes in ... Saterday 20 [March 1790:] have been up all night as has every body in the place soon after the ship went on shore trunks, boxes bed &c what was nearest at hand was thrown over board in hopes it would float on shore a great dele has come on shore but as yet nothing of mine.\(^{109}\)

Two convicts volunteered to swim out to recover the livestock, but once on board, they broke open the spirits, got hopelessly drunk and set fire to the ship.\(^{110}\)

The fire ‘burnt thro’ ye gun deck but was happily Extinguished by the Man that went aboard to send them out ... everything that remained on board the Wreck & the provisions ... [were] not ... damaged as every thing [was] ... on the Gun, & upper decks’.\(^{111}\)

The *Sirius* took many days to break up on the reef at Norfolk Island; this not only shows its basic strength,\(^{112}\) but also puts pay to any notion that the ship had left Portsmouth as a renovated decrepit wreck.

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107 An ink and watercolour drawing entitled *The Melancholy Loss of HMS Sirius off Norfolk Island, 19 March 1790*, by George Raper (1768?–97), is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an21511971).
112 See Frost, *The First Fleet*, p. 94.
Four days after news of the loss of the *Sirius* reached Sydney Cove, a desperate colonist wrote:

> In all the Crusoe-like adventures I ever read or heard of, I do not recollect anything like it … if you was to see with what ardent expectations some of the poor wretches watch an opportunity of looking out to sea, or the tears that are often shed upon the infants at the breast, you must have feelings that otherwise you never could have any experience of.113

**Housing George Worgan’s Piano on the *Sirius***

On Sunday, 13 May 1787, when the *Sirius* departed from Portsmouth for Botany Bay, the ship carried 160 people (including 22 marines), and had a crew of around 30. Most of the crew were in their twenties or thirties, reflecting the fact that the navy was (generally) a young man’s occupation.

Conditions on board the *Sirius* were both crowded and cramped, and it is something of a miracle that surgeon Worgan managed to find space enough to safely and conveniently house his piano.

**The Great Cabin**

In accordance with navy regulations, specific areas of the ship were designated for the occupancy of officers. Whilst on board ship, the captain lived in the Great Cabin, located at the stern. The windows of the Great Cabin formed part of the ornate structure seen from the outside at the stern of the ship …

The Great Cabin was strictly the domain of the Captain. He used the area as his day cabin, his office and his meeting room. It was a space that no one entered without the Captain’s permission. A marine guard posted at the door 24 hours a day saw that this rule was enforced. The Captain of a ship often had to perform diplomatic functions, and the Great Cabin became the meeting room and dining room for these occasions. It was not uncommon for a Captain to invite his officers to dine with him, though he was under no obligation to do so.114

The Great Cabin was on the same level as the gun deck. The captain was the only officer who lived on this level.

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Other commissioned officers (lieutenants) ‘and warrant officers of wardroom rank (surgeon, sailing master, purser) lived in the Ward Room on the berthing deck directly below the Great Cabin’. The Ward Room functioned as a recreation room, and ‘consisted of a series of small cabins along the sides of the ship with a long dining table in the middle’. During the 1780s, naval surgeons were ranked as ‘un-uniformed warrant officers’, and as a consequence ‘could not eat and drink in the wardroom by right’, but rather by invitation. Rarely was a naval surgeon excluded from the Ward Room. George Worgan was very well regarded, and there can be little doubt that he was consistently welcomed into the Ward Room as a valued member of the officers’ company.

The Ward Room

Typically, a cabin adjacent to the Ward Room was 1.5 by 2 metres ‘and large enough only for [one or] two bunks and a little storage space’. If surgeon Worgan managed to make room for a piano in his cabin—the case of the 1780/86? Beck square piano is a little more than 1455 millimetres long, a little less than 505 millimetres wide and 191 millimetres high—he probably kept the instrument unassembled both for space-related and for protective reasons. The portable nature of the piano, however, would have enabled it to be moved into the Ward Room where it may have functioned as a side table (one of the advantages of the square piano’s design). It seems unlikely, however, that the piano was permanently placed on its legs in the Ward Room on board the rolling ship; rather, the instrument was probably assembled (when needed) when conditions were comparatively calm.

George Worgan’s Square Piano Heard in the Ward Room of the *Sirius*

Square pianos are not loud instruments (at least when compared with the flatulent stridency of that overrated thing, the modern piano). They were ‘not intended to produce the stentorian tones of an orator, haranguing the public in an open

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115 Ibid.
116 Brockliss et al., *Nelson’s Surgeon*, p. 15.
117 Arthur Bowes Smyth, surgeon on the First Fleet’s women’s convict ship the *Lady Penrhyn*, remarked that George Worgan was ‘a very agreeable good kind of Man’. Smyth, ‘Journal of Arthur Bowes Smyth’, Part 42. See also ‘George Bouchier Worgan’s Character and Personality’ in Chapter 12, this volume.
118 Hill, *1788*, p. 76.
119 When standing on its legs, the 1780/86? Beck piano’s height from the floor to the upper surface of the keyboard’s naturals is 668 millimetres.
space’. Rather, the voice of a square piano ‘was more like the conversation of an intimate friend: learned, charming, flexible and well-modulated’. Square pianos were ‘heard for the most part in domestic recreations’.\textsuperscript{120}

Soft, subtle and sweet-sounding square pianos perfectly suited the domestic context for which they were designed. During the eighteenth century, square pianos were usually placed within a ‘décor and spatial environment that is very different from subsequent epochs’.\textsuperscript{121}

A square piano was most likely to have been placed in a room with dimensions commonly found in houses built in west London during the eighteenth century: no more than approximately 7 metres by 5 metres, with a ceiling approximately 3 metres high.\textsuperscript{122} (Double-manual harpsichords were often the instrument of choice for those who had larger rooms in, for example, a grand house or a country mansion; these instruments were designed for such a situation.)\textsuperscript{123}

The acoustics of such rooms would have been somewhat lively, because there were fewer soft, sound-absorbing surfaces than is the norm now. Eighteenth-century domestic spaces were the antithesis of the crammed but comfortable room arrangements seen after 1850:\textsuperscript{124}

Any carpet would cover no more than a small central part of the floor surface. Large sash windows at the front of the house had wooden shutters, not the heavy fabric curtain drapes favoured in the Victorian era. Furnishings were more sparse, arranged with an eye to symmetry, and mostly pushed back against the four walls.\textsuperscript{125}

The Ward Room on board the \textit{Sirius} was certainly no longer or wider than rooms ordinarily found in eighteenth-century west London houses, and it was probably not as acoustically lively. If, however, Worgan played his piano either in his tiny cabin or in the Ward Room, the instrument would have produced a sonorous enough sound to be both clearly and easily heard within the space, even with the piano’s main lid closed (as was the late eighteenth-century norm). The dimensions and acoustics of the environment within which Worgan may have performed on board the \textit{Sirius} would not necessarily have compromised his listeners’ ability to hear the tonal variety of the sounds produced by his square piano. It is unlikely, however, that Worgan played his piano as the \textit{Sirius} sailed on the high seas: ‘the movement of timbers and the chafe of rigging would have created a discordant symphony of sounds—creaks, groans, shrieks, wails and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, p. 88.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 89.
\item \textsuperscript{122} See ibid., p. 88.
\item \textsuperscript{123} See ibid., p. 88.
\item \textsuperscript{124} See ibid., pp. 88–9.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid., pp. 88–9.
\end{itemize}
vibrations that never ceased.'126 The sea would have hissed and banged against the hull of the ship,127 and there was always the motion of the ship to consider (the ship’s pitching, rolling and scending would have been hazardous for the physical stability of the instrument).

126 Pembroke, Arthur Phillip, p. 168.
Chapter 5

The First Fleet Departs from England

On Wednesday, 1 November 1786, when George Worgan joined the *Sirius* (having been discharged from the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges*),¹ he could not have imagined the adventures that lay ahead—for his piano, for the ship or for himself. It is reasonable to assume that he would have felt some pride in being assigned to the First Fleet’s leading vessel.

The First Fleet was not large; its 11 ships comprised two small navy warships (the small flagship *Sirius*, and the even smaller brig-rigged sloop *Supply*) and nine other ships that had been hired to the British Government by private shipowners for the duration of the voyage. Six of the nine contracted ships were used as convict transports, whilst the remaining three carried two years’ provisions and equipment. Most of the nine contracted vessels were quite new, the oldest having been built in 1781.

Being a naval officer … [Phillip] would have been aware of the government’s plan to strengthen the Royal Navy after the American War of Independence. This plan provided for sixty ships of the line by the end of 1786, and ninety-three by the end of 1790. But by 1787 only forty were ready for action and this, coupled with the growing crisis in the United Provinces [that is, Holland] was doubtless the reason why the First Fleet’s naval escort was so small and weak.²

On Friday, 13 April 1787, the British Ambassador in the Hague reported that the French were using Dutch East India Company ships to send troops and political agents to the Far East. The British Government ‘simply could not spare any more or larger vessels for the … [First Fleet], having to husband … naval resources in readiness for a possible showdown with France’.³

The departure of the First Fleet from Portsmouth was preceded by nine months of preparations.

As soon as the convicts came under the control of the Central Government, they were cleaned, clothed, fed and had their ailments treated.

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³ Ibid., pp. 161–2. See also Gillen, *The Founders of Australia*, p. 156.
According to [the] Navy Board official’ responsible for the fitting out and loading of the transport ships, Captain George Teer, the ships of the First Fleet were “completely fitted, their provisions and accommodations … better than any set of transports I have ever had any directions in”. For two months at Portsmouth, [the convicts] and the marines were given fresh foods in abundance, and the surgeons obtained adequate medical supplies (at a cost of some £1200).4

The first convicts began to be loaded onto the transports at Portsmouth towards the end of 1786.

Phillip had asked for ‘healthy young men and breeding women’ for his colony, but was given [among 734 others] Dorothy Handland, a sprightly 82-year-old perjurer, and Elizabeth Beckford, a septuagenarian cheese thief. The youngest convict was John Hudson, a thirteen-year-old chimneysweep who had been imprisoned since the age of nine.5

By March 1787, all 736 convicts had been loaded onto the six convict transports; the 11 ships making up the First Fleet lay anchored at the Mother Bank off the Isle of Wight outside Portsmouth Harbour. ‘Here Phillip joined the fleet on 7 May,’6 ‘At three in the morning of Sunday, May 13 [1787], before the first cold gristle of pre-dawn light had spread upon the sea,’7 ‘the signal to weigh anchor was made in the Commanding Officer’s ship the Sirius’8 and the First Fleet, with its cargo of founding felons, ‘weighed anchor and shaped its course in a rising wind for Tenerife’9—the first of three ports of call on the fleet’s journey. George Worgan wrote in his diary: ‘each Ship like another Noah’s Ark, away we steered for Botany Bay.’10 The voyagers

left behind a country where green fields subsided in an orderly pattern to the sea, and where grey stone villages claimed with English restraint their modest portion of land. The fleet turned instead towards the open ocean and the possibilities of a land of disorderly colour, dizzyingly empty horizons and animals and plants whose designs would suggest a whole new template.11

8 W. Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay; With an Account of New South Wales, its Productions, Inhabitants, &c, to which is Subjoined, a List of the Civil and Military Establishments at Port Jackson (London: J. Debrett, 1789), p. 5.
9 Hughes, The Fatal Shore, p. 77.
Marine Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench (1758?–1833), sailing on board the *Charlotte*, observed that the male convicts were more upset to be leaving England than the females. He wrote:

> [I]n general, marks of distress were more perceptible among the men than the women; for I recollect to have seen but one of those affected on the occasion, ‘Some natural tears she dropp’d, but wip’d them soon.’ After this the accent of sorrow was no longer heard; more genial skies and change of scene banished repining and discontent, and introduced in their stead cheerfulness and acquiescence in a lot, now not to be altered.¹²

Somewhat aptly, Tench derived his poetic paraphrase from a line contained in John Milton’s (1608–74) *Paradise Lost*: ‘another tale of man’s fall from grace and journey into banishment.’¹³ By alluding to Milton’s text—‘Som natural tears they drop’d, but wip’d them soon’¹⁴—Tench may have entertained the hope that his readers not only were aware of Milton’s ensuing lines, but also recognised the aptness of Milton’s sentiments in relation to the departure of the First Fleet:

> The World was all before them, where to choose
> Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide¹⁵

**George Worgan’s Piano Heard on the *Sirius* as a Solo Instrument**

During the late eighteenth century, the piano played a central role within the context of the bourgeois world of intensely private emotion, sentiment and solitude.¹⁶ Surgeon Worgan’s piano provided the perfect medium through which the musical pleasures commonly associated with solitude might be induced. ‘Private music-making at the keyboard was invested in the popular imagination of the time with special, even exalted status … Paradoxically, only in the internal world of thought and emotion might the freedom that was lacking in daily political and social life be found.’¹⁷

In 1784, the Swiss physician Johann Georg Zimmermann (1728–95) argued that the context of solitude gave artists the freedom to create without regard for

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¹⁵ Ibid., Book 12, lines 646–7.
¹⁷ Ibid., p. 148.
the constraints of convention. Within the ‘private’ sphere, improvising at the piano represented a context within which musical freedoms might be explored in the hope of resultant apotheosis.

Because of the thorough musical education that George Worgan had received at the hands of his father, he was doubtless conversant with the harmonic, figurative and rhetorical principles associated with keyboard improvisation. We will probably never know how skilfully, compellingly or indeed if George Worgan improvised when he was alone at his piano. It is pleasant to imagine that within such a circumstance he may have spontaneously explored a musical language ‘which perhaps in society he would not have dared openly to hazard without precaution’. If he played extempore to others, perhaps his improvisations caused some listeners to respond in the manner described by Carl Friedrich Cramer (1752–1807) on Saturday, 5 August 1786. Cramer, the editor of the *Magazin der Musik*, speaks of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach’s enthralling improvisations at the piano: listeners ‘have been astonished … [and] have rubbed their brow’ in disbelief, ‘and expressed regret that they did not have such knowledge’ and skill.

Not that the sound of Worgan’s ‘private’ playing on board the *Sirius* would have remained his alone to enjoy. The acoustics associated with shipboard life would have ensured that some (if only perhaps a few officers) may have overheard Worgan’s intimate musical musings.

Documentary evidence reveals that George Worgan played his piano within a ‘social’ context on board the *Sirius*, at Rio de Janeiro. Worgan appears to have been only too pleased to perform for a select audience. It is not known, however, whether such a performance—or for that matter, Worgan’s private, solitary playing—was a commonly occurring event during the journey to Botany Bay.

Captain John Hunter, the second captain of the *Sirius*, may have been only too happy to hear Worgan play his piano. As a former pupil of the English music

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21 See ‘Worgan Plays His Piano in Rio de Janeiro’ in Chapter 6, this volume.
historian Dr Charles Burney, Captain Hunter was an appreciative listener whose passion for the sea only narrowly overcame his passion for music. After John Hunter’s father

was shipwrecked, John was sent to his uncle, a merchant of Lynn, who sent the boy to school, where [in his mid teens] he became acquainted with Charles Burney, the musician. Dr Burney wanted to make a musician of him, and Hunter was nothing loth, but the uncle intended the boy for the Church, and sent him to the Aberdeen University. There his thoughts once more turned to the sea.

It seems likely that Captain Hunter maintained a lifelong love of music as well as friendship with Charles Burney.

In their introduction to *The Journal of Philip Gidley King*, Paul G. Fidlon and R. J. Ryan observe that during the voyage to Sydney Cove, ’Mr. Worgan, the ship’s surgeon, gave pianoforte concerts which were much appreciated by officers of the *Sirius* and of the other ships too’. This is pure conjecture.

In his journal, Lieutenant King remarks ‘*c’est bien a propos ce soir*’ [it is well by the way this evening]’. Perhaps King’s comment—made on Thursday, 29 November 1787, almost 12 weeks after departing from Rio de Janeiro—cryptically alludes to the delights of an evening piano recital given by George Worgan. It is more likely, however, that King is pragmatically referring to the fact that following ‘one of the most confused Tumbling seas I ever beheld … the Sea abated much The latter part of this day had very pleasant & serene Weather, which in a Vessell of this kind is a very desirable circumstance’—therefore, ‘it is well … this evening’.

Victor Crittenden remarks that whilst the First Fleet lay at anchor off Santa Cruz on the island of Tenerife, surgeon Worgan ‘entertained the officers of the *Sirius* with sonatas on his piano which … he had on board’. Moreover, Colin Steele and Michael Richards state that ‘George Worgan … took a piano on board the *Sirius* on which he played Mozart’. Unfortunately, no extant contemporaneous documentary evidence supports either Crittenden’s or Steele and Richards’

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26 Ibid., p. xviii.
assertions. Steele and Richards may have based their understanding on a statement made by the eminent Australian historian Manning Clark (1915–91). Steele and Richards write:

We were intrigued when Professor Manning Clark was quoted in *The Bulletin* of September 1, 1987 that ‘the First Fleeters brought with them a piano, sheet music of Mozart, an authorised version of the Bible and the complete works of Shakespeare—this is one of the things we have to try to remember in telling the history of Australia’. 31

Crittenden’s mention of ‘sonatas’ is perplexing, given the lack of contemporaneous evidence related either to the specific compositional genres or to the repertoire that Worgan played whilst on board ship. Crittenden’s conjecture that Worgan played sonatas is, however, a reasonable one. During the late eighteenth century, sonatas (as a genre) were commonly associated with a specific type of player and listener.

*Liebhaber* and *Kenner*

Eighteenth-century music theorists designate players and listeners as belonging to one of two categories: the *Liebhaber* (lovers of music, with little knowledge of the art), and the *Kenner* (knowledgeable musical connoisseurs). Both types of musician could be what were commonly referred to in England as ‘amateurs’—that is, non-professional musicians. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, ‘writers traditionally assign a spontaneous response of the heart to the music lover (*Liebhaber*), and a more studied (and discriminating) taste to the musical connoisseur (*Kenner*). Both might be moved by music of quality, but the *Kenner* could explain the reasons for the excellence of a work.’ 32

‘The primary arbiters in matters of “good” taste were the *Kenner*—the connoisseurs who, by virtue of their training, possessed true knowledge of music.’ 33

The *Liebhaber* tended to relate to music ‘at the same level of accomplishment at which, as amateur musicians, they could play’. 34 The *Kenner* tended to fixate on ‘musical convention, artistry’ and ‘the rules of the genre’. 35

31 Ibid., p. 4.
33 Ibid., p. 36.
35 Ibid., p. 27.
Works written with the *Liebhaber* in mind were sometimes described as being ‘easy’, whilst works composed for the *Kenner* were often regarded as ‘difficult’.

Elements identifying a piece of music as being calculated either for the *Liebhaber* or for the *Kenner* included:

1. the technical demands placed upon the performer
2. the complexity or simplicity of the harmonies
3. the number and nature of the musical ideas
4. the general trajectory of form
5. the extent and nature of the counterpoint.\(^{36}\)

Music for the *Kenner* manifested:

1. ‘variety in melodic embellishments and rhythmic contour’\(^{37}\)
2. contrasts achieved by the juxtaposition of contrapuntal textures and homophonic or unison passages
3. ‘a capricious sequence of gay, tender, sad, or sublime feelings’ and ‘tone pictures’ that ‘allow the imagination free play’.\(^{38}\)

In particular, imitative counterpoint ‘provided something of a litmus test dividing *Kenner* from *Liebhaber*’.\(^{39}\)

Certain styles of music and specific compositional genres were associated with the *Liebhaber* and with the *Kenner*. ‘This accords with the premise of a place for everything and everything in its place. But there is, in addition, a largely unspoken assumption of a place for everyone and everyone in his place.’\(^{40}\) This is because the complex metaphor of late eighteenth-century social harmony comprised ‘an intricate nexus of ideals pertaining to gender, social station, sensibility, religion, and national identity. Each person occupied his or her correct place … with decorum, the result was harmonious balance within the individual, and in society.’\(^{41}\)

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37 Wheelock, *Haydn’s Ingenious Jesting with Art*, p. 38.
39 Bonds, ‘Listening to Listeners’, p. 36.
Music for the *Liebhaber*

In late eighteenth-century England, *Liebhaber* pianists usually played:

1. pieces based on popular tunes (usually taken from ‘the ballad operas recently performed in London theatres’)
2. Scottish or Welsh folk tunes (real or imitative)
3. simple arrangements of oratorios (usually oratorios by Händel; these were often arranged by the organist, composer and pupil of Johann Christian Bach, Joseph Mazzinghi [1765–1844])
4. sonatinas
5. ‘accompanied’ sonatas (usually accompanied by a violin or flute, and occasionally with a ‘cello doubling the bass line’); the sonata ‘with accompaniment’ was ‘the mainstay of the drawing-room and a staple of publishers’ catalogues into the early nineteenth century. Usually fairly easy to play and destined for amateur use, they were primarily meant for convivial evenings at home. The keyboard part was always most prominent, with the accompanying instruments playing a subordinate role
6. illustrative ‘program’ music commemorating an important event—such as Domenico Corri’s (1746–1825) ‘Lunardi’s Flight’. On Wednesday, 15 September 1784, Vincenzo Lunardi (1759–1806), in front of a crowd of 200 000, made the first hydrogen-filled balloon ascension over London. ‘He was accompanied by a dog, a cat and a caged pigeon.

Lunardi, who had hopes of advancing through the air by rowing, had brought along oars of different shape, one of which broke when he started. But he remained convinced that the oars were instrumental in his reaching a cornfield near North Mimms, some 13 miles north of London. Here he landed at 3.30 p.m., divested himself of his remaining ballast and released the cat, which by now was quite benumbed with cold. Though Lunardi throughout the trip had stayed at altitudes of below 1,000ft, he had registered temperatures as low as –16ºC.

A particularly fine example of illustrative ‘program’ music is Jan Ladislav Dussek’s (1760–1812) ‘The Sufferings of the Queen of France’ (Plate 58).
Dussek’s work ‘graphically depicts the guillotining of Marie Antoinette’, and, characteristically for solo piano music in this genre, not only borders on the histrionic, but is also deeply moving. The unrelenting emotional intensity of this work may be explained by the fact that Dussek was Marie Antoinette’s favourite musician.


Source: Geoffrey Lancaster Collection, Perth. Photo by the author.

48 Illustrative program music was so popular that even the genius Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach composed a sonata entitled ‘The Battle of Bergen’ for harpsichord, fortepiano, organ or harp. See C. P. E. Bach, Sonata pour le Clavecin, Forte-Piano, Orgue ou Harpe qui représent le Bataille de Bergen [Sonata for Harpsichord, Forte-Piano, Organ or Harp Depicting the Battle of Bergen] (Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2007) [Originally published Paris: Huberty, 1776]. This work is devoid of the compositional, aesthetic and technical sophistication usually found in Bach’s music, and appears to be calculated for the most basic kind of Liebhaber player.
49 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 73.
Pieces in this genre were popular as far afield as America. In 1797, for example, ‘James Hewitt (1770–1827), one of early America’s important composers, wrote *The Battle of Trenton* … to mark one of George Washington’s important Revolutionary War victories’ over the English.50

Importantly for late eighteenth-century amateur pianists, illustrative program music usually did not present many technical challenges. The inherent dramatic implications of the music were obvious, and could be easily understood. All that was required was a player who possessed a reasonable technique and a modicum of emotional sensitivity and imagination.

**The Battle of Prague**

Five years prior to the publication of Dussek’s ‘Sufferings of the Queen of France’ (1793), a hugely popular piece of illustrative program music swept through England: the work (for piano), entitled ‘The Battle of Prague’,51 was composed by František Kocžwara (Francis Kotzwara; ca 1750–91), a Czech violinist, violist and double bassist living in London. Kotzwara ‘was also a consummate and convincing forger of other composers’ styles (in particular J Haydn and Pleyel) and supplemented his income thereby’.52 ‘Few composers can have become so famous on account of one single work to quite the same extent as Kotzwara.’53 ‘The Battle of Prague’ is replete with musical banalities: ‘marches, bugle calls, “the word of command”, the hail of bullets, cannon shots, an “attack with swords”, cries of the wounded, and so forth, all captioned in the text and musically illustrated in a highly flimsy’, harmonically bland and often ‘noisy manner’.54

Following its publication by James Harrison in Dublin ca 1788,55 ‘The Battle of Prague’ was, for 50 years (at least within the context of English-speaking

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50 Hoover et al., *Piano 300*, p. 15.
51 The historical ‘battle of Prague was an early engagement in the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763)’. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, p. 514, fn. 25.
54 Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos*, p. 244.
55 See R. R. Kidd, *Koczwara, Frantiszek*, in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 10, p. 136. Ireland was not ‘slow in adopting the [piano] … the first recorded public solo performance on a pianoforte in Dublin’ took place on Thursday, 19 May 1768. ‘It was given by Henry Walsh, organist of St. Patrick’s Cathedral.’ One of the account ledgers of the Dublin-based Ferdinand Weber (1715–84) gives ‘information concerning the supply and tuning of harpsichords, “Spinnets” and “Forte Pianos” going back to 1764. This may well be one of the earliest detailed keyboard instrument-maker’s accounts of this kind to survive in Europe … Weber was almost certainly the first piano-maker in Ireland, and contemporary with the earliest makers of the instrument in England: an entry in his ledger for Mrs. David Latouche records a sum due for tuning her “Forte Piano” from [Thursday, 17] October 1765.’ Cobbe, *Composer
countries), the most played and the best-known piano work in existence. ‘Its fame reached America’, where in late eighteenth-century ‘Boston it was described as “the indispensable climax to every concert”, spawning a spurious Siege of Quebec\(^56\) which incorporated some of … [Kotzwara’s] music’.\(^57\)

Well into the nineteenth century, Kotzwara’s ‘The Battle of Prague’

appeared in countless editions on both sides of the Atlantic … at any moment … [its] loud, silly clatter-clutter might have resounded simultaneously in Llandudno and Londonderry, in Philadelphia and Annapolis, in Malta, Madras, and Melbourne—wherever a form of English was the speech of the realm and … London piano [makers] … could ship their products.\(^58\)

The work’s first performance was given by a Miss Hoffmann, who ‘placed it on the program of a concert given for her own benefit at the Assembly Rooms, Turnham Green’, approximately 6 kilometres west of London,\(^59\) in June 1792. ‘Miss Hoffmann … had already enjoyed the honour of having her playing graciously received by Their Royal Highnesses in Windsor Castle; thus, her concert’s success [was] … preassured.’\(^60\) For the occasion, Miss Hoffmann was accompanied on the timpani by her brother (who, at the time, was three-and-a-half years old). Miss Hoffmann was six.

Child ‘prodigies’ such as Miss Hoffmann and her brother represent the kind of idiocy through which the late eighteenth-century English public’s hunger for musical stunts was satisfied. Child prodigies were in fashion: the eight-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, for example, ‘on his visit to London in the 1760s … was followed most notably … by the 3-year-old [William] Crotch’, Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837), aged nine, and Miss M. C. Poole (later the famous singer Mrs Dickons) ‘at a Benefit in 1785 … not eleven years of age’.\(^61\)

A fine example of the musical inanities available to late eighteenth-century London audiences concerns an Italian who, in 1789, ‘came to London and gave

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\(^{56}\) W. B. de Krift, Siege of Quebec, a Sonata for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte with Accompaniments for Violin, Violoncello & Tympano Ad Libitum (London: J. Bland, 1792).


\(^{58}\) Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos, p. 244.

\(^{59}\) See Moule, Environs of London, middle of the top half of the bottom left-hand quadrant.

\(^{60}\) Loesser, Men, Women and Pianos, p. 244.

a concert with eleven cats. The animals were well trained: each one had its own particular timbre and range; each one made correct entrances upon a given signal and also kept pretty good time. So it was said.  

The late eighteenth-century London taste for novelty was nothing new. On Monday, 14 April 1746 (43 years prior to the concert given by the 11 Italianate cats), the composer Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–87) exploited the London taste for ridiculousness by performing ‘a Concerto upon Twenty-six Drinking Glasses, tuned with Spring-Water, accompanied with the whole Band, being a new instrument of his own invention’. Having plumbed the depths of bad taste, Gluck left England shortly thereafter, and never returned.

During the early 1770s, at Vauxhall, ‘thousands of people paid 10s 6d—the price of a good seat at the opera’ (in the boxes or pit), and about one-thirtieth of a prosperous tradesman’s annual income, ‘to gaze on a … mechanical pineapple that opened to reveal a nest of mechanical singing birds’.  

The public’s fascination for musical machinery was indulged at ‘Maillardet’s Automatical Exhibition, Spring Gardens’, where, as the The Observer advertised in August 1798, there was to be found ‘Conjuring, Music, Rope-dancing, and Singing-bird. This combination of amusement, in the highest degree of perfection, is conveyed by the pleasing and wonderful efforts of Mechanism, in the stile of excellence, superior to any comparative idea that can be formed.’

Thomas Danvers Worgan, in an address he gave in London to the Philharmonic Society, reveals that musical silliness was still to be found as late as 1820:

If any proof were wanting of the frivolity of a taste, however refined, that is not consolidated by knowledge, such proof can easily be found. On questioning ladies, who have attended concerts, where the first performers have been engaged, and the most masterly compositions performed, I have generally found, that almost every harmonious impression has been effaced by some trifle, such as an old ballad, a new face, or the performance of a child: and I will venture to affirm, that if the Philharmonic Society were to exert themselves to inspiration, and in the course of their performances, to put an infant with a fiddle in his

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63 General Advertiser, 31 March 1746, fo. 2r. Quoted in Howard, Gluck, p. 19.
65 The Observer, 12 August 1798, No. 347, p. 3.
hand on a table, nineteen in twenty of a female audience, would the next day remember little or nothing of the concert but the child and the fiddle.66

‘Musical mice’ were also ‘a phenomenon’ in London in 1847. The mouse that ‘was exhibited at Palmer’s Hair Cutting Rooms in the Strand … not only boasted a voice “whose notes resemble those of a bird in spring” but also played [a] … cottage piano’.67

Musical absurdities continued to surface throughout the nineteenth century, and not just in London. For example, in 1869, in America, the December issue of the periodical *Folio* advertised an instrument that produced its sound by means of different-sized cats (this is reminiscent of the Italian who employed 11 cats for performances given 123 years before in London). A certain Mr Curtis announced a ‘Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert’ to be given in Cincinnati, featuring no less than 48 cats in his ‘Cat Harmonicon’. The first work on the program was to be ‘Auld Lang Syne’. Unfortunately (according to a report of the concert), the cats became more than usually excited,68

paid no attention to time, tune, rhythm or reason, but squealed, mewed, yelled, spat, and phizzed in the madness of pain and terror,’ drowning out the accompanying organ in a welter of wails.

There must be something special about Cincinnati. Apparently that same city was the first to introduce a Porco-Forte in 1839, which used pigs instead of cats.69

In 1803, the German medical theorist Johann Christian Reil (1759–1813) published his *Rhapsodieen über die Anwendung der psychischen Kurmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen [Rhapsodies on the Application of Psychological Methods of Cure to Disorganised Spirits]*.70 In his long polemic, Reil proposed that a keyboard instrument comprising

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69 Ibid., p. 57.

cats whose tails were played like the strings on a piano by key levers with nails
attached (in order to induce a yowling meow from the cats) ‘could be used to treat
patients with a modern day equivalent of Attention Deficit Disorder’.

Perhaps it was the general popularity of ‘The Battle of Prague’ (and a cathartic
realisation of just how mediocre the work really is) that explains why Francis
Kotzwara went to Vine Street, St Martin’s, on Thursday, 2 September 1791, and
hanged himself in a brothel.

On the other hand, Kotzwara ‘was reputed to have had unusual taste in his
vices, and was accidentally hanged while conducting an experiment in a house
of ill-repute. Susan Hill, his accomplice in the experiment, was tried for murder
at the Old Bailey on 16 September 1791 and was acquitted.’

The emergence during the late eighteenth century of a debased popular taste
is perhaps best exemplified by descriptive musical vacuities such as Kotzwara’s
‘The Battle of Prague’. During the 1780s and 1790s, the emergence of popular
musical mediocrities was catalysed by the increasing availability of cheaper
pianos, composers hoping for an easy profit and an intensifying trend towards
a culture of consumption.

Nowadays, we tend not to take late eighteenth-century illustrative program
music very seriously, finding in its melodramatic excesses too many similarities
with the style of music once used to accompany silent movies, and levels of
sentimentality and emotional intensity that border on the hysterical. Oddly, in
a sentimental culture, we find sentimentality quaint and, at worst, embarrassing.

Sentimentality is feeling that shuts out action, real or potential … So far
is the sentimentalist from being one whose emotions exceed the legal
limit that he may be charged with deficient energy in what he feels; it
does not propel him. That is why he finds pleasure in grief and when he
is in love never proposes … [The sentimentalist revels] in irresponsible

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71 Steven [Gawker Help], ‘The History of the Katzenklavier, or Cat Piano’, in Observation Deck (New
York: Gawker Media, 26 February 2013). See also J. C. Reil, Rhapsodieen über die Anwendung der psychischen
Kurzmethoden auf Geisteszerrütungen [Rhapsodies on the Application of Psychological Methods of Cure to


74 See McVeigh, ‘Industrial and Consumer Revolutions in Instrumental Music’, p. 12. See also O. Jokiharju,
‘Reflections of Instrumental Chamber-Music Making in Sheet Music Related to the Gluck-Calzabigi Operatic
“Reform”’, in R. Illiano and L. Sala (eds), Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution (Bologna:
Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2010), p. 393.

75 The dramatic intensity and musical gesturalism of late eighteenth-century program music acted, in part,
as a catalyst for the development of nineteenth and early twentieth-century melodrama.
grief and love. This condition explains why the sentimentalist and the cynic are two sides of one nature. In such matters the arts are transparent and the connoisseur can easily tell imitation feeling from the real thing.76

Apart from pieces based on popular tunes, Scottish or Welsh folk tunes, simple arrangements of oratorios, sonatinas, accompanied sonatas and illustrative program music, four remaining genres were commonly associated with Liebhaber pianists:

1. minuets
2. rondos (a favourite genre of the dilettanti)
3. sets of variations
4. lessons from instructional piano methods.

Music calculated for the Liebhaber was usually ‘easy … to comprehend, and easy to hum afterward’.77 As the middle (professional) class gained prominence and prestige … composers responded to their needs and wishes, creating a musical style that … suited middle-class musical ideals. Whereas many if not most aristocrats (not coincidentally associated with languor and laziness by the middle classes) tended to enjoy music passively, performed by servants or employees … bourgeois families and their friends actively made music together in the comfort of their parlors and music rooms.78

**Music for the Kenner**

Musically challenging piano music was composed with the Kenner in mind. Kenner pianists were commonly associated with

1. sonatas specifically calculated for the connoisseur
2. conceptually uncompromising, virtuosic ‘grand sonatas’
3. pre-composed or spontaneously improvised fantasias.

76 Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, p. 411.
During the late eighteenth century, music for the Kenner (that is, high art) and music for the Liebhaber (that is, entertainment) were not regarded as incompatible. Mark Evan Bonds, in relation to Joseph Haydn, states that recent attempts to equate Haydn’s ‘popular’ style with a ‘pandering’ to the lowest common denominator … rest on nineteenth- and especially twentieth-century aesthetic notions that value the learned over the popular, the challenging over the readily accessible. [James] Webster has convincingly argued that ‘there is no reason why an approach to composition as entertainment should be considered either morally suspect or inherently incompatible with the production of great art.’

The value judgment that simple, compositionally uncomplicated music that is easy to listen to is unworthy is founded on the untenable assumption that ‘great’ music is necessarily intense and overtly complex. ‘In one of its most compelling guises’, music is ‘art that disguises its artistry (which is the composer’s business and, to a lesser extent, the performer’s) yet fully reveals its emotional expressiveness (which is the listener’s business).’

George Worgan, as a result of the musical training provided by his father (if not also because of his inclinations), was more than likely a musical Kenner. It is possible that some of the higher-ranking and commissioned officers who listened to Worgan play his piano on board the Sirius may also (as a result of their upbringing and the educational benefits associated with their social status) have been musical connoisseurs.

By the 1770s in London,

there were over a hundred papers and journals, and men of affairs met in coffee houses all over the city to read them and discuss and settle the questions of the day. One of the most influential journals … was the Spectator. In conveniently short essays it advocated a system of polite behaviour by which men could accommodate the complexities of modern life and live in harmony by cultivating good taste and regulating and refining their natural passions to a greater Elegance. Gratification of the passions was effeminate, in the sense of womanish; intellectual pursuits [such as literature and the arts] were deemed manly … in late

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eighteenth-century England such manners were promoted as the key to civilized living. Politeness was a modus vivendi, essentially urban, sociable and cultured.  

Perhaps the higher-ranking and commissioned officers of the *Sirius* exercised their cultivation of good taste, elegance and intellectual pursuits by ensuring that they found occasion to listen to George Worgan play his piano. In 1788, the educator, writer, moralist and social reformer Hannah More (1745–1833), in her *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society*, reflected on ‘the progressive refinement of manners, the art of polite conversation and the sociable sharing of ideas and cultural pastimes. Such civilized social intercourse found its natural home in … convivial gatherings of like-minded connoisseurs who joined together for exclusive evenings of refined music-making.’ For any officer on board the *Sirius* who may have been a musical *Kenner*—for example, Captain John Hunter—there was probably a certain sense of safety in like-minded exclusivity.

Worgan, however, may have been hard-pressed to find many musical cognoscenti amongst his companions of similar rank. After all, cultural and intellectual interests, particularly of literature and music, ‘may have been available to young gentlemen of independent fortune, but were unlikely interests of subordinate officers engaged in active service’. In this respect, Worgan’s close colleagues probably differed from higher-ranking and commissioned officers.

As a musical *Kenner*, Worgan may have been ‘anxious to appeal to a broad listenership even while cultivating the approval of connoisseurs’. As a keyboard player, he may have found himself in the same situation as many composers: needing to find ‘the fine line between’ presenting works that could be ‘appreciated by a wide range of musicians and listeners and yet at the same time [rising] … to the highest standards of art’.

Despite the absence of contemporaneous documentary sources detailing the specific repertoire that George Worgan performed on board the *Sirius*, Victor Crittenden’s assertion that Worgan played ‘sonatas on his piano’ is plausible. If George Worgan had a virtuoso technique, he may well have inherited his father’s enthusiasm for

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81 Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 147. ‘What changed in the decades after 1800 was the growing acceptability of the idea that composers might not be writing for a universal audience. They could compose for such an audience if they chose to, of course, and they often did just that. But when they did so, they now ran the risk of being accused of “pandering” to the public taste, as opposed to creating great art. It is a division that continues to shape the ways in which we listen to—and analyse—music today.’ Bonds, ‘Listening to Listeners’, p. 47.
82 Ibid., p. 149.
85 Ibid., p. 36.
the keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti. If Worgan was a musical Kenner, he may also have played some of the sonatas intended for connoisseurs composed by Joseph Haydn, or perhaps keyboard works written specifically with the Kenner in mind by C. P. E. Bach. Having been raised in an environment that was so constantly associated with music, George Worgan would doubtless have formed his own strong ideas (despite his father’s musical conservatism) concerning the repertoire that he found attractive.

As a Londoner, Worgan would have had access to a wealth of keyboard repertoire written not only by English or London-based non-English composers, but also by composers who lived and worked on the Continent.

George Worgan Plays Music Written by English and/or London-Based Non-English Composers

Piano music written by English and/or London-based non-English composers may have occupied much of George Worgan’s time spent at the piano. The six suave, beautiful sonatas comprising Johann Christian Bach’s Opus 5 (1766) and/or the six sonatas of J. C. Bach’s Opus 17 (1779) may well have been part of Worgan’s repertoire. (J. C. Bach’s Opus 5 ‘were the first compositions to appear in London with a title-page mentioning the Piano Forte as an option to the harpsichord’.)) Even though by the time of Worgan’s First Fleet voyage, J. C. Bach’s keyboard sonatas were generally considered to be almost antiquarian, they were immensely popular, having been written (with Zumpe’s square pianos in mind) by ‘an accomplished composer with the highest credentials’. Bach’s piano sonatas ‘were well calculated to please a public who expected to be able to play the notes without … [too much] struggle’.

If George Worgan’s technique was up to the task, he may also have played some of Muzio Clementi’s (1752–1832) difficult solo sonatas Opus 2, composed ca 1770. An anonymous writer in the English music journal The Harmonicon described the reaction to Clementi’s Opus 2 of the Leipzig-born pianist who became the ‘Master of the Queen’s Musick’ in 1782, Johann Samuel Schroeter (Schröter; ca 1750–88):

[T]hough it is now, from the immense progress which manual dexterity has made in the last sixty years, within the powers of even second-rate performers—was, at the period of its production, the despair of such pianists as J. C. Bach and Schroeter, who were content to admire it,

87 Latcham, ‘Pianos and Harpsichords for their Majesties’, p. 362.
89 Ibid., p. 63.
but declined to attempt to play what the latter professor declared could only be executed by its own composer, or by that great performer of all wonders, and conqueror of all difficulties, the Devil.90

A critic writing in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine & Review* in 1820 declared that Clementi’s Opus 2 sonatas were ‘the basis on which the whole fabric of modern sonatas for the pianoforte has been erected’.91 Clementi was fortunate enough to be ‘a polymath, with an almost alarming ability to excel at whatever he touched’.92 It was Clementi who ‘figured out how to link instrument sales, printed music, journal subscriptions, concert tickets, piano lessons, musical keepsakes—and dreams—so that they all promoted one another’.93

It is also possible that George Worgan had his father’s ‘Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord’ (1769) in his repertoire. Performing music originally written for the harpsichord on a piano was a common occurrence in late eighteenth-century England. Documentation shows that late eighteenth-century performers had a more flexible attitude in relation to their choice of keyboard instrument (often determined by what was available) than that held by many twenty-first-century early instrument specialists. The late eighteenth-century musical bourgeoisie played the latest keyboard music on harpsichord, clavichord or fortepiano, whether the composer really wanted this or not.94 (A reading of contemporaneous accounts of composer-performers’ flexibility in this regard—including C. P. E. Bach, W. A. Mozart and Joseph Haydn—supports the notion that an informed performance-based exploration of late eighteenth-century ‘common practice’ may invigorate our understanding of Classic-era soundscapes and musical meaning.)

Solo keyboard music written by any of the following English or London-based non-English composers may have formed part of Worgan’s repertoire (published works written by these composers were available for purchase in London):

1. Carl Friedrich Abel
2. John Alcock (1715–1806)
3. Thomas Arne

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4. Samuel Arnold
5. Thomas Attwood (1765–1838)
6. Theodore Aylward (1730–1801)
7. Samuel Babb (?–?)
8. François-Hippolyte Barthélemon (1741–1808)
10. J. D. Benser (fl. ca 1770–85)
11. George Berg (1730s–70s?)
12. Thomas Billington (ca 1754–1832)
13. Robert Broderip (1758–1808)
14. John Burton (1730–82?)
15. Thomas Busby (1755–1838)
16. Thomas Butler (ca 1755–1823)
17. John Camidge (1734–1803)
18. Charles Carter (ca 1735–1804)
19. Matthew Cooke (?–?)
20. Miles Coyle (?–?)
21. William Dale (?–1827)
22. William Dance (1755–1840)
23. Charles Dibdin (1745–1814)
24. William Duncombe (?–?)
25. William Flackton (1709–93)
26. John Garth (1722–1810?)
27. Tommaso Giordani (ca 1733–1806)
28. Thomas Gladwin (ca 1710–99)
29. William Goodwin (?–?)
30. Philip Hayes (1738–97)
31. Joseph Holder (1765–1832)
32. James Hook (1746–1827)
33. William Howard (fl. ca 1782–90)
34. Maximilian Humble (?–?)
35. Samuel Jarvis (? – ca 1785)
36. Matthew Peter King (ca 1733–23)
37. John Christian Luther (fl. 1775–85)
38. James Lyneham (?–?)
39. Lawrence Cornelius Nielson (fl. ca 1785–1800)
40. Marmaduke Overend (?–1790)
41. Stephen Philpot (?–?)
42. Venazio Rauzzini (1746–1810)
43. Alexander Reinagle (1756–1809)
44. Jane Savage (fl. ca 1780–90)
45. Johann Schroeter
46. Alexander Scouler (fl. ca 1775–85)
47. Francis Sharp (fl. ca 1775–95)
48. William Smethergell (fl. ca 1770 – ca 1800)
49. Charles John Stanley
50. Raynor Taylor (1747–1825)
51. Thomas Tremain (?–?)
52. Robert Wainright (1748–82)
53. Henry Walsh (fl. ca 1780)
54. Samuel Webbe (1740–1816)
55. Samuel Wesley.

George Worgan Plays Music Written by Continental Composers

English or London-based composers ‘jostled with their foreign colleagues for space in publishers’ catalogues, but they were a beleaguered set, pitted against a public who usually preferred the music of their continental contemporaries’. \(^{95}\) That ‘foreign music and musicians dominated serious musical life in London’ \(^{96}\) not only created a musical cosmopolitanism, but also fostered

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\(^{96}\) S. C. Pelkey, ‘Music, Memory, and the People in Selected British Periodicals of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries’, in J. H. Jackson and S. C. Pelkey (eds), Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines
a self-conscious Britishness. This comes out rather consistently and most forcefully in articles that imply that a national musical crisis existed and was manifested in the preference for foreign music and the lack of British musical genius. Various explanations were offered for this situation, but in such discussions we find strongly nationalistic utterances about British music and its relationship to the nation.97

Late eighteenth-century England’s prolific music-publishing industry and innovations in piano design and manufacture interlocked in ‘a commercial network that embraced European music in every dimension. Britain was a world-leader in instrument technology, and its international trade benefited from what was already a commercially and financially mature economy.’98

Numerous music publishers in late eighteenth-century London were quick to buy (or pirate) the works of Continental composers such as

1. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach
2. Georg Anton Benda (1722–95)
3. Ludwig Berger (1777–1839)
4. João Domingos Bomtempo (1775–1842)
5. Carlo Campioni (1720–88)
6. Jean-Frédéric Edelmann (1749–94)
7. Franz Jacob Freystädtler (1768–1841)
8. Philipp Joseph Frick (1740–98)
9. Felice Giardini (1716–96)
10. Adalbert Gyrowetz (1763–1850)
11. Johann Adolph Hasse (1699–1783)
12. Joseph Haydn
13. Friedrich Himmel (1765–1814)
14. Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel
15. Johann Nepomuk Hummel
16. Feliks Janiewicz (1762–1848)
17. Johann August Just (ca 1750–?)

97 Ibid., p. 75.
98 McVeigh, ‘Industrial and Consumer Revolutions in Instrumental Music’, p. 34.
Given the possible influence of Worgan’s father on the development of his son’s musical abilities and taste, it is highly likely that George Worgan played solo keyboard music written by at least some of these Continental composers. Much of the latest keyboard music composed by ‘foreign’ musicians was procurable in London. During the 1760s, the importation into England of music written by non-English composers was accepted practice for any publisher with pretensions to a wide audience … by the last part of the eighteenth century importation … [represented] the primary distinguishing feature of the more sophisticated publishing establishments … these houses [went] … to considerable lengths to be able to uphold the claim that on their lists was indeed to be found music ‘by the first talents of Europe’.100

Keyboard repertoire written by Parisian composers had much in common with English keyboard music; this set French keyboard repertoire apart from the

keyboard works written by composers who resided outside France. Generally, French keyboard music contained the hallmarks of the newly developed, overtly virtuosic English piano style. This innovative style comprised

1. expansive, lyrical legato phrases
2. melodies written in octaves
3. new standards of virtuosity, such as passagework in thirds, sixths and octaves, flamboyant arpeggio and scaldic passages, wide leaps, and thick chords
4. the use of thick chords at the extreme ends of the keyboard (notably in the treble)
5. the use of extremes of dynamic
6. the notated use of raised dampers over many bars at a time
7. hocket-like figuration (alternating notes in the left and right hands)
8. ‘drum bass’ figuration (an accompanying figure comprising repeated bass notes with a simultaneous pedal point one octave lower, an oscillating bass octave divided into small note values or an oscillating bass octave enriched by added texture).

Contrastingly, ‘composers writing within the Viennese musical tradition tended to emphasise invention and craftsmanship, harmonic sophistication, and the sensuous richness of instrumental colour’.101 Virtuosity was rarely explicit.

Given the traditional tensions that existed between France and England, it seems remarkable that the French so readily absorbed a demonstrably English piano style. The French tendency towards English-style virtuosity was not so much the result of adopting an English aesthetic, as a rejection of the overrefinement associated by contemporaneous commentators with ‘the Italian school’.102 Late eighteenth-century French piano music, with its focus on technical prowess, represents a move away from what was seen as an effeminate aristocratic salon culture. The French composer François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829) articulated this attitude in a speech given on Thursday, 8 November 1793: ‘The soul of the French, restored to its original grandeur, should not be weakened any more by effeminate sounds in the salons or

in the temples dedicated by the Imposture."\textsuperscript{103} 'Only after ca 1800 did a more refined and sentimental French piano style begin to surface again, perhaps simply because it became evident that Napoléon [Bonaparte (1769–1821)] favoured Italian opera.'\textsuperscript{104}

**Music Publishing in Late Eighteenth-Century London**

In London, the ‘creation of a substantial market for music’,\textsuperscript{105} catalysed by a ‘massive growth of music publishing after 1750’,\textsuperscript{106} stimulated music making within both domestic and public contexts. Between the 1760s and 1780s in London, as a commercial response to the intense demand for printed music, at least 62 music publishers plied their trade. These included

1. Samuel Babb
2. Thomas Baker
3. John Bew
4. Birchall & Andrews
5. John Bland
6. James Blundell
7. R. Branston
8. Robert Bremner
9. J. Buckland
10. Thomas Cahusac
11. Cobb & Watlen
12. J. Coote
13. Joseph Dale
14. P. Evans
15. Robert Falkener
16. Catherine Fentum

\textsuperscript{103} C. Pierre (ed.), *Conservatoire de Musique et de Déclamation* [*Conservatory of Music and Declamation*] (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900), p. 90.


\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 21.
17. John Fentum
18. John Fielding
19. William Forster
20. Henry Fought
21. James Freeman
22. J. French
23. G. Gardom
24. William Gawler
25. Goulding & Company; Goulding, Phipps & D’Almaine
26. John & Andrew Gow
27. James Harrison
28. Joseph Hill
29. P. Hodgson
30. Robert Horsfield
31. A. Hummell
32. John Johnson
33. John Kerpen
34. Thomas Knibb
35. J. Lewer
37. William Napier
38. William Owen
39. John & Sarah Phillips
40. A. Portal
41. John Preston
42. William Randall
43. Michael Rauche
44. John Rutherford

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Because of the proliferation of music publishers in London, and the extraordinary amount of musical activity taking place there, it could be argued that during the second half of the eighteenth century, England ‘was the most musical country in Europe’.\textsuperscript{108}

The extensive 1789 music catalogue of the music-publishing house Longman & Broderip provides a glimpse into the types of music available to pianists in late eighteenth-century London. Longman & Broderip ‘were the first music publisher to deposit [their] … new publications at Stationers Hall for copyright purposes, and [were] probably the most prolific of all London music publishers in the 1790s’.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{109} D. W. Krummel and S. Sadie (eds), Music Printing and Publishing (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), p. 102. See also ‘21) James Longman (ca 1740–1803) and Francis Broderip (d. 1807)’ in Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
In order to survive, publishers had not only to supply their customers with music, but to provide them with the sort of music they wanted to play or hear, not just the sort of music that composers thought they should publish. The problematic nature of this endeavour may be one of the reasons for the bankruptcy of so many eighteenth-century music publishers [including Longman & Broderip].

Longman & Broderip’s 1789 catalogue lists 1664 works. Of these, 565 are for harpsichord or pianoforte. Of these 565 works, 300 are sonatas or lessons, and 30 are duets. There are 333 songs for solo voice accompanied by harpsichord, 90 dances (such as cotillions, country dances and minuets) involving the use of a keyboard instrument, favourite airs with variations, and arrangements for keyboard solo of overtures taken from popular operas. Almost 60 per cent of the listed music involving a keyboard instrument—that is, 988 works—could only have appealed to people who owned pianos or harpsichords. There can be little doubt that George Worgan’s repertoire would have included works written in most, if not all, of these genres.

When Muzio Clementi and his business partners purchased Longman & Broderip on Thursday, 1 November 1798, he immediately embarked on a frenzied letter-writing campaign in order to establish business relationships with important Continental composers and music publishers. Among the first to be contacted was Artaria in Vienna, who had published some of Clementi’s works in the early 1780s and who had previously collaborated with Longman & Broderip. Within a matter of months, he was also writing to Pleyel in Paris and Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig.

‘Not only did Clementi’s firm have regular contact with the likes of Haydn and Beethoven [1770–1827], but it also negotiated for works by a whole host of lesser figures including Berger, Bomtempo … Gyrowetz, Himmel, [and] Janiewicz.’

As the son of one of London’s finest musicians, George Worgan (despite the musical conservatism of his father) was probably aware of, and perhaps owned some of, the latest ‘fashionable’ music released by London music-publishing houses.

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114 Ibid., p. 527.
115 Ibid., p. 537.
George Worgan’s Piano Heard on the *Sirius* as an Accompanying Instrument

For centuries, when European sailing ships headed south out of the North Atlantic, they made their first port of call at the Canary Islands [off the coast of north-west Africa] ... The route to the Canaries was second nature to European navigators. It was facilitated by the northeast trade winds and the surface currents of the North Atlantic.\(^\text{116}\)

Jonathan King writes that on Wednesday, 6 June 1787, whilst the First Fleet lay at anchor off the Spanish island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands,\(^\text{117}\) Governor Phillip and ‘twelve carefully selected officers ... dined with the Spanish Governor in his Santa Cruz palace’.\(^\text{118}\) Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench was amongst the chosen few, and was astonished by the ‘profusion of ices which appeared in the dessert’,\(^\text{119}\) which he found ‘surprising, considering that we were enjoying them under a sun nearly vertical’.\(^\text{120}\) Tench must have expressed his surprise, and in turn received an explanation, for he continues: ‘But it seems the caverns of the Peake, very far below its summit, afford, at all seasons, ice in abundance.’\(^\text{121}\)

Apart from ices, jellies and creams constituted popular late eighteenth-century desserts, and would probably have been offered to the Spanish Governor’s dinner guests. During the late eighteenth century, jellies were made with isinglass (a type of gelatine derived from the air bladders of sturgeon and certain other fish), fruit, sugar and occasionally brandy. Savoury jellies were also produced.\(^\text{122}\) Other sweet delicacies were part of late eighteenth-century cuisine:

> Cherries were often bottled when they were in season for use later in the year. Favourite dessert fruits were oranges, pineapples, strawberries, peaches and occasionally grapes. Quinces, rhubarb, damsons, plums and apples [may also have] ... featured on the menu, and the juice of lemons [may have been] ... used for flavouring.\(^\text{123}\)

Jonathan King suggests that whilst Governor Phillip and his 12 select officers were enjoying the hospitality of the Spanish Governor at the palace, on board the


\(^{117}\) A watercolour drawing entitled *Santa Cruz on the SE Side of Tenerife; Sirius and the Convoy in the Roads, June 1787*, by William Bradley (1757–1833), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney: Call No. ML Safe 1/14 opp. p. 19; Album ID. 823705; Digital Order No. a3461002.


\(^{119}\) Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 11.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., pp. 11–12.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., p. 12.


\(^{123}\) Ibid., pp. 55–6.
Sirius ‘there were sing-songs around’ surgeon Worgan’s piano. Although it is possible that, on occasion, Worgan may have played his piano to accompany ‘sing-songs’, no contemporaneous evidence describes him using his piano within this repertoire-based context (the few details that have come down to us consistently imply that George Worgan used his piano to perform solo repertoire).

During the late eighteenth century, the compositional genres commonly associated with ‘sing-songs’ were

1. canons
2. catches
3. glees.

### Canons

A canon is a musical form in which a melodic line is introduced by a single first voice; at some place during this melodic line (after a specified duration, for example, one bar, two bars, and so on), the first voice’s melodic line is repeated exactly by a second voice; during the second voice’s presentation of the melodic line (and after the same specified duration), the melodic line is repeated exactly by the third voice, and so on. All voices may continue repeating the melodic line indefinitely. When all voices (usually three or four) are singing, different parts of the melodic line not only coincide, but also fit harmoniously together.

A canon (sometimes called a ‘round’) is a simple form of part-singing, because only a single melodic line needs to be learned by all involved. As typical examples, three well-known canons (rounds) are: ‘Three Blind Mice’, ‘Row, Row, Row Your Boat’ and ‘Frère Jacques’.

### Catches and Glees

In London in 1761, a society called the Noblemen’s and Gentlemen’s Catch Club was formed to provide a context within which catches and glees might be sung. Another particularly well-known glee club was formed in London in 1783, and lasted until 1857.

The terms ‘catches’ and ‘glees’ were frequently interchangeable. Catches and glees are both part-songs.

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124 King, *The First Fleet*, p. 53.
125 The club is still in existence, and is currently based at the House of Lords.
Compositionally, a catch functions in the same way as a canon (round). What sets a catch apart from a canon is the text. In a catch, a word or a phrase that is not apparent in the text emerges when the text is sung by all voices in performance.

The text of a catch frequently breached the decorum of polite society. For example, in 1774, the Anglo-Irish politician and composer Garret Colley Wesley, First Earl of Mornington (1735–81), wrote a catch entitled ‘See the Bowl Sparkles’. Within the context of each separate voice, the text is innocuous. In performance, however, between bars five to eight, different voices successively sing and hold the words ‘see’ (sounding as the letter ‘c’), ‘you’ (sounding as the letter ‘u’), ‘end’ (sounding as the letter ‘n’) and ‘tea’ (sounding as the letter ‘t’), clearly spelling out the word ‘cunt’. A profusion of such obscenities necessitated the publication of collections of catches without ribald texts—‘The Words Consistent with Female Delicacy’.127

A glee often comprises several short, musically contrasting movements. The glee’s (respectable) text may be convivial, fraternal, idyllic, tender, philosophical or dramatic, making its performance appropriate for refined female company.128 The glee is usually scored for three or four solo voices. Generally, the glee was a manifestation of politeness. ‘The glee … selected or written for public concerts was undoubtedely of the more genteel and artistic type.’129

On the other hand, in 1787, the British musician, dramatist, novelist, actor and songwriter Charles Dibdin suggested that Thomas Arne’s ‘catches and glees had caused half the drunkenness and disorder that pervaded’ the Noblemen’s and Gentlemen’s Catch Club’s ‘convivial meetings’.130

John Wall Callcott (1766–1821), an acquaintance of Joseph Haydn in London, was one of the most prolific composers of catches and glees.131 In his Essays on Musical Subjects, Callcott reveals that

devotion to the past was … at least in part responsible for the establishment of … the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club … in

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127 See, for example, T. Arne et al., Musicae Vocalis Deliciae being a Collection of Scarce & Celebrated Madrigals, Glee, Catches, Canzonets, Rounds & Canons, both Antient and Modern Composed by Arne, Atterbury, Breuer, Bird, Baildon, Berg, Battishill, Craft, Ford, Gregory, Hilton, Howard, Hayes, Long, Morley, Morrington, Norris, Purcell, Rogers, Smith, Weels, Webbe, & Other Eminent Masters; Most of which are Sung at the Noblemens Catch-Club, Anacreontic Society, and Je ne scai quoi Club. The Words Consistent with Female Delicacy (London: T. Skellern, ca 1790).
129 McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn, p. 110.
130 C. Dibdin, The Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin (Sheffield: J. Gales, 1788), p. 162.
131 ‘Haydn’s most lasting contribution to the glee was to provide piano (or harp) accompaniments for’ ‘Twelve Sentimental Catches and Glees, for Three Voices’, ‘by the Earl of Abingdon … a patron and friend of the composer’. Robins, Catch and Glee Culture in Eighteenth Century England, p. 124.
1761 … In Callcott’s words, the objective of the Catch Club [was] ‘to encourage the efforts of rising composers’, an ambition that would gain fulfilment in a unique repertoire of [English] … music.132

As the name implies, the Noblemen and Gentleman’s Catch Club’s members came from the upper echelons of the social spectrum. ‘The earliest use of the title Noblemen and Gentleman’s Catch Club discovered to date is on the title page of a collection of glee and catches by’ the composer, organist and singer Joseph Baildon (ca 1727–74) published in 1768.133 Membership of the club ‘was firmly controlled and the club developed a strict set of rules that included fines and expulsion for non-attendance’.134

‘Catch clubs were usually located in an alehouse or tavern.’135 In London, the consumption of alcohol was an ordinary part of daily life. ‘Men, women and children all drank “small” or weak beer, partly because there was no reliable supply of clean water, while stronger drinks of “spirituous liquors”, primarily gin, were relatively cheap and easily available.”136 Singing with friends in a tavern became a common pastime for many late eighteenth-century English gentlemen.

The craze for catches and glees reached such a pitch in the late eighteenth century that prizes were instituted for new compositions, and pubs even ran competitions for the best performances … 137

By the late 18th Century there were numerous Glee Clubs in London, where gentlemen met to eat, drink and sing English ‘glees’ or part songs. The degrees of bawdiness in the punning lyrics depended on whether ladies were admitted.138

According to the popular mid-eighteenth-century English composer of catches, glees and canons William Hayes (1708–77), the fundamental ethos of glee clubs was ‘cheefulness, and good humour, friendship and love of harmony’.139

In the same year that Captain Cook sailed northward along the east coast of Australia, 1770, the Noblemen and Gentleman’s Catch Club passed a resolution ‘to invite professional musicians to become’ (styled variously) privileged,

133 Robins, Catch and Glee Culture in Eighteenth Century England, p. 32.
136 Ibid., p. 259.
138 Ibid., p. 40.
139 W. Hayes, Catches, Glees & Canons for Three, Four, and Five Voices (Oxford: Printed for the Author, 1757), Preface.
professional ‘or honorary members of the club’. This resolution suggests that the club was not solely concerned with conviviality, but also with standards of music making. The presence of professional musicians ensured that musical standards remained high, and may also have ensured that there was a constant availability of newly composed catches and glees. The London-based organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens recalled that, in 1782, ‘to be an Honorary Member of the Catch Club appeared to me (at this time of my life) to be a desirable thing for a young Musician’.

The first professional musicians to become members of the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club were:

1. John Beard (1716–91), the finest English tenor of his day
2. the eminent composer of church music and organist Jonathan Battishill
3. the leading English composer Thomas Arne
4. Gaetano Quilici (fl. 1754–80), ‘a good musician with a base [that is, bass] voice’
5. the German émigré and eminent viola da gamba virtuoso Carl Friedrich Abel
6. the Italian composer and London’s principal resident violinist during the 1750s and 1760s Felice Giardini, whose ‘great hand, taste, and style of playing, were so universally admired, that he had soon not only a great number of scholars on the violin, but taught many ladies of the first rank to sing’
7. a singer by the name of Cowper
8. William Savage (1720–89), who had a ‘pleasant bass voice … clear articulation [and] … perfect intonation’
9. Samuel Champness (d. 1803), ‘a bass who was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and who sang at the Covent Garden oratorios’.

As an independent gentleman, George Worgan—along, no doubt, with some of his fellow officers—may have been aware of the more risqué glee club repertoire. The prudish Exeter essayist and composer William Jackson (1730–1803) criticised the London Catch Club for singing bawdy catches; in the tenth of his Thirty Letters on Various Subjects, Jackson made a ‘thinly veiled attack

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141 Argent, Recollections R. J. S. Stevens, p. 43.
143 Giardini maintained this status until Wilhelm Cramer (1746–99) settled in London in 1772.
on the Catch Club and its espousal of a form “not judged perfect, if the result be not the rankest indecency”’. After all, ‘openly and without danger to their rank or their claim to be Christians, the gentlemen and nobles of England lived … dissolute lives; gambling, drinking, Sabbath breaking, and committing adultery’. Both in England and in France, the overt rejection of traditional Christian sanctions and indifference to religion resulted in the close association of freedom of ideas and free-living; ‘the pedlars of radical Enlightenment tracts often mixed [their] … trade with the sale of pornography’.

In late eighteenth-century London, as the music publishing industry boomed, and concerts proliferated,

sexual licence became ever more flagrant, especially by the royal princes. During the late 1780s … a movement of serious moral concern arose over the course that public life had taken. Even before the French Revolution one can see [the English] … beginning to rethink their life and trying to establish stricter standards of behaviour, embracing a kind of early Victorianism.

Through bawdy glees, the culture of the catch club reflected a level of moral laxity that had intensified in London during the 1770s and 1780s. Such laxity extended to the Grand Tour, which was ‘often regarded as an episode which might include sexual as well as cultural initiation’. The culture of the catch club was dependent on ‘the basic tenets of male conviviality—drinking, smoking and male companionship’. Bawdy texts set as glees were congruous with the risqué lyrics and double entendre traditionally inherent in some drinking songs.

The English composer William Hayes proposed that the performance of catches and glees should ideally manifest subtlety and sophistication in relation to dynamics, tone colour and expressivity. Hayes writes:

I must beg leave to suggest, that, so often as it [the catch] is repeated, an Alternacy of Forte and Piano or Loud and Soft, in imitation of the Chiaro Oscuro, or Light and Shade in painting, has an agreeable effect;

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except in such, where the humour of the Subject requires a certain Jollity to be kept up throughout the whole, which the Performer will very easily distinguish. And if ... any should be found worthy of being pathetic, or to have anything delicate in their Taste or Construction, I would recommend Mezzo Piano (at least sometimes under the full Tone of Voice) as being more expressive of Tenderness.

... [T]he best Guide will be a true Perception of the Sense and Drift of the Design; and ... Expression ... resulting from ... instantaneous Feeling.153

The scores of many catches and glees contained precise dynamic markings; these markings included pianissimo, piano, forte, fortissimo, sforzando, crescendo and diminuendo. (This range of dynamic indicators may, representatively, be seen in A Twenty Sixth Collection of Catches, Canons and Glees for Three, Four and Five Voices Most Humbly Inscribed to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Catch Club at the Thatch'd House Tavern, St. James's by their Much Obliged and Devoted Servant Thomas Warren.)154 Just how often an ideally crafted performance was achieved under the influence of alcohol and conviviality is, however, another matter.

Not all glees were ribald. Most were compositionally intricate, overtly beautiful and had texts that reflected pious, noble, polite and/or heartfelt sentiments. 'By the end of the 1780s the glee had become firmly established among amateur musicians, its entry into the domestic sphere of music long established.'155

As might be expected, the standard of performance of glees sung within the domestic context sometimes left much to be desired. Richard John Samuel Stevens recalled that, in 1793, he sang the tenor part in the domestic performance of a glee that he had written: 'Ye Spotted Snakes':

[H]ow we got to the end I scarcely know: but of all the exerable Music that was ever howled by any set of Infernals, the discord, yell, and grumbling ... could never be exceeded: I have never in my life heard anything so very diabolical and detestable ... Mrs. Hughes has often mentioned my look after this divine performance: she often says, 'that she shall never forget it as long as she lives'.156

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153 Quoted in ibid., pp. 144–5. Robins takes the quotation from: W. Hayes, A Supplement to the Catches, Glees, and Canons Lately Published by Dr. Hayes (Oxford: Published for the Author, 1765).
Accompanied Glee

Did Worgan accompany glees with his piano on board the Sirius? During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, an ‘increasing and controversial employment of keyboard accompaniment’ was incorporated into the performance of glees within the domestic context.

‘The practice of accompanying glees on the keyboard dates at least from the early 1770s—the earliest recorded instance occurring during 1773. The organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens recalled that in 1773, during his student days as a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral, the leading English composer ‘Doctor [Thomas] Arne accompanied some Glees, but his method of playing the Harpsichord, and his figure at the Instrument being remarkable and rather ridiculous, could not but tickle the fancy of us boys: we, also particularly noted his bad habit of swearing’. That Stevens does not express surprise at the existence of a keyboard accompaniment, choosing instead to comment on the way in which Dr Arne played, suggests that by 1773, the accompaniment of glees using a keyboard instrument was not unusual.

By the early 1780s, the domestic performance of glees may often have involved the use of an accompanying keyboard instrument. For example, during a visit to Bath in April 1782, after a social breakfast, the gentleman composer John Marsh (1752–1828) ‘sang some glees, accompan’d on the harpsichord by Miss H’, the daughter of the prominent amateur glee composer Dr Henry Harington (1727–1816). By way of further example, Stevens remembered that during mid-1788, ‘after breakfast, the Ladies persuaded the Glee party to go to the Piano Forte, and to sing’ his glee ‘Sigh No More, Ladies’ ‘several times over’. Stevens’ account implies that, at least by the late 1780s, the use of a piano to accompany the performance of a glee was not considered abnormal. Stevens also recalled that in 1793, at a private ‘Concert Room, which was intolerably full of a mixture of Company … we were absolutely in an Oven’, he ‘conducted’—that is, accompanied—the performance of a glee from the harpsichord:

Miss Bruton (an Apothecaries daughter in Duke Street, St. James’s) kindly undertook to sing the Soprano part; Stephen Groombridge (now President of the Glee Club), undertook the Base; I was to sing the Tenor;

162 Ibid., p. 92.
and a Gentleman (who I afterwards found) did not know a note from an Oyster, was to sing the Alto. I sat down to the Harpsichord as Conductor, and we began.  

Controversy abounded, however, when in the same year (1793), John Marsh was censured for providing (within the context of an evening’s domestic music making) a piano accompaniment in the performance of a glee. Marsh writes:

[W]e all went to a musical party at Mr Middletons to whom I lent my piano forte for the occasion on w’ch amongst other things I accomp’d a new glee sung by Mrs S. Hemming, Mess’rs Moore & Toghill, the latter of whom immediately afterw’ds observ’d that it wo’d have a better effect another time without accompaniment … tho’ … saying he did not mean to criticise on my accompaniment in particular, but on accomp’ts in general.  

Three years later, in September 1796, during a visit to the Nottingham Catch Club, Marsh heard ‘some glees &c. very decently done, some of w’ch I accompanied on the piano forte’.  

‘In the glee, admittedly a minor genre in the grander scheme, the British developed an indigenous achievement that was unique.’ Perhaps George Worgan, gentleman and up-to-date musician, consented to play his piano as an accompaniment to glees in the ‘sing-songs’ that may have taken place on board the Sirius. If so, his improvised accompaniments may have produced the effect described by the Genevan philosopher, writer and composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) in relation to bass lines and/or textures that supported a melodic line: ‘a light murmur comparable to the sound of a brook or the twittering of the birds.’  

Although there is no documentary evidence to support the hypothesis, Worgan (weather permitting) may have accompanied hymn singing within the context

163 Ibid., pp. 92–3.  
167 See King, The First Fleet, p. 53.  
of religious services held on board ship (whilst anchored at Rio de Janeiro and at Cape Town, ‘Mr. Johnson, the chaplain, preached on board two of the transports every Sunday’).\textsuperscript{169}

During the late eighteenth century, the playing of keyboard music was part of a wide and complex social intercourse. Piano music’s discourse was ‘practiced at many different levels: seriously and frivolously’\textsuperscript{170}. George Worgan may have used his piano to play repertoire ranging from improvised fantasias, through sonatas, to accompanying gles and (possibly) hymns; he may also have played his piano within ‘private’ and ‘social’ contexts.

\textbf{Playing with the Lid Closed}

In all probability, George Worgan would have played his piano with the lid closed—not propped open and acting as a sound reflector as is currently fashionable. We can make this assumption because during the 1770s and 1780s many square pianos by English makers had no internal ‘sideways-folding music desk fitted to the back of the name board’,\textsuperscript{171} which, when extended, held the lid open. Often, ‘the only provision for music sheets was a ledge fitted to the inside face of the lockboard, to be used with the lockboard opened and standing in its vertical position’ (Plate 59).\textsuperscript{172} This meant that when a music score was used, the main part of the lid of many square pianos had to remain closed, the upright lockboard serving as a convenient prop for the score.

A notable exception to this design is found in a square piano by Frederick Beck dated 1782/87\textsuperscript{173} (Plate 59b). Rather than being split into discrete hinged parts by a longitudinal cut over the nameboard (extending the length of the instrument) and a short lateral cut over the right-hand cheek (Plates 361 and 362), the lid is cut along its entire length in the middle; this forms two large rectangular segments, which are hinged to one another.

The lockboard is hinged to the inside face of the front-half segment of the lid (Plate 59c). The front-half segment of the lid can be folded backwards to lie flush against the back-half segment. When the front-half segment of the lid is in this state, the hinged lockboard may be brought to its vertical position and used as a music desk. The ‘half-open’ lid, however, does not fully expose the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{170} Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., p. 91.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 90.
\textsuperscript{173} The instrument is owned by the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
\end{quote}
soundboard or strings. As a consequence, the closed back-half segment of the lid acts as a damper, inhibiting the effect of action noise, and suppressing some upper partials of the sound. The result is a sound that has no trace of harshness.

When the lid is fully opened, the outside face of the front-half segment of the lid acts as a music desk (Plates 59a and 59b). With a fully opened lid, space is created along the entire length of the instrument for sound to be liberated. The fully opened lid, however, does not fully expose the soundboard or strings. Once again, as a result, the lid acts as a damper, blocking out intrusive action noise and some overtones. A smoother, richer and slightly more distant timbre emerges.

The disadvantage of this remarkable design lies in the fact that the player is limited to the sonic character resulting from the influence either of a half-open or a fully opened lid; the player is never allowed to exploit the piano’s unadulterated volume or character of sound.

Visually, the fully opened lid is beautiful. For the time, its proportions are exotic (Plate 59a); inlaid lines (stringing) of satinwood form an ornamental rectangular panel that emphasises the shape of the instrument’s case; and the elaborate patterns of the grain of the lid’s yellow mahogany are clearly visible (Plate 59b).

During the late eighteenth century, playing pre-composed music from memory was not a commonly encountered or expected element of the performance aesthetic. The use of a music score in performance was the norm. This is confirmed by many late eighteenth-century paintings, drawings and cartoons, in which the use of a music score in performance is depicted.

The English organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens describes a domestic performance within which context the score was used: ‘A little time after, a … Girl … entertain[ed] us with a Harpsichord Lesson; and Mr. Peter Denys … was to accompany her on the Violin. I was on the left hand of the young lady, and had the honour of turning the Book for her.’

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174 See ‘English Square Pianoforte by Frederick Beck, London, circa 1782’, in Norfolk Charitable Trust records. I am indebted to Elisabeth McGregor, Curator/Archivist of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, for providing me with this information.

175 Improvisation created a performance context within which a music score was usually absent.

Plate 59 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): lockboard music desk—right-hand front lid flap closed.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 59a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): lid open—the backwards-slanting outside face of the front-half of the lid acts as a music desk.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
Plate 59b Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): lid open—the backwards-slanting outside face of the front-half of the lid acts as a music desk.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.

Plate 59c Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1782/87?): lid standing open, revealing the hinged lockboard music desk (top centre of image).

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Norfolk Charitable Trust, Sharon, MA, USA.
This is not to say that performance from memory did not take place. C. P. E. Bach, for example, goes so far as to suggest that works that have been memorised should be played in the dark, in order (ultimately) to increase proficiency in sight reading: ‘In order to become oriented at the keyboard and thus make easier the acquisition of a necessary skill at sight reading, it is a good practice to play memorized pieces in the dark.’

Many late eighteenth-century paintings, drawings and cartoons also show square pianos being played with their lids down. This may not always have been because the lockboard of some square pianos was an integral component of the music desk; perhaps the closed lid also functioned as a moderator of tone.

The closed lid of square pianos not only filters out extraneous action noise, but also suppresses the effect of some of the upper partials of the sound. This produces a slightly ‘darker’ and more mellow timbre. Arguably, the quality of the sound is enhanced, although the volume is less. Late eighteenth-century players and listeners were attracted to this ‘warmer’ timbre.

That the lid of a square piano usually remained closed in performance may also have been so because, ‘in an age when elegance and refinement were all-important, exposing the working parts of the hammer action would be somehow indecorous.’ If a stronger tone was required, a ‘small lid flap at the right might be opened, for a more immediate sound, at the player’s discretion’ (Plate 60).

The provision of a prop-stick (in order to hold the entire lid open) fitted in some English square pianos made during the 1780s and 1790s suggests that it gradually became ‘increasingly common to open up the piano to maximize the immediacy and loudness of the instrument’ (Plate 61).

The lid-stick of Worgan’s piano is missing. The lid-stick would most probably have been tapered, and made of wood. It was hinged at the bottom (wide) end of the taper on a screw (extant). On Worgan’s piano, the lid-stick fasting hole is located at the bass end of the underside of the lid. Witness marks show the lid-stick’s arc of rotation around its hinging screw (Plate 62).

By the end of the final decade of the eighteenth century,

178 Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 79.
179 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 90.
there were thus three options. A square piano could be played with the
lid entirely closed ... which ... is ... the [option] most frequently seen
in contemporary pictures. Alternatively, it could be played with the lid
flap open on the right, in which position most of the sound is available.
Or, if the maximum sound was required, as, for example, when playing
a sonata with violin and cello, the whole lid could be propped open.181

Plate 60 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London,
1780/86?): right-hand front lid flap open.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

181 Ibid., p. 79.
Plate 61 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): entire lid held open (manually).

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Plate 62 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): witness marks indicating the (missing) lid-stick’s arc of rotation.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Chapter 5

Tuning George Worgan’s Square Piano: A keyboard all at $C$

George Worgan would have been acutely aware of temperature and humidity changes on board the *Sirius*, because the vagaries of the weather would have constantly compromised the tuning stability of his piano, which was wooden-framed. Keeping his piano constantly in tune may well have been akin to an uninterrupted nightmare.

Not all owners of keyboard instruments were capable of keeping their harpsichords and/or pianos in tune; as a result, many professional keyboard performers found recurring alternative employment as tuners. An idea of the scale of such activity is revealed by ‘the accounts of Thomas Green (1719–1791), a Hertfordshire organist, tuner of musical instruments, and teacher of music. In 1755–65, he tuned about 180 different harpsichords, 115 spinets and 40 pianofortes, nearly all within eight miles of Hertford.’

Owing to the overtly musical environment within which George Worgan was raised, the comprehensive nature of his musical training and the apparent importance of music in his life, it is reasonable to assume that he was a sensitive and erudite musician who would not easily have tolerated an out-of-tune instrument. Despite the fact that no extant document mentions Worgan (or anyone else for that matter) tuning his piano, it is highly probable that this is something he would have done himself, and possibly (because of changes in temperature and humidity) quite often.

In 1824, Carl Dieudonné (ca 1780–1825) and Johann Lorenz Schiedmayer (1786–1860) remarked in their *Brief Manual on the Proper Use and Knowledge Concerning the Playing, Tuning, and Maintenance of Fortepianos*:

> As for the strings … they … suffer … from heat and cold … If a piano were tuned in a room at 16 degrees, and the temperature were to drop overnight to 10 degrees, the bass would already be higher, and vice versa …

182 Although the English bentside spinet had ‘neither the resources nor the depth and brilliance of the’ harpsichord, ‘neither did [it] … have the cost or upkeep of the larger’ instrument. It did, however, ‘provide the middle and upper classes with harpsichords of a sort, capable of playing the contemporary literature’. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, p. 499, fn. 25.


A very good, durable piano can be tuned today and in a few days, indeed, even on the next day, the purity of the tuning could be lost, because the composition of the air … has changed itself completely … 185

Such a piano can … in very stable … air … do without tuning for an entire quarter year.186

The circumstances of George Worgan’s upbringing represent a context within which the tuning of a keyboard instrument would have been both ordinary and recurrent. Worgan’s father was one of London’s professional master musicians, and doubtless would have tuned his own harpsichord. For a professional harpsichordist ‘to call someone in to tune a harpsichord would have been as preposterous an idea as calling someone in to tune a violin for a professional violinist’.187

George Worgan received a complete musical training from his father. It is probable that his training included learning how to tune and maintain a harpsichord and piano.

Tuning a harpsichord or piano was a skill that did not take very long to master. In 1810, Captain Thomas Williamson observed that the skill may be effected in the course of a month, or six weeks, by attention to the instructions of a regular tuner, who would feel himself well satisfied under a moderate compensation … Besides, in a country whose climate deranges the most skilful adjustment of the wires, often in a few minutes, merely by a slight exposure to heat, or to damp, the expense attendant upon such frequent tunings, as are indispensably requisite, would speedily absorb the full value of the instrument itself; the ordinary rates being a guinea for a grand-piano, and twelve shillings for a square one. Therefore, whether considered as a convenience, or as a matter of economy, too much cannot be said in recommendation of every [player] … learning to tune [their] … piano.188

Tuning a harpsichord or piano involved two important tasks. First, fixing the basic pitch of the instrument, and second, dividing the octave into its 12 constituent notes.

185 Ibid., p. 291.
186 Ibid., pp. 291–3.
Chapter 5

Fixing the Basic Pitch

Usually, fixing the basic pitch of a keyboard instrument was achieved either by using a pitchpipe or (more uncommonly) a tuning fork. A contemporaneously representative recommendation for the use of a pitchpipe was made, for example, in *Apollo’s Cabinet*, a publication that contained eight song settings written by George Worgan’s father, John Worgan, amongst the 141 song settings by 45 other composers.

A pitchpipe is a small end-blown, square-bodied wind instrument without finger holes, ‘fitted with a moveable wooden plunger or piston on which a scale of notes with a range of about an octave [is] … marked’. When blown, the pitchpipe sounds the note of the scale as marked on the plunger. The mouthpiece of a pitchpipe may be shaped like that of a recorder—that is, ‘beaked’—or as a central turned element.

Typically, pitchpipes were made of mahogany. In his *Elementa musica* of 1739, Quirinus (Gerbrandzoon) van Blankenburg (ca 1654–1739) wrote: ‘you can make a square flute without finger holes, in which a sliding rod fits. On the four sides of the rod, different [pitch] levels can be marked … This is called a pitchpipe.’ Pitchpipes have limitations, as they can be ‘unstable in sound because of warmth and cold, humidity and dryness’, and the pitch ‘can be raised or lowered … by blowing harder or softer’.

Generally, however, ‘pitch-pipes operate on the same level of accuracy as recorders, since they use the same blowing technique. They are thus well within a useable range of tolerance for conveying musical pitch.’ Unlike recorders, a pitchpipe’s sound is harsh and consistently piercing.

Haynes compellingly reveals that a ‘considerable’ amount of historical evidence exists to support the fact that during the eighteenth century ‘the pitchpipe was the usual means of carrying pitch’, and that ‘pitchpipes were often used

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193 Ibid., p. 18.
to fix the basic pitch of keyboards’.\(^{194}\) Pitchpipes were small, portable and convenient to use. George Worgan may well have used one to fix the basic pitch of his piano.

Pitchpipes were used well into the nineteenth century. In 1862, James Eardley submitted a patent for an ‘improved chromatic’ pitchpipe. Eardley’s pitchpipe was made of nickel, and was sometimes used in England and Scotland by church organists and choirmasters.

In 1905, the Scottish nonagenarian William Arthur stated:

> In the Auld Kirk, in my younger days, there was neither choir nor organ. On William Durie—the old precentor—sounding the keynote from his whistle [that is, a pitchpipe], immediately all the people joined in, and, keeping time to the evolutions of the pitchpipe, they sang together with great sound and evident pleasure.\(^{195}\)

Furthermore, William Arthur observed that by pushing a pitchpipe’s moveable wooden plunger in or out,

> an adept could play a tune: only, the tone being somewhat strident and coercive, it is better adapted as a prelude to the singing of the Psalms in the house of God. Directly attacking the nervous system, the shrill notes of the pitchpipe roused the sleepers when everything else had failed, and at the same time indicated the keynote to the congregation.\(^{196}\)

During the eighteenth century, tuning forks were used only sometimes to fix the basic pitch of a keyboard instrument. ‘Most references to tuning forks through the 18th century imply that they were a novelty and not commonly used.’\(^{197}\)

Sometimes, a non-keyboard instrument was used to fix the pitch of a keyboard instrument. For example, in a ‘somewhat lascivious letter written by’ the novelist Laurence Sterne (1713–68) ‘to Mrs Elizabeth Draper’, around March 1767, Sterne suggests that ‘your Piano Forte must be tuned from the brass middle string of your Guittar, which is C’.\(^{198}\)

\(^{194}\) Ibid., p. 19.
\(^{195}\) Quoted in *Proceedings of the Society, December 11 1905*, p. 43.
\(^{196}\) Ibid., p. 44.
During the eighteenth century, the context of performance often determined the range within which a basic pitch might sound. ‘Opera pitch’ and ‘chamber pitch’ were usually different from one another (opera pitch was often lower). ‘Church pitch’ was usually the highest.  

During the 1720s, in London, the basic pitch of Händel’s opera orchestra was approximately $a^1 = 415$ Hz (a$^1$ above middle C vibrates at 415 cycles per second, which is about a semitone below modern concert pitch). By 1751, Händel’s opera orchestra played at about $a^1 = 423$ Hz. The anonymous pitchpipe (made in London?) that Händel gave to Charles Burney (currently owned by the Royal Society of Musicians) possibly dates from the 1750s; this pitchpipe gives a pitch of $a^1 = 429$ Hz.

An original English pitchpipe stamped 1747 and made by Samuell Bennet gives a pitch of $a^1 = 407$ Hz. ‘This pitch-pipe is about 40 cm long, and 12 in diameter. Its size suggests that it stayed in one place, and was meant to be quite accurate.’

The eminent (and tone-deaf) English scientist Alexander J. Ellis (1814–90), in his article ‘On the History of Musical Pitch’, noted the existence of [tuning] forks probably made about 1750 in London that sound A[a$^1$]–424. The famous tuning fork left by Händel at the Foundling Hospital when the Messiah was performed in 1751 is at A[a$^1$]–423, and is supposed to represent the pitch of the organ (a$^1$ = 423 Hertz was the so-called ‘new consort pitch’).

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199 Currently, we think of all instruments as being tuned to the same pitch, a$^1$ = 440 Hz—that is, a$^1$ above middle C vibrates at 440 cycles per second. This pitch standard is commonly referred to as ‘concert pitch’. Worldwide, many orchestras now tune slightly higher than a$^1$ = 440, with ‘concert pitch’ sitting somewhere between a$^1$ = 440 and a$^1$ = 443 Hz. A pitch standard near a$^1$ = 440 is actually quite old. It is about the same as Beethoven’s Wiener-Ton, for instance. And because Viennese music was influenced by Italy, Wiener-Ton was inherited from Corista Veneto, which was itself derived from a standard known as tutti punto that had been common in northern Italy since before [Claudio] Monteverdi’s [1567–1643] time. All these names, used in different periods, referred to a pitch in proximity to a$^1$ = 440.’ Haynes, A History of Performing Pitch, p. xxxvi.

200 Ibid., p. 291.

201 Commonly, the octave is divided into 12 notes. The distance (‘interval’) between each adjacent note is called a semitone.


203 Ibid., p. 475.

204 Ibid., p. 290. This pitchpipe is currently owned by the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. See ibid., p. 475.

205 Ibid., p. 475.


Between 1770 and 1800, the pitch of woodwind instruments built in England moved upwards; extant instruments are ‘pitched between a\(^1\) = 419 Hz and a\(^1\) = 445 Hz, the range of a semitone, with an average of a\(^1\) = 434’.\(^{209}\) English chamber organs range between a\(^1\) = 419 Hz and a\(^1\) = 428 Hz, with most extant instruments pitched at around a\(^1\) = 423 Hz.

It is likely that George Worgan, using a pitchpipe, or even a tuning fork, fixed the basic pitch of his piano on board the *Sirius* at somewhere between a\(^1\) = 419 Hz and a\(^1\) = 434 Hz.

**Dividing the Octave into its 12 Constituent Notes**

After fixing the basic pitch of a keyboard instrument, musicians who tuned their own harpsichords or pianos would then divide the octave into its 12 constituent notes. This tuning was usually done by ear. Eighteenth-century ears were very sensitive to interval\(^{210}\) differences. Tuning a keyboard instrument involved judging the ‘relationships between the two notes of an interval by listening to the two notes melodically only’.\(^{211}\) ‘The first note was never sustained while the second note was being played. Therefore, no beats could be heard. In other words, tuners tuned in the manner that singers sing.’\(^{212}\)

Currently, the system of tuning commonly used for modern pianos results in every one of the 12 adjacent notes in an octave being the same sounding distance apart from one another; the size of the interval between each adjacent note (100 ‘cents’—a cent is one one-hundredth of a semitone) is identical. This means that each of the 24 major and minor scales has identical interval relationships.\(^{213}\) The musical consequences are

1. that every tonality or ‘key’ has the same ‘flavour’ or ‘character’
2. any tonality can be transposed to any other tonality, without the transposition having a different ‘flavour’ or ‘character’ from the original.

This tuning system is now commonly referred to as ‘equal temperament’.

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210 An ‘interval’ is the sounding distance between two pitches.
213 See ibid., p. 769.
The ‘Common Established Temperament’
(‘Well Temperament’)

During the eighteenth century, a tuning system emerged (as one of many available tuning systems) within the context of secular keyboard music that resulted in every one of the adjacent notes in an octave not being the same sounding distance apart. The size of the interval between each adjacent note could be different.

This meant that each of the 24 major and minor scales contained its own unique interval relationships … 214

During the 18th century, this tuning system replaced previous tuning systems to such an extent that it was referred to as the ‘common established temperament.’ Instruments tuned with the common established temperament were also sometimes described as being ‘well tuned,’ or ‘well tempered’ … 215

In the early 1960s, the term ‘well temperament’ replaced the eighteenth-century term ‘common established temperament’.216

The English composer, music theorist, writer on music and Fellow of the Royal Society the Reverend William Jones described well temperament in 1781, and credited its invention to the Italian composer and theorist Francesco Antonio Vallotti (1697–1780).217 Vallotti probably developed his temperament as early as the 1720s.218

The musical consequence of well temperament is that certain tonalities feel ‘tense’ (because they sound relatively out of tune), whilst others feel ‘relaxed’, pure and sonorous (because they sound either relatively or perfectly in tune). This results in each tonality having a distinct character or flavour. Eighteenth-century composers wrote with these characters or flavours in mind, and ‘incorporated the psychological effects of the various sizes of intervals into the emotional contents of the music itself’.219

214 Ibid., p. 769.
215 See ibid., pp. 173 and 294, note 5.
216 Ibid., p. 173.
218 Jorgensen, Tuning, p. 179. The German theorist, organist and composer Andreas Werkmeister (1645–1706) described well temperament as early as 1698 in his Erweiterte und Verbesserte Orgel-Probe [Advanced and Improved Organ-Practice] (Quedlinburg: Theodori Philippi Calvisii, 1698).
219 Jorgensen, Tuning, p. 157.
According to the ‘philosopher, physician, writer, administrator of science, and master of many languages’220 Thomas Young (1733–1829), the eighteenth-century preference for well temperament resulted from the ‘considerable advantage’ obtained from the ‘difference of character produced by … various keys’—that is, the differing character of various tonalities.221 Young states:

When it is considered, that upon an average of all the music ever composed, some particular keys [tonalities] occur at least twice as often as others, there seems to be a very strong … reason for making the harmony the most perfect [that is, in tune] in those keys which are most frequently used; since the aggregate sum of all the imperfections [that is, the ‘out of tune’ intervals and tonalities] … must by this means be diminished in the greatest possible degree, and the diversity of character [that is, the emotional ‘character’ or ‘flavour’ of each tonality is] … preserved. Indeed, in practice, this method, under different modifications, has been almost universal.222

In his Il Principio or a Regular Introduction to Playing on the Harpsichord or Organ223 of 1760, the organist, composer and master of the Chapel Royal (England’s most prominent school of music) James Nares (1715–83) implied that well temperament was the most commonly encountered English secular tuning system.

George Worgan, as a thoroughly trained late eighteenth-century English musician, may have tuned his piano to well temperament; in order to facilitate this, he would have used a T-shaped tuning hammer to turn the wrest-pins.

On the other hand, the tuning method adopted by Worgan may have been that published by Nicolo Pasquali (1718–57). Pasquali’s ‘An Approved Method of Tuning the Harpsichord’, printed on a single page at the conclusion of his The Art of Fingering the Harpsichord (written between 1743 and 1757?),224 was both popular in England and widely available.

Pasquali migrated from Italy to London in about 1743, and he quickly established himself as a composer in both Dublin and Edinburgh. His tuning system is meant for harpsichords, not pianos; however, the popularity and easy availability of

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220 Ibid., p. 251.
222 Ibid., pp. 144–5.
223 J. Nares, Il Principio or a Regular Introduction to Playing on the Harpsichord or Organ (London: Welcker, 1760).
224 N. Pasquali, The Art of Fingering the Harpsichord; Illustrated with Examples in Notes; To which is Added, an Approved Method of Tuning this Instrument (Edinburgh: Robert Bremner, n.d. [1743–57?]), p. 28.
Pasquali’s treatise in England may have meant that Worgan was not only familiar with Pasquali’s tuning plan, but also adopted Pasquali’s recommendations when tuning his piano.

In relation to well temperament, Pasquali’s tuning system is old fashioned. Pasquali advises that ‘[t]he firste Note G [should] … be Tuned by a pitch Pipe or any other wind Instrument. The 5ths must be Tuned rather flat than otherways.’\textsuperscript{225} If the resulting thirds are ‘fine … what has been done may be depended on; if otherways it will be best to begin afresh, and Tune all over again … By this Method of Tuning the imperfection of the Instrument is thrown in A\textsubscript{b} and E\textsubscript{b} its 5th’.\textsuperscript{226}

That Pasquali mentions an ‘imperfection’ lying between the interval of the fifth A\textsubscript{b}–E\textsubscript{b} reveals the temperament to be ‘meantone temperament’—or, ‘the old tuning’—not well temperament. This is because in Pasquali’s tuning plan, the G-sharps do not function as A-flats. In playing terms, for piano, the difference between G\# and A\textsubscript{b} is usually one of nomenclature only; both notes are usually played by depressing the same key lever, and both notes are usually sounded by the same string (or strings). In Pasquali’s tuning plan, bearing in mind that G\# and A\textsubscript{b} are the same key lever and string(s), the interval E–G\# is acceptably in tune, whilst the interval A\textsubscript{b}–C sounds hideously out of tune. The disadvantage of meantone temperament is that modulation is severely restricted; only tonalities such as C, F, G, B\textsubscript{b}, D, E\textsubscript{b} and A-major will sound in tune.

A late eighteenth-century anonymous amateur poet even went so far as to compose a poem on the subject of tuning, likening the difficulties of eradicating any severely out of tune tonalities (along with their ‘sick semitone’)\textsuperscript{227} to ‘the trouble a lady has in expunging that last troublesome pimple from her visage!’\textsuperscript{228}

\section*{Maintaining George Worgan’s Square Piano}

\subsection*{String Breakage}

Apart from keeping his piano in tune, George Worgan would have had to take responsibility for its maintenance. Instrument maintenance was a useful sideline associated with piano ownership.\textsuperscript{229}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., p. 28.
\item\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., p. 28.
\item\textsuperscript{227} Woodfield, \textit{Music of the Raj}, p. 80.
\item\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., p. 80.
\item\textsuperscript{229} See ibid., p. 61.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
During the early nineteenth century, the inevitability of string breakage was an issue that was discussed in several tuning and instrument maintenance manuals. Structural weaknesses arising from impurities (nonmetallic inclusions) in handmade iron strings often caused some strings to snap spontaneously, especially when a sudden rise in pitch occurred as a result of the increase in humidity and drop in temperature associated with a storm. (Despite the fact that strings become more brittle over time, ‘the majority of historical strings that remain in instruments today will probably not break. Any faulty original strings will have had the opportunity to break during the past centuries. Any surviving historical strings are bound to represent the very best standard of historical string.’)\(^{231}\)

Sudden changes in the environment, such as sudden drafts, the heat from candles and the increase in humidity and temperature caused by an audience located in proximity to the instrument, may cause historical strings to break. In the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 20 January 1831, an anonymous author wrote:

> The pitch of a pianoforte is lowered in a warm day or in a warm room, owing to the expansion of the strings being greater than the wooden frame-work; and in cold the reverse will happen. A harp or piano, which is well tuned in a morning drawing-room, cannot be perfectly in tune when the crowded evening party has heated the room.\(^{232}\)

Within such contexts, the rapid expansion and contraction of the strings may cause some of them to snap. Tuning the piano to a high basic pitch may also result in string breakage.

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the English had already encountered the problem of broken piano strings in extreme climates. For example, in 1810, Captain Thomas Williamson recommended that travellers to India take an abundance of spare piano strings: ‘Nor would it be superfluous for a lady to take with her several sets of wires for her piano: they being very scarce.’\(^{233}\)

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Fine music wire [had] ... relatively high value for weight and could be shipped long distances with profit ... [During the late eighteenth century] as now, wire was used for a wide variety of decorative and mechanical purposes and so called ‘music wire’ was often chosen for use in other trades because of its superior quality. Studies of guild regulations and of trade records such as import and export documents have shed light on wire as an item of commerce.\(^{234}\)

If Worgan had to replace any broken strings in the bass register of his piano—that is, brass strings—he would have been forced to deal with the ensuing sonic and musical ramifications:

When a brass string breaks ... and is replaced, the new string at first sounds duller than the old one and will stand out from its neighbours even if they all came from the same spool of wire. The effect, disturbing to musicians ... is called ‘brightening’ because with time the duller sound of the new string becomes brighter until it eventually matches that of the other strings. This process occurs most rapidly in the first few days but can take weeks, even months, to complete.\(^{235}\)

When compared with modern steel strings (which sound ‘brighter’ and less ‘sweet’ than historical strings, being ‘filled with partials ... that are too pronounced to be pleasant’),\(^{236}\) iron strings—used in all registers, excluding the bass, of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century pianos—are ‘drawn’\(^{237}\) at a lower temperature. The lower forging temperature can result in impurities (nonmetallic inclusions) in the strings. In a metal wire, nonmetallic inclusions ‘have the effect of reducing the area of metal that bears the load and in extreme cases will cause fracture of the wire at that point. This loss of strength is called overdrawing.’\(^{238}\) The impurities problem was rectified by Henry Bessemer (1813–98) in 1856, with his invention of the so-called ‘Bessemer converter’. The converter—a furnace for forging steel—enabled blasts of cold air to be blown through the heated liquid metal, which burned off excess carbon and any other impurities that may have been present. The Bessemer converter had an enormous impact on the quality of steel piano strings—strings that were cheaper, more durable and that could take greater tension than the iron strings, which they quickly replaced.

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\(^{235}\) Ibid., p. 113.
\(^{237}\) ‘To draw wire ... metal [is] formed into a strip or rod which is then pulled through a tapered hole shaped somewhat like a funnel.’ Goodway and Odell, ‘The Metallurgy of 17th and 18th-Century Music Wire’, p. 21.
\(^{238}\) Ibid., p. 67.
During the eighteenth century, wire for stringing keyboard instruments was ‘carefully manufactured to meet an exacting set of service requirements’. Evidence concerning the drawing of wire does not point to exotic alloys and arcane ‘lost’ processes but rather of common materials transformed by traditional skill and craft into a commercial product of superb quality. If there was any ‘secret’ of the old wire it was in this skilled and knowing craftsmanship, comparable in its way to that of the instruments upon which it was strung.239

George Worgan, as the owner of a piano within a context that was located far from the piano technicians of London, would have needed the skills necessary to replace broken strings; he had probably obtained such skills as part of his upbringing in a musical home. There can be little doubt that Worgan would have had the foresight to travel with at least one spare set of strings.240

Re-Leathering Hammerheads

Re-leathering hammerheads is a standard procedure in fortepiano maintenance. With a lot of playing, the density of the leather that covers the hammers changes; the leather becomes compacted and hardened. This results in the tone of fortepianos becoming brighter, more metallic and harsh. If George Worgan played his piano often (and if the leather that Frederick Beck had used to cover the hammerheads was not very durable),241 the hammerhead leather would have eventually hardened and produced an unpleasant tone. In order to maintain the characteristically sweet sound of his piano, George Worgan may, on occasion, have had to re-leather some hammerheads.

On English square pianos, there were always at least two layers, and usually three, of leather over each wooden hammerhead core. Worgan’s piano, in the manner of Zumpe, has three layers (Plate 63); this is consistent with Beck’s usual practice, as is representatively evidenced, for example, by the hammerhead coverings on a Beck square piano dated 1778 (Plate 63a).

When replacing the two leather under layers of a hammerhead (this would not often have been necessary), Worgan would have selected thinner leather for the treble (about 1 millimetre), and thicker for the bass (about 1.2 millimetres).

239 Ibid., pp. 127–8.
240 Most of the iron strings on Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano are original. It is not known when the strings that failed were first replaced. See ‘Stringing’, in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
241 Ozone, oxygen and humidity also affect the durability of leather.
Plate 63 Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1780/86?): leather-covered hammerheads of the first four bass notes (FF–GG#)—for each hammerhead, two thin foundation layers of brown vegetable-tanned leather are overlaid with approximately 1 millimetre of firm, fibrous buff leather stretched tightly around a flattened semicircular solid limewood (?) core (no larger than a shirt button). The leather is glued to the core only on the sides.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Frederick Beck’s pianos are closely modelled on those of Zumpe. Beck’s aesthetic of sound, however, differed from that of Zumpe. In any piano, the hammerhead covering is the most influential factor in the creation of timbre. Zumpe’s hammerheads comprise a fairly thin outer layer of leather, which produces a sweet, light and percussive style of voicing. On the other hand, Beck’s thicker outer layer of leather creates a tone that is more mellow than that of Zumpe’s pianos. Worgan would have been sure to maintain the characteristic tone of his Beck piano by re-leathering hammerheads with a fairly thick outer layer (Plate 63). The ‘leather is always glued to the … sides’ of the hammerhead core, ‘never over the top surface, even for [the] under layers. The leather is wrapped like a [jam] roll’ (Plates 63 and 63a), with the glue remaining ‘out of the string contact area all the way to the
[wooden] core. The layers must be in good physical contact [with one another], but not stretched so tightly that they become hard. This was, and is, a technique that is acquired with practice.'242

Worgan would then have shaped (shaved) the layers of leather, thinning them downwards on the lower sides of the hammerhead.

Plate 63a Square piano by Frederick Beck (fl. ca 1756 – ca 1798) (London, 1778): leather-covered hammerheads of the first six bass notes (FF–AA#)—for each hammerhead, two thin foundation layers of brown vegetable-tanned leather are overlaid with approximately 1 millimetre of firm, fibrous buff leather stretched tightly around a flattened semicircular solid limewood (?) core (no larger than a shirt button). The leather is glued to the core only on the sides.

Source: Reproduced with permission of Thomas Strange. Photo by Thomas Strange.

Because Beck’s instruments are closely modelled on those of Zumpe, it is likely that Worgan would have used vegetable-tanned243 sheep leather to cover the hammerheads. (Typically, this leather type was ‘used for the outer covering of’ hammerheads on English pianos ‘from the 1760s’ to ca 1795.244 ‘The leather used on English squares from c1800 onwards was oil-tanned Chamois (the alpine goat-like animal Rupicapra-rupicapra).’245

243 See ‘Tanning’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.
245 Strange, ‘Re-Leathering Your Square Piano Hammers and Action Parts’, p. 5.
Although at Sydney Cove during the last years of the eighteenth century ‘leather made from the skins of cattle, kangaroos and seals, and tanned with the bark of the wattle tree proved good’, there can be little doubt that any hammerheads covered with such leather would have sounded different to those adjacent to them. Perhaps Worgan brought a small supply of hammerhead leather with him from England, in order to be able (as needed) to maintain the sonic aesthetic of his piano.

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246 Kangaroo leather is highly flexible, and is three times stronger than cow leather.
248 The hammerhead leathering found on Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano may be original. It is not possible to cut a replacement layer of leather so that it fits exactly with the layer underneath. Layers of original hammerhead leathering are all cut together, and so are exact; this can be seen on Worgan’s piano (see Plate 232).
Chapter 6

George Worgan Plays His Piano in Rio de Janeiro

If George Worgan had the skills and time to tune and maintain his piano during the First Fleet’s journey to Botany Bay, there would have been nothing to prevent him from deriving satisfaction from playing the instrument when conditions at sea, and his workload, allowed. The piano would have needed to be in good working order when, according to fellow voyager Arthur Bowes Smyth, Worgan used the instrument in performance on board the *Sirius*.

During the First Fleet’s journey to Botany Bay, a week-long stopover in Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, was made between Sunday, 3 June and Sunday, 10 June 1787. ‘Santa Cruz, with its warmth, humidity and Spanish architecture set against a backdrop of dramatic, rocky mountains, must have seemed like another world’¹ to some of the First Fleet’s officers and crew.

Whilst in Tenerife, John Turnpenny Altree (1736–98), the surgeon volunteer appointed to the women’s convict ship the *Lady Penrhyn*, became ill and was taken off the ship. He was replaced with ‘the 37-year-old assistant surgeon’² Arthur Bowes Smyth.

‘Bowes Smyth was born in Tolleshunt D’Arcy in Essex, the seventh son of a surgeon, and as a youth would follow in his father’s footsteps, working locally as a surgeon, before signing up with the First Fleet.’³ Smyth, ‘an evangelical Christian’,⁴ joined the *Lady Penrhyn* in late March 1787,⁵ arriving in Portsmouth by mail coach⁶ four months after George Worgan had been discharged from the Portsmouth guardship *Ganges⁷* to the *Sirius*. (As will be seen, the articulate and perceptive Smyth provides us with a detailed account of the context within which Worgan played his piano for a select group of his fellow officers.)

Having sailed down the coast of Tenerife, past the ‘spectacular high peak of the island with its ruffled collar of clouds’⁸—‘the altitude of which … was 15,396 feet

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¹ Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 13.
² Hill, 1788, p. 75.
³ Ibid., p. 75.
⁵ See Hill, 1788, p. 75.
⁸ Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 13.
[4693 metres], only 148 yards [135.3 metres] short of three miles” — the First Fleet made its way to the Portuguese port of Rio de Janeiro (commonly known as St Sebastian).

It may, at first, seem odd that after leaving Tenerife — that is, the Canary Islands, off the coast of north-west Africa — the fleet should make for the Cape of Good Hope (Africa’s southern tip) via Rio de Janeiro (South America). Why not simply follow the West African coast southwards?

During the eighteenth century, time-honoured ‘sailing rituals remained fundamentally unchanged — follow the currents, sail before the winds and follow the paths of seabirds’. The route from Tenerife to the Cape of Good Hope was designed to avoid the Doldrums — or the Intertropical Convergence Zone as the meteorologists call it … In this region … violent thunderstorms and stagnant calms … are … frequent. Often there is no wind, not the slightest breeze. And a ship becalmed in extreme heat is a danger to the health of its crew, let alone to any human cargo below decks without adequate ventilation … If a ship persisted in maintaining a southerly bearing, it would, when finally emerging from the Doldrums, be slowed by … [a current known as the South Atlantic Gyre] flowing in the opposite direction. And if it stayed close to the West African coast, it would encounter head-on the full force of [the so-called Benguela Current thundering up from the Antarctic] … Phillip therefore steered a south-westerly course from Tenerife.

From Rio de Janeiro, a strong current — known as the Southern Connecting Current — flows eastwards to the Cape of Good Hope, and this provided the First Fleet with ‘a red carpet ride to Cape Town’.

On Tuesday, 7 August 1787, the fleet arrived at Rio de Janeiro, anchoring ‘in a harbour graced by 40 islands, and surrounded by peaks … with rainforest slopes’.

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11 Ibid., pp. 170–2.
12 Ibid., p. 171.
In elegant, closely written copperplate, Smyth informs us in his journal that on 7 August 1787—the start of a month-long stopover in Rio de Janeiro—he received a pressing invitation [from Worgan] to dine on board the Sirius while we lay in harbour, & to hear him play on the piano forte. He has a very fine one on board, is the son of Dr. Wogern D. Mus [Doctor of Music]: & seems a very agreeable good kind of man.

In ca 1790, Smyth compiled a fair copy of his journal. When compared with the original journal, the fair copy’s entry for Tuesday, 7 August 1787 is slightly enlarged:

This day Mr. Wogan Surgeon of the Sirius dined on board, to whom I was introduced by Mr. [John] Watts [a naval lieutenant, who was a sketcher and diarist], & rec’d an Invitation to dine w/ him in the Sirius, & to hear his piano forte; he is a son of Dr. Wogan D. Music: & seems a very sensible good kind of man.

Smyth’s evaluation of Worgan’s piano as being ‘very fine’ suggests that the instrument may have been the beautifully veneered 1780/86? Beck square piano. Smyth’s opinion concerning the quality of Worgan’s piano raises several questions.

1. Was his evaluation based on comments made by others?
2. Was his evaluation based on a comment made by Worgan?
3. Had Smyth already seen, but not heard Worgan’s piano?
4. Had Smyth already both seen and heard Worgan’s piano?
5. Was Smyth’s evaluation based singly upon his observation of the piano’s ornate casework and unique legs? (As luck would have it, the design and quality of manufacture of British furniture were at their zenith just as British culture took root in the Antipodes.)

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16 Ibid., Parts 41–2.
17 There are three extant manuscript versions of Smyth’s journal. What is believed to be the original version is held at the National Library of Australia, Canberra. The British Museum, London, and the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, each hold a version that is believed to be a fair copy.
6. Was Smyth’s evaluation based upon an informed perception of the inherent musical qualities of the instrument?
7. What were Smyth’s criteria for judging the quality of a piano?
8. Was Smyth simply being polite?

Unfortunately, Smyth provides no information concerning his prior experience with pianos, music or his criteria concerning the evaluation of quality and aesthetic worth.

On Saturday, 18 August 1787, 11 days after receiving Worgan’s ‘pressing invitation’ to dinner and a recital, Smyth states: ‘Mr. Wogan the Surgeon of the Sirius dined with us this day & made me promise to dine with him on board the Sirius on Monday & after dinner … go into the town to visit 2 monasteries where there were organs to play upon.’

In the ca 1790 fair copy of his journal, Smyth’s equivalent entry reads: ‘Mr. Wogan did us the favor of his company to dinner this day, & made me promise to dine on board the Sirius wth him on Monday & proposed after dinner going into the town to visit two monasteries where there were excellnt organs.’

Smyth was true to his promise and, on Monday, 20 August 1787, he reports that he ‘went wth Mr Watts to dine on board the Sirius wth Mr. Wogan (the Surgeon).’

In the fair copy of his journal, Smyth’s entry for Monday, 20 August 1787 begins: ‘Went accompanied by Mr. Watts to dine on board the Sirius with Mr. Wogan’, this was 13 days after Worgan had first issued his invitation for Smyth ‘to dine on board the Sirius … & to hear him play on the piano forte’. During this 13-day period, Worgan would have had time to stabilise the tuning of his piano, as well as to practise. (Given that the Sirius lay anchored in the calm waters of Rio de Janiero Harbour at the time, it is likely that these activities took place with greater ease than would have been possible on the rolling open ocean.)

When Smyth and Watts arrived on board the Sirius, Commodore Arthur Phillip and Captain John Hunter, captain of the Sirius,

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21 Smyth, A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales, Image 45 (no. a1085045).
23 Smyth, A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales, Images 45 (no. a1085045) and 46 (no. a1085046).
25 An engraved portrait of Arthur Phillip by Francis Wheatley (1747–1801), dated 1786, is housed at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra (Catalogue No. 2010.54).
26 An engraved portrait of Captain John Hunter by Daniel Orme (1766 – ca 1832), dated 1792, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an9631633).
were on deck ... the Commodore inform’ed me that he had mention’d my going to use my drudge [medical skills] to the Vice Roy & that I had permission to use it when & where I pleased, & that when I went he w[ould] supply me w[ith] 2 men & a Portuguese from the Pallace.\textsuperscript{27}

In this instance, Governor Phillip gave Smyth permission to use his medical skills within contexts other than on board the ships of the First Fleet. The granting of such permission was both a gracious gesture and a required protocol, given the context.

Smyth recalls the event in simpler terms in the ca 1790 fair copy of his journal: ‘When I went on board the Sirius, Governor Philip & Cap’ Hunter were both walking the quarter deck & behaved very politely to me.’\textsuperscript{28}

Smyth names seven of those who sat at table together: Lieutenant Maxwell of the navy (most probably George William Maxwell, Third Lieutenant of the \textit{ Sirius}); Lieutenant John Long, the Adjutant of Marines and Second Lieutenant of the \textit{ Sirius}; ‘Mr. Wogan the Surgeon’; John Palmer, the Purser of the \textit{ Sirius}; ‘& three others, names unknown to me’.\textsuperscript{29}

A subtly altered version appears in Smyth’s ca 1790 fair copy: ‘These were present at dinner Lieu’ Maxwell, Lieu’ Long the Adjutant of Marines, Mr. Wogan the Surgeon, Mr. Palmer the Purser, & 3 other gentlemen unknown to me.’\textsuperscript{30}

Given that Smyth ‘went with Mr Watts to dine on board the Sirius w[j]th Mr. Wogan (the Surgeon)’,\textsuperscript{31} it is reasonable to assume that Lieutenant John Watts was also a member of Worgan’s dinner party.

The eight officers ‘sat down to a fine dinner freshly cooked and the wine sparkling in the glasses was drunk freely’.\textsuperscript{32} As officers, Worgan and his seven dinner companions would have eaten better food than that normally available to the marines and ordinary sailors on board ship.

The following list of daily rations, issued by the Royal Navy in 1796, shows that ordinary sailors were expected to endure alarmingly monotonous and unappetising culinary fare:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Sunday:} One pound of biscuit, one gallon of small beer [that is, watered-down beer], one pound of pork, and a half-a-pint of pease.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{28} Smyth, \textit{A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales}, Image 45 (no. a1085045).
\textsuperscript{30} Smyth, \textit{A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Walesca}, Image 45 (no. a1085045).
\textsuperscript{32} Crittenden, \textit{The Voyage of the First Fleet 1787–1788}, p. 46.
Monday: One pound of biscuit, one gallon of small beer, one pint of oatmeal, two ounces of butter, and four ounces of cheese.

Tuesday: One pound of biscuit, one gallon of small beer, and two pounds of beef.

Wednesday: One pound of biscuit, one gallon of small beer, half-a-pint of pease, a pint of oatmeal, two ounces of butter, four ounces of cheese.33

Ensuing days of the week saw a repetition of the same. Additional protein was provided in the form of weevils, which inevitably burrowed into all stored foodstuffs.

The gastronomic delights of shipboard food are described, for example, by Joseph Banks (1743–1820), who, travelling on the *Endeavour* as part of Captain Cook’s Tahitian expedition to observe the transit of Venus, writes:

> Our bread indeed is but indifferent, occasioned by the quantity of vermin that are in it, I have seen hundreds nay thousands shaken out of a single bisket. We in the cabbin have however an easy remedy for this by baking it in an oven, not too hot, which makes them all walk off, but this cannot be allowed to the private people who must find the taste of these animals very disagreeable.34

A daily ration of 160 ounces of beer may have been of some assistance to navy crews, helping them to ignore the tiny beetles scurrying through their food. Relief from this dietary horror often depended ‘on the next port of call on a ship’s voyage … [where] the crew might look forward to fresh tropical fruit, raisins, currants, olive oil, mutton, pickled beef suet, and the substitution of brandy, rum, or arrack (made from fermented coconut palm sap) in place of the beer allowance’.35

Captain David Collins tells us that while the First Fleet lay ‘in harbour in Rio, every convict was regularly given one and a half pounds of fresh meat, a pound of rice, a suitable portion of vegetables and several oranges. Sailors returning from jaunts ashore brought a great number of oranges and even pelted the convicts with them.’36

The diet of First Fleet officers was more varied than anyone else’s and would have been ‘regularly supplemented by the slaughter of a chicken, a pig or some

34 Quoted in Hunt, *Girt*, p. 60.
other animal on board’. Smyth’s journal reveals that officers also had access to port and other wines (during the eighteenth century, red port wine was a dry table wine, not the heavily fortified sweet wine of today). Sometimes, a small quantity of spirits was added to the wine as a preservative for long sea voyages.

Smyth informs us that following the convivial meal of Monday, 20 August 1787 held on board the *Sirius*, ‘Mr. Wogan play’d after dinner on the piano forte, & soon after Major Ross came from the Great Cabbin to us, & Mr. White the Surgeon General also came there’.

In the ca 1790 fair copy of his journal, Smyth describes events in slightly different terms: ‘After dinner Major Ross & Mr. White who din’d that day with the governor on board, came down to us to hear the piano forte.’

Major Robert Ross (1740?–94) was both Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony and the officer in charge of the First Fleet’s marine garrison. Presumably, Major Ross (and perhaps also White) had just dined with Governor Phillip in the Great Cabin, and came from there to hear George Worgan’s performance, arriving either soon after it had begun (perhaps having been enticed by the sounds of the piano) or soon after it had concluded.

If Major Ross and Surgeon White had dined with Governor Phillip in the Great Cabin, it is not surprising that the fleet’s commanding officer did not join his dinner companions to hear George Worgan play the piano; Governor Phillip, it seems, was not particularly interested in music.

Smyth’s remark ‘came from the Great Cabbin to us’ suggests that Worgan’s piano was not housed in the Great Cabin. Smyth does not tell us the exact location on the ship where Worgan’s recital took place. As the concert occurred directly after dinner, it is reasonable to assume that

1. the dinner took place in the Ward Room
2. Worgan’s piano was located either in or close to the Ward Room.

If Worgan normally stored his piano in his cabin (with the instrument’s stand dismantled and the hinged legs folded underneath the piano), it is likely that prior to the dinner party, he would have

1. brought the instrument to the location of the recital

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37 Hill, 1788, p. 77.
40 Smyth, *A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales*, Images 45 (no. a1085045) and 46 (no. a1085046).
2. assembled the instrument on its stand
3. stabilised the instrument’s tuning.

He may even have done these things some days earlier, in order to practise for the concert (unless he was so talented that he did not need to practise—there is, however, no evidence that Worgan was blessed with such genius).

If the recital took place in the Ward Room, Worgan’s piano, with its lid closed during dinner, may have functioned as a side table during the meal.

After Worgan’s concert, Smyth and Lieutenant John Watts ‘accompanied by Mr. White & Surgeon Wogan left the Sirius ab[out] 6 o’clock & went on board the Lady Penrhyn; where they did us the favor of their company to supper’—that is, the late evening meal—and ‘went away ab[out] 10 o’clock’.43

In the fair copy of his journal, Smyth’s recounting of these events includes Watts by name: ‘Abt 6 o’clock left the Sirius & return’d accompanied by Mr. Watts, Mr. White, Mr. Wogan on board the Lady P: where they all staid [for] supper it being too late to go to the town as was at first proposed.’44

Counteracting normal protocol, the Viceroy of Brazil, Luiz de Vasconcelos (1742–1807), had given the British officers permission not only to go ashore without guards, but also to wander freely through Rio de Janeiro’s streets up to 8 kilometres from the town centre.45 ‘This gesture was almost unheard of in security-conscious Rio de Janeiro’, and it was taken ‘for granted that it was due to the standing of [Arthur] Phillip in the Portuguese community’.46 First Fleet convicts were allowed to exercise on the Ilha das Enxadas (Isle of Hoes).

Smyth’s mention of the approximate time at which he and George Worgan left the Sirius for the Lady Penrhyn and the fact that Worgan ‘play’d after dinner’ confirm that these events took place immediately following the second-last meal of the day. Under normal circumstances, ‘dinner’ was taken between 2 pm and 5 pm. If this was the case on Monday, 20 August 1787 (there is no evidence to the contrary), Worgan would have had more than enough time after the meal had concluded to demonstrate his pianistic skills and the beauties of the sound of his piano, before leaving the Sirius ‘about 6 o’clock’.

It is not known exactly how long Worgan’s recital took, nor whether he played repertoire calculated for the Kenner or the Liebhaber. At the very least, Worgan

43 Ibid.
44 Smyth, A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales, Image 46 (no. a1085046).
46 Pembroke, Arthur Phillip, p. 177.
may only have run his fingers cursorily over the keys. At best, he may have played one or several pre-composed works in their entirety. He may also have improvised.

Crittenden states that ‘this was only one of many such dinner parties held while the fleet was at Rio’. Crittenden implies that Worgan’s piano playing formed the conclusion to more than one dinner held on board the Sirius. Although contemporaneous documentary evidence does not support Crittenden’s statement, it is tempting to hypothesise that Worgan gave more than one piano recital on board the Sirius whilst the ship lay at anchor during its month-long stopover in Rio de Janeiro.

That several officers heard Worgan play was, in microcosm, a reflection of the rage in England during the 1780s for attending concerts.

Music is everywhere the rage … a very elegant concert was given a few evenings ago at a butcher’s near Leadenhall-market … Three-penny concerts in a hay-loft, and six-penny Sunday concerts, at a common public-house, are proofs that the rage for music is extending from the higher to the lowest classes of society.

Because a disproportionate share of the eighteenth-century written record has been left behind by the literary representatives of bourgeois culture, the idea that the music-listening norms of the bourgeoisie represent the activities of the lower classes is dubious in the extreme.

Musical discourse of the period was by no means concerned only with marking itself off from the old ruling order but was also intent on distinguishing itself from, and considering its relationship to, the lower classes of society.

It seems that attendance at public concerts (as well as at the theatre) had a particular attraction for men of the sea. Sailors (and not just the officers)

were a conspicuous … presence in British theatres. Seamen worked under conditions of danger, deprivation and harsh discipline. After a voyage, which could last for a year or more, they were given their wages as a lump-sum payment and discharged. The money was then thrown away in a wild round of whores, drink and theatre, followed by a sheepish return to the sea.

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47 Crittenden, The Voyage of the First Fleet 1787–1788, p. 46.
48 The Times, 23 February 1788; The Morning Chronicle, 15 December 1791. Quoted in McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn, p. 34.
Despite the fact that in late eighteenth-century London there was a strong taste for public concerts amongst the lower orders, many of London’s successful concert venues reveal that public recitals represented a form of entertainment that was calculated for the refined. It is reasonable to assume that several of the officers who heard Worgan play his piano on board the \textit{Sirius} were erudite listeners. Some may even have suffered from the late eighteenth century’s most celebrated disorder: extreme sensitivity.\textsuperscript{51}

What Feelings were Engendered by George Worgan’s Recital?

The English passion for attending concerts was an outgrowth of the broad intellectual trends of the age. That listeners were regarded as important reflects a mid-century move away from early eighteenth-century theories of music aesthetics and composition. The ‘rationalism that traced its descent from \textit{[René] Descartes [1596–1650] was a dominant paradigm of the Enlightenment’},\textsuperscript{52} as were ‘Cartesian ideas about the passions as they were applied to music’.\textsuperscript{53} Johann Mattheson, in his \textit{Der vollkommene Capellmeister}, proposed that specific emotional states were best expressed musically by specific intervals— for example, joy by wide melodic leaps, and grief by small, often chromatic intervals.\textsuperscript{54} ‘Such conventions were the basis of the mechanistic system of musical figures employed by composers of the early eighteenth century. Like the systems derived from rationalistic philosophers, this doctrine of the affects gave little attention to the perception of the listener.’\textsuperscript{55}

A legitimisation of the perception and responses of the listener took place during the 1750s, with recognition that ‘affects were not only conveyed by the composer, but sensed by the listener … It was to a Lockian paradigm,’\textsuperscript{56} the inclusion of sensory perception as a valid aspect of cognition, that many writers … looked to … legitimise the response of listeners and spectators’.\textsuperscript{57} Within the context of musical performance, mid-century listeners could now pay composers

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item See Berg, \textit{The Correspondence of Christian Gottfried Krause}, p. xxvi.
\item Ibid., p. xxi.
\item Ibid., p. xxi.
\item Berg, \textit{The Correspondence of Christian Gottfried Krause}, p. xxi.
\item The English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) defined the self as a self-aware and self-reflective consciousness, fixed in a body; knowledge of the self is determined only by experience derived from sense perception. See F. E. Baird and W. Kaufmann, \textit{From Plato to Derrida} (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), pp. 527–9.
\item Berg, \textit{The Correspondence of Christian Gottfried Krause}, p. xxi.
\end{thebibliography}
the supreme compliment: music could make them weep. In 1793, the English clergyman and writer on music the Reverend Richard Eastcott (ca 1740–1828) described such an event:

Whilst writing this article, a musical friend who accidentally called upon me, told me, that he had very lately met this same person at a gentleman’s house, in the vicinity of the town of Tiverton, in Devonshire; that the lady of the house, who sings with great taste, and is a very pleasing performer on the piano-forte; obligingly sat down to entertain her friends on that instrument, but was soon interrupted by [an unnamed gentleman] bursting into a flood of tears, and appearing to be greatly affected; she was obliged to desist.

Generally, however, by the very end of the eighteenth century the fashion for delicacy of feeling publicly displayed had waned. An article published in the *Monthly Magazine* of October 1796, for example, sought an answer to the question ‘Ought sensibility … be cherished, or repressed?’ The anonymous author of the article concluded that the ‘current of taste and opinion seems at present, to tend towards the negative side of this question’.

No extant documents describe the emotional responses of the men of feeling who heard George Worgan play his piano on board the *Sirius*. The absence of descriptions concerning the effect that Worgan’s music making had upon the audience may not be due to the fact that his playing was merely competent, or that none of the listeners at his recital was musically sensitive. Rather, his audience comprised men of ‘their time’ and profession, officers who would have regarded the display of tears within the context of Worgan’s concert not only as an exaggerated, self-indulgent gesture, but also as a feminine expression (it was commonly theorised that the effect of music on women was especially profound). The ‘growing artistic and rhetorical convention of praising “nature” over “art” was reflected in … authors’ praise of “natural” feminine behaviour. They translated these concepts into minute rules of behavioral practice, thereby revealing links between gender, science, and the aesthetics of sentimentality.’

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58 See ibid., p. xvii.
During the late eighteenth century, the rise of an overtly emotional musical style\textsuperscript{62} not only created socially acceptable musical contexts within which women might be ‘profoundly’ and openly moved, but also caused one writer to lament:

Our music has become so totally changed. It is not now sought as a repose for the mind after its fatigues, but to support tumults,—not to impress the delights of calm reason, or prevail on us to listen to the charmer; but she must leave the purity of her own nature, and by divesting herself of simplicity, force us to admire, not feel, and yield to astonishment and absurdity, instead of chaste beauty and delight.\textsuperscript{63}

On the other hand, late eighteenth-century English men were encouraged to perceive music as a science rather than as a catalyst for the overt expression of emotion:

\textit{Music is a science} established on the most sublime parts of mathematical truths; its \textit{theory} founded on the doctrine of proportion; on the most wonderful, though the most simple and few principles; the knowledge of which, fills the enquiring mind with the most transcendent pleasure, and admiration of the wisdom of the Creator, who ‘hath filled all things with good.’\textsuperscript{64}

Music was associated with logic and ratio. Music was abstract. ‘For men, as listeners, a constrained emotional response was regarded as appropriate because music was “a masculine and mental practice [whose aims were] … utilitarian”.’\textsuperscript{65} ‘Intellectual pursuits were deemed manly.’\textsuperscript{66}

A man was expected to ‘maintain his rank through his manners: assuming an air of personal dignity, the appearance of easy assurance, a controlled deportment, the repression of emotional display, the assumption of distinguished speech, and by proper decorum in his relations with the world in all its various degrees’.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{62} Commonly referred to as the \textit{empfindsamer stil} (‘sensitive style’). Music composed in this style reveals an emphasis on ‘the expression of a variety of deeply felt emotions within a musical work’. ‘Empfindsamer Stil’, in \textit{Encyclopædia Britannica Online} (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2011).


\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Euterpe}, p. 15. Quoted in Leppert, ‘Social Order and the Domestic Consumption of Music’, p. 515.

\textsuperscript{65} Leppert, ‘Social Order and the Domestic Consumption of Music’, p. 515.

\textsuperscript{66} Goold, \textit{Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano}, p. 147.

If, within a music-making context, a performer was a man, his very identity was at risk precisely as regards that component of his identity most central to himself and all other men who might view him, his sexuality …

Writers of the period commonly urge the man who would be a musician to practice his art ‘at his private recreation’—a tacit acknowledgment of shame. The sight of men making music was derogatively described with considerable consistency.68

Men who played keyboard instruments were not exempt from such negative criticism. Some conduct books linked women and femininity specifically with the harpsichord. The English physician, naturalist and writer John Berkenhout (1726–91), for example, wrote: ‘As two gentlemen were passing the window, I heard one of them exclaim—“I hate to see a man at the harpsichord!” I had never before annexed the idea of effeminacy to that instrument, but from that moment, I began to be of that gentleman’s opinion.’69 It is not surprising that such a view should have been given contemporaneous credence; after all, late eighteenth-century English culture was ‘steeped in hedonism and sexual intrigue … culture was bound up with the giddy round of social pleasures that its critics found so morally offensive. It provided the public space for gustatory and bibulous excess, the venue for courtship, seduction, and the pleasures of the flesh.’70

In 1722, the English dancing master and choreographer John Essex (ca 1680–1744) created a list of instruments that he considered appropriate for women, along with a list of those that were not. Essex regarded instruments with phallic similarities as tainting:

The harpsichord, spinet, lute and base violin, are instruments most agreeable to the ladies: there are some others that really are unbecoming to the fair sex; as the flute, violin and hautboy; the last of which is too manlike, and would look indecent in a woman’s mouth; and the flute is very improper, as taking away too much of the juices, which are otherwise more necessarily employ’d, to promote appetite, and assist digestion.71

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69 Quoted in Leppert, ‘Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism’, p. 112.
'During the late 18th century, harpsichords were generally replaced by fortepianos, lutes by English guit[...]rs, violas da gamba [also called base violins] by violoncellos.' On the other hand, some felt that 'the unladylike position required for playing the bass viola da gamba and the cello precluded these instruments from feminine patronage. For example, in his *Lettre de Monsieur l’Abbé Carbasus*, the composer François Campion (ca 1686–1748), publishing under the pseudonym Abbé Carbasus, remarked that 'decency, modesty, and the hoopskirt fashion effectively prohibit the fair sex from playing the viol'.

An anonymous writer in the *Musikalischer Almanach für 1784* [*Musical Almanac for 1784*], observing that when a woman plays a ‘cello she must spread her legs’, prudishly remarked: ‘In thousands of people it calls up pictures that it ought not to call up.’ (If a woman played the cello, it was recommended that she play it ‘in the “side-saddle” position, an attitude that persisted in certain educational institutions well into the twentieth century’.)

The English aristocrat Peter Beckford (ca 1740–1811), a patron of Muzio Clementi and a hunting enthusiast, expressed a distrust of music because of its links with femininity:

> Though music is a charming talent, I think more time is allotted to it than it deserves, considering the little use that is made of it afterwards; besides, it increases sensibility, particularly in a female breast, which surely is no advantage, and frequently procures a tête-à-tête that had always better be avoided.

No extant contemporaneous document suggests that the officers who gathered around George Worgan as he played his piano for them on board the *Sirius* regarded him with any derision; after all, ‘the traditional bastion of male security (from fear of female fickleness) is male solidarity’. There can be little doubt that the officers in question ‘were mostly young men, educated and shaped by the Enlightenment, romantic, well meaning and impressionable’. Perhaps Smyth’s perfunctory description of the event—’Mr. Wogan play’d after dinner on the...
piano forte’—reflects the fact that Worgan’s colleagues cast no aspersions on
their musical fellow officer concerning his performative involvement with piano
music. On the other hand, Smyth’s seeming lack of feeling concerning the event
may represent an attempt to mask his reservations (this is unlikely, however, as
his account is consistent with the generally unemotional tone and descriptive
nature of his journal entries).

We may never know exactly how Worgan’s audience felt about his playing the
piano for them, nor what their emotional response to his music making was as
they heard his pianistic musings after dinner on board the *Sirius* on Monday,
20 August 1787.

### The Effect of the Weather on George Worgan’s
Square Piano: Weather during the First Fleet’s
voyage

Whilst George Worgan played his piano on the *Sirius* as the ship lay at anchor in
the tranquil waters of the ‘very commodious’ Rio de Janeiro Harbour, there can
be little doubt that surrounding levels of temperature and humidity would have
caused significant stress to the instrument. This was not the first time during
the voyage to Botany Bay that Worgan’s piano would have been exposed to a
potentially harmful atmospheric environment. Since leaving London, the 11 ships
of the First Fleet had already experienced weather at its most uncomfortable—
and there were still many surprises to come as the fleet made its way across
thousands of kilometres of little-known and mostly uncharted waters.

Every owner and player of historical musical instruments will tell you from
experience that rapid fluctuations of temperature and/or (especially) humidity
are deleterious for any fortepiano. This is because the resultant expansion and/
or contraction of the soundboard and bridge may cause these vital parts of the
instrument to split. Overly high temperatures can also soften the animal glue
that holds the piano together, and the instrument can shift. As Carl Dieudonné
(ca 1780–1825) and Johann Lorenz Schiedmayer (1786–1860) state in their *Brief
Manual on the Proper Use and Knowledge Concerning the Playing, Tuning, and
Maintenance of Fortepianos*:

> [W]ood is a material that is unable to resist the effects not only of heat
and cold, but especially also of dryness and humidity.\(^{84}\)

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84 Dieudonné and Schiedmayer, Kurze Anleitung zu einer richtigen Kenntnis und Behandlung der Forte-Pianos, p. 286.
... [O]ne can assume that the temperature of 15–18 degrees [Celsius] ... is the best for the piano ... pianos ... are soon ruined in rooms that are overheated, or at least lose their good tone; the action loses its precision and clatters and one is lucky if such an instrument, which has been reduced to a shambles, does not come apart at its main joints.

[Dampness] ... can be absolutely ruinous for the piano. [Humidity can cause] ... such destructive effects that the glue in the joints dissolves.85

Inevitably, and at the very least, tuning stability is utterly compromised; even a slow humidity fluctuation of 3–4 per cent is enough to undermine tuning stability.

During the eighteenth century, ocean voyages were usually planned with major atmospheric and oceanic circulation systems in mind. This is because long journeys necessarily included stops at established supply ports. Data originating from the First Fleet itself tell us of the atmospheric environments within which Worgan’s piano found itself: aboard the Sirius, Lieutenant William Bradley (1757?–1833) ‘kept a daily logbook of weather observations including temperature, barometric pressure and winds’.86 Lieutenant Bradley, ‘who excelled in navigation ... was the nephew of the astronomer royal and son of a mathematics master’.87

Portsmouth to Tenerife

‘On leaving the English Channel, the [First Fleet] ... sailed south past Spain and northwest Africa into the latitudes of the northeast trade winds and the Canary Current.’88 Lieutenant Bradley’s observations reveal that during the time it took to travel to Tenerife, the temperature climbed steadily, and the humidity rose and fell wildly.

Tenerife to Rio de Janeiro

Between Sunday, 3 June and Saturday, 9 June 1787, the First Fleet took on fresh water and provisions at the port of Santa Cruz, on the island of Tenerife (in the Canary Islands).

Of all the ports visited by the [First Fleet] ... Santa Cruz had the longest history of European possession and was the most familiar to navigators; however, it had not been the most prosperous of colonies ... a successful

85 Ibid., p. 293.
87 Groom, First Fleet Artist, p. 10.
commerce in wine [had been established] but the harsh environment was not generally suited to European agriculture … the inhabitants relied on costly shipments of grain from Spain, America and Germany … [In general, the food left much to be desired, and there was] a scarcity of fresh water.89

The fleet departed Santa Cruz on the morning of Sunday, 10 June. The fleet passed the Cape Verde Islands (off the coast of north-west Africa), but was prevented by the wind from landing at Port Praya on the island of St Iago (the largest and most fertile of the Cape Verde Islands). And so the fleet continued onward towards Rio de Janeiro.

Between Monday, 18 June and Wednesday, 20 June, the fleet entered the Doldrums in the Atlantic Narrows. As the First Fleet entered the Doldrums, ‘the European world was [on the verge of being] … turned upside down’,90 in France, because of the failed harvest and resultant famine, discontent was rising, and ‘in London a group of Christian gentlemen formed a society to abolish the slave trade’.91

On the evening of Saturday, 14 July 1787, the fleet crossed the Equator in serene conditions, after which it encountered hot, humid and squally weather. ‘The extreme heat of the tropics brought … rotting food, the stench of unwashed people, sickness and diarrhoea. Six convicts died on the passage from Tenerife; many suffered from low spirits, [whilst] … some of the officers … gave the most cause for concern as they argued and drank to excess.’92

Following a period of light, variable winds, ‘the ships progressed south and southwest in the Brazil Current and southeast trade winds to Rio de Janeiro where they anchored … [on Tuesday, 7] August 1787’.93 So far, the fleet had followed a tried and true trade route. Captain David Collins (1756–1810) observed: ‘the track which we had to follow was too beaten to afford us anything new or interesting.’94

Whilst in Rio de Janeiro, Bradley did not record any meteorological observations. The weather may well have been characteristically humid and sultry. (It was on Monday, 20 August 1787, 13 days after the fleet’s arrival in Rio de Janeiro, that Worgan played his piano for some of his companions on board the Sirius.)95

89 N. Starbuck, Constructing the ‘Perfect’ Voyage: Nicolas Baudin at Port Jackson, 1802, PhD dissertation (University of Adelaide, 2009), p. 46.
92 Brooke and Brandon, Bound for Botany Bay, p. 45.
94 Quoted in Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 21.
Since the First Fleet’s departure from Tenerife (on Sunday, 10 June 1787), the journey to Rio de Janeiro had taken a longer than expected two months. To this point, Worgan’s piano had been subjected to typically warm equatorial air and fluctuations in humidity, both of which represented massive departures from the cool English climate in which the instrument had sat during the first year(s) of its life. ‘High temperatures and heavy tropical rain caused distress and anxiety.’ The heat was enervating, the humidity debilitating. By the time of the piano’s arrival in Rio de Janeiro, it is possible that the proper functioning and physical integrity of the instrument may already have been adversely affected by extremes in the weather.

**Rio de Janeiro to Cape Town**

After replenishing supplies in Rio de Janeiro, the fleet departed on Wednesday, 5 September 1787, riding the westerly winds south to the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. During the more than five weeks that it took to complete this leg of the journey, temperatures rose and fell, ranging from the mid 20s to 12°C. Humidity levels rapidly soared and plummeted. These were conditions of extreme stress for Worgan’s piano.

The weather was stormier than it had been during the first and second stages of the voyage and the convoy encountered strong gales for the greater part of the passage to the cape. The transports pitched and rolled, sometimes shipping large quantities of water.97

On Saturday, 13 October 1787, the fleet arrived at Cape Town—‘the Dutch headquarters in Africa’98—where it anchored for a month.

> After the seductive luxuriance of Rio, the ... Protestant settlement at Cape Town proved a contrast ... Some of the officers and gentlemen from the fleet visited the Dutch East India Company’s garden, near the centre of the town. In the garden was a menagerie, which contained ‘a vicious zebra ... two of the birds called secretaries, [and] a crane’.99

Although there is no documentary evidence to support the notion, it is possible that during the preparations at Cape Town for the final and longest stage of the voyage to Botany Bay, George Worgan may have given a piano recital for some of his colleagues.

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96 Pembroke, Arthur Phillip, p. 173.
97 Ibid., p. 179.
98 Keneally, Australians, p. 68.
It is likely that the extremes of temperature and rapid changes in humidity during the journey to Cape Town had already caused some damage to Worgan’s piano (crudely repaired cracks in the soundboard and bridge of the 1780/86? Beck square piano\textsuperscript{100} testify to the deleterious effect of such climatic extremes).

**Cape Town to Botany Bay: Ferocious storms, violent extremes**

The fleet departed from Cape Town, in quiet conditions, on Tuesday, 13 November 1787, and sailed into the westerly winds and tremendous swell of the Southern Ocean. The voyage from Cape Town to Botany Bay took about eight weeks.\textsuperscript{101} Above decks was a babble of complaints from animals … There were Captain Phillip’s greyhounds and horses on *Sirius*, Reverend [Richard] Johnson’s kittens on the store ship *Golden Grove*, as well as on every ship a number of newly purchased sheep, pigs, cattle, goats, turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, rabbits and pigeons penned in various structures on every deck.\textsuperscript{102}

The fleet split up [into two divisions: the faster and the slower ships]. Phillip went ahead in the *Supply*, accompanied by three transports full of male convicts whom he intended to set to work [building storehouses and huts] immediately [upon arrival, before the remaining ships reached Botany Bay. Second Captain John] Hunter followed in the flagship *Sirius* [as an escort to the slower] … seven other transports.\textsuperscript{103}

Arguably, ‘this was the [most] dangerous part of the voyage … Phillip had to sail deep into the Southern Ocean to make full use of the Trade Winds, [and] there was … the threat of icebergs in this region’.\textsuperscript{104}

The Southern Ocean is the largest stretch of unbroken water on Earth. It extends continuously around the globe, separating America, Africa and Australia from Antarctica. Nowhere else does the sea roll uninterrupted around the world, nor the winds have such an unimpeded range.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{100} See ‘Soundboard’ and ‘Bridge’, in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
\textsuperscript{102} Keneally, *Australians*, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{103} Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{105} Pembroke, *Arthur Phillip*, p. 185.
As the fleet sailed on the vast stretch of ocean between Africa and Australia, it was often battered by ferocious summer storms.

A little more than two weeks into the journey, on Wednesday, 28 November 1787, John Easty (fl. 1786–93), a marine on the Scarborough, recorded in his journal that the sea was ‘the heaviest … as ever I saw in my life’.106 The next day, on Thursday, 29 November 1787, Arthur Bowes Smyth wrote: ‘The wind was very high … The Sea rose in most prodigious mountains … In the night the ship rolled at the most prodigious rate that every thing which was moveable was thrown over in every part of the ship.’107

Except for ballast, the [First Fleet’s] ships were wholly made from materials derived from trees and grass. The hull, masts and spars were of wood; the rigging, rope and cordage of hemp; and the sails of flax. At sea, the ships would pitch and roll, searching for equilibrium.108

Furthermore, the average length of the ships making up the First Fleet was 27 metres; the average width 8.5 metres.109 In such small and fragile vessels, the havoc caused by pitching and rolling in violently stormy seas is unimaginable.

In 1849, the Irish political prisoner John Martin (1812–75), on board the Mount Stuart Elphinstone sailing from Cork to Van Diemen’s Land, described the consequences of a storm that must have been similar to that encountered by the First Fleet on 29 November 1787:

[The ship] rocked abominably … she was laying her sides alternately upon the water, down to the very hammock nettings. Such abominable sensations as the rocking produced! For noises there was the continual creaking & groaning of the strained timbers, the rolling clashing rattling & thumping of every moveable upon deck & in the cabins, except such as were firmly lashed … What a mess! I was sitting on my bed, holding on by hands & feet, and thanking my stars that I had two legs & thighs & hands & arms … We heard that the poor convicts in the prison thought the ship was going to the bottom & many of them fell on their knees in the water to pray for mercy.110

109 Data concerning the length and width of each of the First Fleet ships can be found in Perrem, ‘Articles and Facts’.
Such conditions cannot in any way have been favourable for Worgan’s piano. The instrument would have been stowed away (doubtless lashed to something immovable) in the hope that it would not be thrown around the cabin (how successfully it was stowed, we will never know). Even if the case of the instrument was protectively immobilised, the key levers, hammer shanks and dampers would have moved in response to every heave of the ship. At least the piano was not ‘tumbled about, and shivered to atoms, by the vessel’s motion’. The violence of the storms through which the fleet sailed was such that the *Prince of Wales* lost its topsail and a man overboard.

Extreme fluctuations in weather continued. On Friday, 7 December 1787, Smyth, on board the *Lady Penryn*, wrote that ‘the Sun shines so very hot that the seats upon the round House burnt you as you sat down upon them’.

As the fleet made its way through the Roaring Forties, temperatures fell and humidity, wildly fluctuating, climbed. On Tuesday, 18 December 1787, Second Lieutenant Philip Gidley King on board the *Sirius* observed that there were ‘great quantities of rain, sleet, & large hail stones … the cold is as extreme here as in England at this time of ye’ year, altho’ it is the height of summer here’. Winds from the Antarctic brought low temperatures and misery. ‘The convicts must have been particularly cold as all they had to clothe them was their regulation dress and one blanket each.’

Two days later, Smyth remarked: ‘This day very cold.’ On Saturday, 22 December, he wrote that the ‘swell of the sea [was] very great’. Conditions continued to deteriorate, and as Christmas approached, Lieutenant King on the *Sirius* observed that there were ‘very heavy gales & a tumbling sea’.

In the big seas and constant swells that confronted Phillip’s fleet, the most critical situation was in the troughs, in the valleys between the waves. If a ship wallows, losing some of her way at the bottom, she runs the risk that she will not have the speed to outrun the following sea. If the sea overtakes her, a mass of breaking water will crash over the stern … More likely than not, she will slew around, presenting her broadside, and the next seas will overwhelm her, turning her on her beam-ends, carrying way her masts and rigging and consigning all on board to a watery grave. On the crests of waves the danger is different. As the crest

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115 Brooke and Brandon, *Bound for Botany Bay*, p. 46.
117 Ibid., Part 94.
breaks and curls, streaming in a white cascade down the leeward side of the wave, the air is filled with flying spume, the wind shrieks and the ship simply slides, practically rudderless, barely in control.\textsuperscript{119}

The activities and trappings of a traditional late eighteenth-century English Christmas would have been absent for those sailing to Botany Bay: decorating with holly and ivy; Christmas trees (these were introduced to England by Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz when she married George III in 1761); sending food (principally fowls, hams, hares, pheasants and turkeys) to friends; giving presents (traditionally, presents were exchanged at New Year, but the custom of giving them at Christmas originated with Princess Charlotte); and entertaining and getting together with friends, in the evening, during the 12 days of Christmas (from 25 December to 6 January). The ritual of sending Christmas cards has its origins with the Victorians and Prince Albert during the late 1840s.

Four days after Christmas, during a respite between storms, Smyth had time to reflect: ‘We reckon ourselves this day at 12 o’clock at noon about 1000 miles [1600 kilometres] from the South Cape of New Holland, and 2000 [3200 kilometres] from Botany Bay.’\textsuperscript{120}

On Monday, 31 December, Smyth wrote: ‘long and high swells, ship often rolls gunnell under. The sea the most mountainous of any since we sail’d … the sea was so very outrageous … The foretopsail was … split from top to bottom tho’ the canvas was double … at one time in the night there was hail fell.’\textsuperscript{121}

Meanwhile, on board the \textit{Sirius}, William Bradley’s measurements reveal that around New Year’s Day 1788, the temperatures were the lowest the fleet had experienced since leaving England.\textsuperscript{122}

On New Year’s Day, Smyth described how the sea poured into his cabin on the \textit{Lady Penryn}:

The seas … perpetually broke over the decks & even the round house … just as we had done dinner … a most tremendous sea broke in … it pour’d in all across the cabin and my cabin as the door happen’d not to be quite close shut [it] was half fill’d with water, the sheets & blanketts all in a flow: the water ran from the main deck nearly into the Great

\textsuperscript{119} Pembroke, \textit{Arthur Phillip}, pp. 189–90.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., Parts 102–3.
Cabin, it struck against the main and missen chains & the shock it gave the ship at first alarm’d us all greatly; but particularly me, as i really thought the ship was drove in pieces—not an hour’s sleep all … night.123

Newton Digby Fowell, a midshipman on the *Sirius*, described the violent weather that greeted the new year in a letter written to his father: ‘This year began with very bad tempestuous weather, it blew much harder than any wind we have had since our leaving England.’124

John Hunter, Second Captain of the *Sirius*, reveals that as the storm continued, the fleet was forced to slow in order to ensure that the ships’ sails did not tear.125 The people of the First Fleet ‘celebrated their New Year … with “hard salt beef and a few musty pancakes”’.126 On 2 January 1788, ‘it blew so hard that we could not set any sail’.127

Breaks in the weather allowed the *Sirius*’ company to observe some of the strange phenomena of the southern hemisphere. On a night early in the new year of 1788, the *Sirius* sailed through a sea of lights more than a mile wide—’a luminous appearance or substance … lights floating on the surface of the water’. The strange lights were fickle: when the crew tried to scoop some up, they collected only dark sea water. On a night soon afterwards, the aurora australis put on a spectacular display of constantly changing red, orange, yellow and white streamers.128

From late November 1787 to this point in the epic journey (early January 1788), it is unlikely that Worgan’s piano would have been used for either practice or performance at any time. The rough weather and extremes of temperature and humidity were not conducive, and were potentially detrimental to the instrument. It is likely that the piano would have been placed within a protective context, its unique hinged cabriole legs tucked underneath (Plate 213) and its campaign-furniture-inspired stand’s two long detachable stretchers (Plate 203) safely stored nearby.

Van Diemen’s Land

In the first week of January 1788, the majority of the fleet ‘sailed past the southeast corner of Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania)’. Extreme changes in the weather abounded. On Saturday, 5 January, Smyth wrote:

[I]n the night I was so hot in my cabin that I was obliged to throw off the cloaths from my bed. There are at this time in the window of the great cabin, a very fine grape vine w[ch] flourishes much, also some scarlet geraniums in full blossom, there is also myrtles, banana plants, & several other sorts, bro’ from Rio de Janeiro.

The South Coast of New South Wales

‘Navigating now with the aid of maps made by [Captain] Cook’, the fleet made its way northwards along the coast of New South Wales. On Wednesday, 9 January 1788, Smyth observed that

the swell of the sea [was] greater than at any other time during the voyage … Many heavy seas wash’d entirely over the ship, & many of the fastenings to the different articles in the [great] cabin gave way, the tubs w[th] the bananas, grape vine, &c, &c overset & all except the vine were totally demolish’d … sometimes the spritsail yard dipp’d into the water, the ship pitched so much; towards morning it hail’d.

The next day, many of the ships were damaged in the most severe storm the fleet had yet encountered. Smyth’s journal entry for 10 January 1788 reveals how terrifying the storm was:

[T]he sky grew very black, & the wind arose, & in half an hour or less, it blew a perfect hurricane … The sea ran mountains high … The ship was laid along side in such a manner as alarm’d every body much, & some very great flashes of lighteng were seen, & heavy peals of thunder immediately followed the lighteng … I never before saw the sea in such a rage; it was all over as white as snow; it rain’d prodigiously … Every other ship in the fleet (except the Sirius) sustained damage … During the storm the convicts on board our ship were so much frighten’d that most of them were on their knees at prayers … Towards even[in]g it cleared up and the wind was in our favor.

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131 Groom, First Fleet Artist, p. 16.
133 Ibid., Parts 111–13.
A week later, Smyth noted: “tis so intensely hot we are obliged to sit with cabin windows open; under the necessity of sleep & with my cabin door open, & throwing off most of the bed cloaths.” Throughout the fleet, below decks, the heat must have been unbearable for the convicts, who did not have the luxury of lightweight clothes to wear. (Eighty-six years later, those passengers who were fortunate enough to have a choice of clothing on their journey from England to New Zealand had their discomfort, in similar circumstances, alleviated, ‘there being a general turn out of boxes (in which clothes are stored) to let people get their light things for the heat’.)

**A Recalcitrant Goat**

Unfortunately, during that hot night, in the Great Cabin, the grapevine that had so stoically survived the journey from Rio de Janeiro through violent storms and extremes of temperature met its untimely demise. Smyth describes the fateful event: ‘Last night one of the goats got by some means imperceived into the great cabin & eat off all the green shoots of the grape vine.’ However dire the situation may have seemed, all was not lost. Smyth continues: ‘since the weather has been so very hot the banana plant wch was brot from Rio de Janeiro & wch had never before appear’d to grow, has sprouted out several inches.’ (Ultimately, ‘the plants and seeds collected at Rio de Janeiro’ that survived the journey were sown at Sydney Cove ‘in front of the governor’s house’.)

The extreme vacillations of temperature and humidity during the journey from Rio de Janeiro would have more than tested the fabric of Worgan’s piano.

**Botany Bay**

The *Sirius* arrived at Botany Bay on Saturday, 19 January 1788 (only two days after the recalcitrant goat’s banquet in the Great Cabin of the *Lady Penryn*, and two days before the slower vessels of the First Fleet arrived). The fleet’s arrival at its destination did not mean that the weather became any less stressful for Worgan’s piano.

‘Finding the soil, water and anchorage at Botany Bay unsuitable’, Governor Philip gave orders (on Wednesday, 23 January) for the entire fleet to leave Botany

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134 Ibid., Parts 115–16, entry for Thursday, 17 January 1788.
137 Ibid.
139 Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 16.
Bay for Port Jackson, 12 kilometres to the north. Strong headwinds, however, prevented the fleet from leaving Botany Bay. (Whether or not these conditions ‘can be associated with a La Niña’ is not entirely clear, but should not be ruled out.)

Lieutenant Gidley King, having transferred from the *Sirius* to the *Supply* (as had Governor Phillip), wrote on Friday, 25 January 1788: ‘the wind blowing strong from NNE prevented … our going out … The wind blew so strong from ye SSE that we were obliged to anchor & wait for the ebb tide & at noon we weighed & turned out of the harbour.’ On the same day, on board the *Sirius*, George Worgan wrote: ‘the Governor sailed for Port-Jackson, in the *Supply* … but the wind coming on to blow hard, right into … [Botany] Bay, the *Sirius* and transports could not possibly get out.’

The following day, Saturday, 26 January 1788, First Lieutenant Ralph Clark, a marine officer on the *Friendship* (one of the transports for female convicts), described how the ships were blown dangerously close to the rocky coastline:

[I]f it had not being by the greatest good luck we should have been both on the shore on the rocks and the ships must most have been all lost and the greater part if not the whole on board drowned for we should have gone to pieces in less than a half of an hour but how good the Almighty is to us.

Smyth, on the *Lady Penryn*, described the difficulties and damage—including ripped sails and a lost boom—associated with battling the huge seas that rolled into Botany Bay as the fleet attempted to leave:

The ships having attempted to get out of the bay yesterday 3 times in vain, lay at single anchor till this morning in order to proceed out, but the wind … is still blow[ing] directly from [the] sea into the mouth of the bay … We were obliged to work out of the bay & wth the utmost difficulty and danger got out abt 3 o’clock p.m. The Charlotte was once in the most immense danger of being on the rocks & the Prince of Wales and the Friendship … came foul of each other … The Friendship carried away her jib boom. The Prince of Wales had her new main sail and her new main top mast stay sail rent in pieces. The Charlotte also came foul of the Friendship afterward and carried away some of the carv’d work from her stern, & it was with the greatest difficulty the Lady Penryn escaped the same fate.

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140 In eastern Australia, La Niña events are associated with above average rainfall.
144 Clark, *Journal Kept on the Friendship during a Voyage to Botany Bay and Norfolk Island*, p. 1, Saturday, 26 January 1788.
Port Jackson

Approximately four hours later, about 7 pm, the fleet reached ‘the mouth of Port Jackson, & sail’d up it to’ Sydney Cove. According to Smyth, the ‘water … even to the very side of the shore is 5 & 6 fathoms, & exactly like a canal in a garden; you may wth ease fasten the ships to the trees instead of putting down the anchor’. In the evening all anchord safe in Sidney Cove. ‘For the first time … ships bells rang through the summer night to mark the passing of time, and for the first time, the Eora people heard their tolling.’

George Worgan’s piano had been a part of ‘one of the major achievements of the Royal Navy’. Captain David Collins wrote:

Thus, under the blessing of God, was happily completed, in eight months and one week, a voyage which, before it was undertaken, the mind hardly dared venture to contemplate, and on which it was impossible to reflect without some apprehension as to its termination. This fortunate completion of it, however, afforded even to ourselves as much a matter of surprise as of general satisfaction; for in the above space of time we had sailed five thousand and twenty-one leagues [24 000 kilometres]; had touched at the American and African Continents; and had at last rested within a few days sail of the antipodes of our native country, without meeting any accident on a fleet of eleven sail, nine of which were merchantmen that had never before sailed in that distant and imperfectly explored ocean.

The Voyage of George Worgan’s Piano: Particulars

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It is reasonable to assume that at some stage during the days that followed the First Fleet’s arrival at Sydney Cove, George Worgan would have made a thorough inspection of his piano in order to ascertain if, or the extent to which, it had

146 Ibid., Part 131.
147 Ibid., Part 132.
149 Groom, First Fleet Artist, p. 16.
150 Ibid., p. 16.
been damaged by the extremes of temperature, humidity and violent storms through which it had passed on its journey from England. Doubtless, he would also have done all that he could to ensure that the instrument remained safe from potential further damage in the unfamiliar environment of Sydney Cove.
Chapter 7

George Worgan’s Piano Arrives at Sydney Cove

Eight months and one week after leaving England, having sailed ‘over 24,000 kilometers of poorly charted, angry seas to lodge upon the fringe of an invisible, fantastic land’, the First Fleet anchored in Sydney Cove. George Worgan’s superior, John White (the colony’s chief medical officer), was so impressed by the refuge afforded by Sydney Harbour that he wrote: ‘I believe [it] to be, without exception, the finest and most extensive harbour in the universe, and at the same time the most secure, being safe from all the winds that blow.’

In a dispatch written to Lord Sydney on Thursday, 15 May 1788, Governor Phillip wrote that he ‘had the satisfaction of finding the finest harbour in the world, in which a thousand sail of the line may ride in the most perfect security’. Fresh from the great harbour at Rio de Janeiro, Phillip had doubtless ‘compared the two well in his own mind before pronouncing judgment so emphatically in favour of Port Jackson’.

Almost immediately after the First Fleet’s arrival at Sydney Cove at ca 7 pm on 26 January 1788, a ‘number of the officers assembled on shore where, they displayed the British flag’ on a newly erected flagstaff, perhaps made ‘from a sappy pole of eucalyptus’, ‘and each officer with a heart, glowing with loyalty drank his majesty’s health and success to the colony’. The summer sun would not yet have set as this joyous occasion took place.

The following day, Sunday, 27 January 1788, the male convicts set up some tents. ‘From his vantage aboard the Friendship, Ralph Clark thought these looked “prety amongst the trees”’.

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1 Birmingham, Leviathan, p. 44.
2 Quoted in Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, pp. 23–4.
7 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 111.
9 Quoted in Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 25.
'A total of about 1500 people arrived with the First Fleet. Of this number, 1373 have been identified, including 732 convicts, 306 ships’ crew, and 245 marines. There were 22 children of convicts, [and] 23 marines’ children’, ranging in age from Joseph Cox, who was old enough to become a drummer with the marines in June 1788, to eight children who were born on the voyage. There were also

31 wives of marines and 14 other officials and passengers … There would have been a further hundred or more seamen on the transports, for whom no records have been found …

Most were young; incomplete statistics suggest that at least two-thirds were aged 30 or younger.

Only the chaplain, the Reverend Richard Johnson [1753?–1827], and the ‘other ranks’ of the marines—the privates, corporals and sergeants—were allowed to bring their wives to the colony with them. Richard Howe [1726–99], First Lord of the Admiralty, said that permission was denied the officers because the extent of their duties would be ‘as if they were at war’.10

The average death rate for a convict voyage across the Atlantic Ocean was 10 per cent.

The average over an extended period was about 14 per cent. Yet, during a much longer and more difficult voyage, the First Fleet death rate was about 2 per cent. It would have been impossible for Phillip and his officers to have achieved this success if the ships were as poorly equipped and provisioned as [some] … historians have claimed.11

Unloading stores and provisions took many weeks; initially some were ‘put on the ground and covered until storehouses could be built’.12 In this way, much of the food was ‘lost to insects and parasites, many of which were completely new to the European settlers’.13 It took 11 days for all the convicts to be brought ashore, even though Phillip had been told

to disembark his human freight quickly so that three of the transports which were under charter … could sail immediately to Canton to get cargoes of tea and other goods for shipment to the United Kingdom. This was an experiment … to determine whether or not the sailing route to China via Botany Bay was practicable and economical.14

10 Egan, Buried Alive, pp. 20–1.
11 Frost, The First Fleet, p. 4.
12 Hill, 1788, p. 156.
13 Ibid., p. 156.
14 Swan, To Botany Bay, p. 159.
We know what food George Worgan ate in the first weeks following his arrival at Sydney Cove.

On landing, [Governor] Phillip … implemented his plan to provide full rations from the two years of supplies the ships had brought. Convicts were to receive an equal share to men and officers—7 pounds of salt beef or four of pork, 3 pints of dried peas, 7 pounds of flour, 6 ounces of butter, half a pound of rice or, if it were not available, an extra pound of flour weekly.

… [S]ome officials disapproved of the democracy of rations.\textsuperscript{15}

Worgan’s journal entry for Tuesday, 5 February 1788 reveals that within 20 days of anchoring in Sydney Cove, ‘all the tents of the battalion, the laboratory, and hospital, and several of the civil officers tents have been pitched,—likewise those for ye men and women convicts, the Governors house [also a tent] got up, a spot of ground enclosed, and some culinary seeds put in’.\textsuperscript{16} This was a rough beginning for the colony,\textsuperscript{17} which at this stage of its development amounted to nothing more than an open ‘penal camp inhabited by convicts and their gaolers’.\textsuperscript{18}

It is not known exactly when Worgan’s piano was taken off the \textit{Sirius}. Given the circumstances, its removal is unlikely to have been placed high on the list of priorities.

Heavy February rains made the building of waterproof accommodation imperative. Worgan reports that ‘[o]n the first day of this month [February], we had a vast deal of heavy rain’.\textsuperscript{19}

Governor Phillip—or his clerk, Henry Brewer (1739?–96)—wrote:

Only sixteen carpenters could be hired from all the ships; among the convicts no more than twelve were of this profession, and of them several were sick … With every effort, it was found impossible to complete either the barracks for the men, or the huts for the officers, as soon as was desired. As late as the middle of May they were yet unfinished.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{15} Keneally, \textit{A Commonwealth of Thieves}, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{16} Worgan, \textit{Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{17} A watercolour drawing entitled \textit{Sydney Cove, Port Jackson. 1788}, by William Bradley (1757?–1833), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML Safe 1/14, opp. p. 84; Album ID: 823705; Digital order no. a3461012).
\textsuperscript{19} Worgan, \textit{Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{20} A. Phillip, \textit{The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay}, Facsimile edn (Richmond, NSW: Hutchinson, 1982) [Originally published Piccadilly: John Stockdale, 1790], p. 185.
A map of ‘Sydney Cove, Port Jackson’ dated Saturday, 1 March 1788, surveyed by Captain John Hunter—the second captain of the *Sirius*, whose passion for the sea triumphed over ‘competing passions for music, the classics, and the Church of Scotland’—and drawn in the diary of William Bradley, first lieutenant on the *Sirius*, shows the ships of the First Fleet anchored in the cove. The *Sirius* is anchored at the entrance of Sydney Cove, on guard.

**Jean-Françoise de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse**

The unexpected appearance of two French frigates, the *Astrolabe* and the *Boussoule* (‘compass’), each named after a navigational aid, at Botany Bay on Thursday, 24 January 1788, under the command of Jean-Françoise de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse (1741–88), would doubtless have seemed threatening. Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench feared that the ships were ‘Dutchmen sent to dispossess us’. He describes his astonishment upon hearing of the sighting of the two vessels.

But judge of my surprise on hearing from a serjeant, who ran down almost breathless to the cabin where I was dressing, that a ship was seen off the harbour’s mouth. At first I only laughed, but knowing the man who spoke to me to be of great veracity, and hearing him repeat his information, I flew upon deck, on which I had barely set my foot, when the cry of ‘another sail’ struck on my astonished ear. Confounded by a thousand ideas which arose in my mind in an instant, I sprang upon the barricado, and plainly descried two ships of considerable size, standing in for the mouth of the Bay. By this time the alarm had become general, and every one appeared lost in conjecture … It was by Governor Phillip, that this mystery was at length unraveled, and the cause of the alarm pronounced to be two French ships, it was now recollected were on a voyage of discovery in the southern hemisphere …

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22 The original watercolour, pen and ink map, entitled *Sydney Cove, Port Jackson. The Position of the Encampment & Buildings are as they Stood 1st March 1788. The Transports are Placed in the Cove as Moored on their Arrival*, by John Hunter (1737–1821), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML Safe 1/14, opp. p. 84; Album ID: 823712; Digital order no. a138498). The map is reproduced in Bradley, *A Voyage to New South Wales*.
24 An engraved portrait of Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse, by Edme Bovinet (1767–ca 1832) after Pierre Alexandre Tardieu (1756–1844), dated ca 1800, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DL Pd 773; Digital order no. a928385).
25 Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 50. ‘The Dutch, static and intent on consolidating their assets and influence [in the Far East] to the exclusion of all others, remained in continual friction with the British. But the latter, continually seeking new markets and sources of raw materials, were determined to expand into any region where trade was offering. This Gordian knot was cut finally by the British after the outbreak of the French Revolution and the subsequent occupation of the United Provinces [Holland] by the French in early 1795.’ Swan, *To Botany Bay*, p. 167.
Had the sea breeze set in, the strange ships would have been at anchor in the Bay by eight o’clock in the morning ... On the following day [Friday, 25 January 1788] they re-appeared ... and a boat was sent to them, with a lieutenant of the navy in her, to offer assistance ... In the course of the day the officer returned, and brought intelligence that the ships were the Boussole and Astrolabe, sent out by order of the King of France, and under the command of Monsieur De Perrouse. The astonishment of the French at seeing us, had not equalled that we had experienced, for it appeared that [they had] learnt that our expedition was in contemplation.26

Governor Phillip was aware that the situation called for discretion. Wisdom dictated courtesy. This was expressed as consideration, erring on the side of caution. George Worgan, in his journal entry of Saturday, 9 February 1788, reveals the degree of grace and courtesy extended by Governor Phillip to the French officers:

Cap[27] [Robert Sutton de] Clonard [1751–88] (the French Commodore’s Captain) came around by water, in a boat from Botany Bay, to wait upon Gov’ Phillip. He brought with him, from the Commodore, some dispatches for Europe which the Governor, had politely made an offer to forward by the first of the transports that he should dispatch from this place for England.27

Within this context, diplomacy was vital for both the British and the French.

For the French, a recent treaty with Britain granted immunity from military action for scientific expeditions. ‘Sent out by King Louis XVI himself, La Pérouse’s expedition was a South Seas voyage of discovery’28—‘for the benefit of world knowledge and French trade’29—‘no corner of the region was to go unexplored, no island uncharted’.30

In a letter written by John Paul Jones (1747–92) to Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), dated Wednesday, 5 October 1785, we read that King Louis XVI planned La Pérouse’s expedition ‘and made out all the detail with his own hand before he spoke a word of it to any person. His majesty defrays the expence out of his private coffer and is his own minister in every thing that regards the ... operations of his plan.’31

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26 Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay, pp. 49–51.
27 Ibid., p. 37.
30 Clode, Voyages to the South Seas, p. 13.
France was the customary enemy of England, and misunderstandings could easily arise. 'Anglo-French relations, as they concerned voyages of discovery, were complicated by the conflicting forces of imperial rivalry and scientific cooperation.'32 (King Louis XVI 'was a keen geographer, an avid reader of the accounts of Captain Cook's voyages and a determined rival of Britain's maritime supremacy'.)33 Both Phillip and La Pérouse played a delicate political game. 'For all Phillip knew La Pérouse could have received instructions to make a French counter-claim to sovereignty over some part of the coast of New South Wales, New Holland or New Zealand.'34

Phillip wanted … to fool La Pérouse about the scale of the supplies the British in Sydney Cove possessed by offering him 'whatever he might have occasion for'.

La Pérouse playing the game Phillip had set up … [said] exaggeratedly that he would be in France in fifteen months time and had three years stores aboard, and so would be happy to oblige … Mr Phillip with anything he might want.35

In fact, La Pérouse was not as innocent as he pretended. 'He had been instructed by the French government to call at Botany Bay and discover just what the English were up to. La Pérouse told Judge-Advocate Collins that he had expected to find a town with a flourishing market.'36

The French Government was intrigued by the colony of convicts located on the rim of the Pacific, perceiving it to be a significant social experiment. In 1789, the French politician and sociologist Pierre-Édouard Lemontey (1762–1826) colourfully remarked:

Perhaps a strong and hard-working nation will emerge from a vile rabble of convicts, as in other times a swarm of ruffians founded the empire of the Caesars. Life everywhere is born of corruption. It is to fetid dung that we owe both the golden harvests and the dazzling wine.37

Oddly, even though La Pérouse had been tasked with obtaining information about the new British colony, he never visited Port Jackson, even though he heard descriptions of it from Lieutenant Philip Gidley King, second lieutenant of the Sirius, and other English officers whom he met while at Botany Bay.38

32 Starbuck, Constructing the 'Perfect' Voyage, p. 119.
34 Swan, To Botany Bay, p. 164.
35 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 119.
36 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 118.
38 See 'Notes on 1.15 Phillip and Exploration', in Barton, History of New South Wales from the Records, fn. 3.
The peaceful outcome of La Pérouse’s arrival at Botany Bay suggests that both Governor Phillip and La Pérouse possessed the diplomatic skills and restraint that were the unwritten requirements of positions of command.39

Comments made by Lieutenant King and George Worgan reveal the nature of Franco–English relations at Botany Bay. On Saturday, 2 February 1788, King visited the French. On this occasion, he was ‘received with the greatest politeness and attention by Monsieur de la perouse and his officers’.40 Subsequently, King yielded to the sollicitations of ye French Commodore & consented to dine with him & stay the remainder of the ye day & return to Port Jackson next morning41 … After dinner, I attended ye Commodore & other officers onshore where I found him quite established, having thrown round his tents a stoccade, guarded by two small guns.42

According to La Pérouse, his stockade ‘was necessary against the Indians of New Holland, who though very weak and few in number, like all savages are extremely mischievous … for they even threw darts at us immediately after receiving our presents and our caresses’.43

Seven days later, on Saturday, 9 February 1788, Worgan’s journal entry reveals that the day before, a group of his colleagues had

set out for … Botany Bay, by land, to pay a visit to the French officers, from whom, they met with a very polite and cordial reception …

Our gentlemen met with a good deal of swampy, rocky ground in their journey and on the whole it was tedious, but the civilities and hearty, friendly treatment, which they received from the French officers very amply recompensed all their fatigues.44

That La Pérouse had a keen ‘scientific’ eye for detail is revealed by Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench. When describing the kangaroo, Tench reports:

This singular animal is already known in Europe by the drawing and description of Mr. Cook. To the drawing nothing can be objected but the position of the claws of the hinder leg, which are mixed together like those of a dog, whereas no such indistinctness is to be found in the animal I am describing. It was the Chevalier De Perrouse who pointed out this to me, while we were comparing a kangaroo with the plate,

39 See Groom, First Fleet Artist, p. 40.
41 Ibid., p. 38.
42 Ibid., p. 40.
43 Quoted in Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 104.
which, as he justly observed, is correct enough to give the world in general a good idea of the animal, but not sufficiently accurate for the man of science.45

Following the departure of the French on ca Monday, 10 March 1788, Captain David Collins commented on the relations that had been established with the French, and the level of respect that had developed for them:

We had, during their stay in this country, a very friendly and pleasant intercourse with their officers, among whom we observed men of abilities, whose observations, and exertions in the search after knowledge, will most amply illustrate the history of their voyage: and it reflected much credit on the minister when he arranged the plan of it, that people of the first talents for navigation, astronomy, natural history, and every other science that could render it conspicuously useful, should have been selected for the purpose.46

Tench reinforces Collins’ feelings for the visiting explorers: during the stay of the French at Botany Bay, ‘the officers of the two nations had frequent opportunities of testifying their mutual regard by visits, and every interchange of friendship and esteem’.47

Tench specifically singles out La Pérouse:

It was no less gratifying to an English ear, than honourable to Monsieur De Perrouse, to witness the feeling manner in which he always mentioned the name and talents of Captain Cook. That illustrious circumnavigator had, he said, left nothing to those who might follow in his track to describe, or fill up.48

Increasing Disillusionment with Captain Cook

That Tench mentions La Pérouse’s respect for Captain Cook testifies to a sense of the continuing influence of Cook that provided ‘the frame of reference for the colonists’ growing sense of self-definition’.49 It was generally felt that Cook

45 Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay, pp. 125–6.
46 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter II, para. 2.
47 Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay, p. 95.
48 Ibid., p. 97.
was ‘a hero … a practical visionary, resourceful and courageous, a man who restrained his hot temper, eschewed conjecture for accurate observation … [and who] fused curiosity and moral certainty’.\(^5^0\)

Tench’s perceptions of Cook eventually hardened into disillusionment. In June 1788, six months after the arrival of the First Fleet, Tench writes: ‘Of the natural meadows which Mr. Cook mentions near Botany Bay, we can give no account; none such exist about Port Jackson.’\(^5^1\)

In September 1789, following Tench’s participation in a surveying expedition from Sydney Cove to Botany Bay, he wrote:

> Had not the nautical part of Mr Cook’s description … been so accurately laid down, there would exist the utmost reason to believe, that those who described the contiguous country, had never seen it. On the sides of the harbour … we did not find 200 acres [80 hectares] which could be cultivated.\(^5^2\)

By December 1790, Tench’s full-blown scepticism of Cook’s description of Botany Bay is revealed: ‘We had passed through the country which the discoverers of Botany Bay extol as “some of the finest meadows in the world”.’ Tench then appends a footnote:

> The words which are quoted may be found in Mr Cook’s first voyage, and form part of his description of Botany Bay. It has often fallen to my lot to traverse these fabled plains; and many a bitter execration have I heard poured on those travellers, who could so faithlessly relate what they saw.\(^5^3\)

In 1773, three years after Cook’s voyage, John Hawkesworth (ca 1715–73) published his edition of Cook’s *Endeavour Journal*.\(^5^4\) This ‘version of the voyage, hurried into print before the official account’,\(^5^5\) paraphrased Cook’s remarks

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\(^5^1\) Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 120.
\(^5^3\) Ibid., p. 176.
\(^5^4\) J. Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and Successively Performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Carteret, Captain Wallis, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour: Drawn up from the Journals which were Kept by the Several Commanders, and from the Papers of Joseph Banks, Esq; By John Hawkesworth, LL.D. In Three Volumes. Illustrated with Cuts, and a Great Variety of Charts and Maps Relative to Countries Now First Discovered, or Hitherto but Imperfectly Known* (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1773), Vols 2 and 3.
\(^5^5\) Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, p. 9.
concerning Botany Bay’s notorious meadows. Hawkesworth printed: ‘We found also interspersed some of the finest meadows in the world: some places however were rocky, but these were comparatively few.’

In fact, Cook had written: ‘I found in many places a deep black Soil which we thought was capable of producing any kind of grain, at present it produceth besides timber as fine meadow as ever was seen. However we found it not all like this, some places were very rocky but this I believe to be uncommon.’

The differences between these two descriptions suggest that ‘Hawkesworth hoped to make the notes of an unlettered sailor fit entertainment for a cultivated public’. Editorial ‘sleight of hand [goes] … a long way towards clearing Cook of the charge of wilful inaccuracy’.

Both Tench and La Pérouse took Cook’s—that is, Hawkesworth’s—words at face value. This is not surprising; both were ‘Enlightenment empiricist[s] interested in objective data, not … surmise’. ‘Those who had visited La Pérouse and his officers at Botany Bay were doubtless the last Europeans to see him and his men before they vanished, without a trace for forty years, in the South Pacific ocean.’

The Frenchman’s fate remained a mystery until 1828 when Chevalier Captain Peter Dillon (1788–1847) discovered that La Pérouse’s expedition had been wrecked at Vanikoro in the Santa Cruz Islands. We do not know if La Pérouse departed Botany Bay with the knowledge that the British had brought a piano with them to the new colony.

### Spanish Imperial Designs

On Wednesday, 13 March 1793, two Spanish ships, the Descuvierta and the Atrevida, arrived in Sydney Cove in order to ‘investigate the scope of Britain’s imperial designs in the Pacific’. The leader of the Spanish expedition, Alejandro Malaspina (1754–1810), subsequently advised his government that the new British port at Sydney Cove represented a threat to Spanish hopes in the region. His warnings

58 Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, p. 41.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., p. 42.
62 See ibid., p. 174, fn. 31.
were not acted upon due to political rivalries in the Spanish court. As a result, the British enjoyed a breathing space of 14 years before the French challenge reappeared in the form of a scientific exploring expedition in two ships [Le Géographe and Le Naturaliste] under the command of Nicholas Baudin [1754–1803], sent by Napoleon to chart the coasts of New Holland so that they might know ‘the entire coastline’ of what he called ‘the great south land’.64

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the south-east region of Australia remained largely unknown to Europeans. Solving the mystery of this region was central to Nicolas Baudin’s mission. His exploration of Bass Strait and the charting by his cartographer, Louis de Freycinet [1779–1842], of the section of the south-eastern coastline encompassing Victoria, which he named Terre Napoléon (Napoleon Land), preceded that of the simultaneous British expedition led by Matthew Flinders [1774–1814].65

That in March 1788 the Sirius lay anchored as a guard ship to the fledgling colony reflects a cautionary panic resulting not only from tensions that existed between England and France, but also from fear of a French assault (which had the potential to induce a convict uprising).

Was George Worgan’s piano still on board the Sirius as the ship lay at anchor silently watching over the colony? Worgan may have disembarked ashore. If so, it is reasonable to assume that his piano had also been offloaded. The Sirius would, however, have provided a relatively stable environment for the instrument (unlike the tents that had been erected at Sydney Cove). This fact may have convinced Worgan to leave his piano on board. Extant documentary evidence sheds no light on the matter.

### Where was George Worgan’s Piano First Housed?

**The Hunter/Bradley Map, 1 March 1788**

Captain John Hunter’s66 map of Saturday, 1 March 1788, drawn in the diary of Lieutenant William Bradley, shows the Sirius anchored on guard against the
French at the entrance to Sydney Cove. The map also reveals that tents and shelters erected within the first five weeks of the colony’s existence had been precisely laid out. Unfortunately, the ‘tents were open to spiders and vermin’.67 On Friday, 1 February 1788, First Lieutenant Ralph Clark recorded: ‘in all the course of my life I never Sleept worse … than I did [last] night—what with the hard cold ground Spiders ants and every vermin that you can think of was crauling over me I was glad when the morning came.’68

Hunter’s map shows that the marines were located on the western side of the Tank Stream, ‘facing east down the harbour [towards] … any threats that might enter’.69 The ‘marine encampment’ comprised tents (along with huts and stores) that were grouped around, or positioned in relationship to, a parade ground. ‘[T]he spot of ground that had been cleared for a parade’, mentioned by George Worgan in his journal entry for Saturday, 9 February 1788,70 was probably this very parade ground. The convicts’ tents were located nearby.

David Blackburn (1753–95), Master of the First Fleet ship *Supply*, in a letter dated Saturday, 12 July 1788, written to his friend Richard Knight, states: ‘on the 25th [January 1788] saild with the Governor in the Supply for Port Jackson. & next day the whole fleet follow’d & in the evening all anchor’d safe in Sidney Cove. Time was then busily employ’d erecting the tents.’71 ‘Officers lived in marquees, and the marines lived in tents.’72

Governor Phillip, via his clerk Henry Brewer, tells us that one month after Hunter had drawn his map, huts replacing the officers’ marquees (perhaps including a hut for Worgan) had still not been completed.73 (Brewer had coarse, harsh features and a habit of muttering to himself;74 he did, however, have an unswervingly honest and reliable character.75 Brewer ‘had been hand-picked by Phillip, with whom he had served on several ships previously’.)76

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67 Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 27.
70 Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan*, p. 34.
73 Phillip, *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*, p. 185.
76 Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 11.
Governor Phillip in his temporary blue-panelled canvas house (‘like some pre-industrial IKEA nightmare’) and at least five administrative officers (described on the map as being the ‘Provost’, ‘Commissary’, ‘Judge’, parson and the ‘Surveyors’) were located on the more sheltered eastern side of the Tank Stream.

Governor Phillip’s ‘first home was an elaborate tent. With a timber frame, it could support some of the “squares” of window glass imported for more substantial dwellings, but the tent leaked and let in the wind.’

Governor Phillip’s tent had been ‘provided by Messrs Smith of St George’s Field’, and ‘cost the Government £130 … though flimsy, [the tent] served Phillip for many months as both office and residence’.

Nearby were stores, as well as a smaller number of convicts’ tents than were on the western side of the Tank Stream.

The Hunter/Bradley map also shows a wharf. This was located directly below the Governor’s house on the south-eastern side of the Tank Stream. This was ‘almost certainly the first artificial … structure placed in the harbour’. Writing to Lord Sydney (Thomas Townsend, First Viscount Sydney; 1733–1800) on Thursday, 15 May 1788, Governor Phillip, in his first dispatch sent from Sydney Cove, remarks that ‘ships can anchor so close to the shore that at a very small expence quays may be constructed at which the largest vessels may unload’. If the scale and details of the Hunter/Bradley map are to be believed, the wharf may have been located where the depth of the water at the shoreline was only 1.2 metres, near the present-day corner of Loftus and Alfred streets.

Sadly for Worgan’s piano, it appears that if the instrument was taken ashore sometime during the first months of the colony’s life, it may still have been located in a tent by ‘as late as the middle of May [1788]’.

The Hospital and the Barracks

In March 1788, two months after the arrival of the First Fleet, construction began on the hospital. The building was 26 metres by 7 metres, ‘divided into a dispensary … a ward for the troops, and another for the convicts. It was ...
built of wood … the roof … covered … with shingles.’84 Because nails were scarce, the shingles were fixed in place using ‘wooden pegs cut by the convict women’.85

As a surgeon, George Worgan may have been curious to learn of discoveries made in relation to any medicinal properties associated with plants growing at Sydney Cove.

A knowledge of herbal remedies and medicines was a requisite of eighteenth-century life, demonstrated as a part of normal activities, from the arrival of the First Fleet when ‘every species of esculent plants [including] … wild celery, spinach and parsley … grew in abundance about the settlement’ and were given to those who were sick. A herb called sweet tea ‘was recommended by some of the medical gentlemen … as a powerful tonic’.86

Perhaps sweet tea, amongst other herbal infusions, was administered in the colony’s newly built hospital building.

The barracks were begun

early in March; but much difficulty was found in providing proper materials, the timber being in general shakey and rotten. They were to consist of four buildings, each building to be sixty-seven feet [20 metres] by twenty-two [7 metres], and to contain one company. They were placed at a convenient distance asunder for the purpose of air and cleanliness, and with a space in the centre for a parade.87

Structures such as the hospital and the barracks would have provided some protection against the elements for Worgan’s piano, but there is no evidence to suggest that the piano was housed in either of these buildings.

Francis Fowkes’ Drawing, 16 April 1788

Three months after the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove, a drawing was made of the settlement as it appeared on Wednesday, 16 April 1788. The drawing returned to England … in 1789. The creator of it remained unknown as the map only has the initials, ‘F.F. delineavit’ appearing in the lower left-hand corner. By a process of elimination, it was deduced that only one

84 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter II, para. 2.
85 Bridges, Foundations of Identity, p. 11.
86 Barkley-Jack, Hawkesbury Settlement Revealed, p. 413.
87 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter II, para. 2.
person [who] travelled with the First Fleet had those initials: [the convict] Francis Fowkes … The map was published in London in July 1789 by R. Cribb and sold for 1 shilling plain, or 2 shillings [hand] coloured … it is not an accurate cartographical representation but it does provide much detail about the settlement just 3 months after arrival.88

The drawing shows the approximate location of the marine officers’ marquees. Although Worgan was not a marine officer, was his piano moved into one of the officers’ marquees? The notion that a marquee may have been the piano’s first destination ashore is consistent with a journal entry written six months after the First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove, by John White, the chief surgeon of the First Fleet: ‘We have been here nearly six months and four officers only as yet got huts: when the rest will be provided with them seems uncertain, but this I well know, that living in tents, as the rainy season has commenced, is truly uncomfortable.’89 ‘White remained [at] … Sydney [Cove] until December 1794, when he returned to England. He was put on half-pay in 1820 and died in 1832, leaving a fortune which today would amount to about £100,000.’90

Was Worgan one of the four officers to be provided with a hut to live in? It seems unlikely; higher-ranking officers would have had first preference, and Worgan was neither a high-ranking nor a marine officer. Worgan’s military ranking (warrant officer) may not, however, have precluded his piano from being taken off the *Sirius* for subsequent placement in one of the four officers’ huts. Perhaps one of the four officers generously allowed Worgan’s piano to be placed in his hut. After all, it would have been commonly understood that the instrument, being unique in the colony and valuable in cultural and financial terms, needed to be housed protectively and responsibly.

The outline of each of the four officers’ huts ‘might have been drawn by a child; simple square buildings about nine feet by twelve with a central door’, which may or may not have been lockable, ‘on one side and a window each side of it’. The windows were covered with wooden lattice shutters. Posts, girders and rafters were made of sawn she-oak (*Casuarina Fraseriana*). ‘Cabbage-tree palms [*Livistona australis*] provided material that could be worked—the trunks were soft in texture, easy to fell and roughly consistent in size; unfortunately every cabbage-tree in the vicinity of the settlement had soon been cut down.’

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The cabbage-tree palm drop-log walling was plastered with mud on the outside of the hut. ‘The first roof shingles were made of wood from the casuarinas, known popularly as ‘Botany Bay wood’.’\textsuperscript{91}

If the hut was thatched, the roof comprised ‘grass, the reed-like stalks of the blackboy (\textit{Xanthorrea}) and rushes from the low-tide flats around the harbour’.\textsuperscript{92} Inside the hut, there was a packed earth floor.

**The Dawes/Medland/Hunter Map, July 1788**

A map attributed to William Dawes (1762–1836), ‘drawn with the help of … Thomas Medland’\textsuperscript{93} (1755–1822) and Captain John Hunter\textsuperscript{94} in July 1788, reveals that a ‘Small House building for the Governor’ had been built to the east of his temporary tent accommodation. The location of other accommodation as shown in the Hunter/Bradley map of four months before—that is, Saturday, 1 March 1788—remains fundamentally unchanged. The map ‘indicates that settlement was close and intensive, production and storage of food were taking place, defence and communal religious activity were important and disease was present in the colony … nine acres [4 hectares] of corn [are] marked on the farmlands’.\textsuperscript{95}

**Newton Fowell’s Letter, 12 July 1788**

The fragility of the housing built immediately following the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove is revealed in a letter dated Saturday, 12 July 1788, written to his father by midshipman Newton Fowell. Fowell writes:

\begin{quote}
[T]he convicts were constantly employed clearing ground, building store houses for the reception of provisions & which were built of by putting trees about 2 feet [60 centimetres] in the ground so as to touch each other & thatched over with rushes, there are likewise a number of hovels built of cabbage tree for some of the Officers & the battalion, they are chiefly thatched with rushes but some are covered with wooden tiles the wood of which these tiles are made of splits something like the ash.\textsuperscript{96}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p. 134.
\textsuperscript{92} Bridges, \textit{Foundations of Identity}, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{93} Hoorn, \textit{Australian Pastoral}, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{94} The map may have been based on the Hunter/Bradley map of March 1788, and is published in Phillip, \textit{The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay}.
\textsuperscript{95} Hoorn, \textit{Australian Pastoral}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{96} ‘Newton Fowell (1768–1790)’, in Discover Collections at Your State Library (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, Discover Collections, 2008).
Reverend Johnson’s Letter, 15 November 1788

The Reverend Richard Johnson97 ‘was appointed the first Church of England chaplain to the colony of New South Wales in 1787’.98 Johnson ‘was a humourless, dedicated evangelist [who] … reconciled himself to a martyr’s crown in a far-off land among moral degenerates’.99 Accordingly, he ‘put together a collection of theological munitions’ in the form of 4200100 ‘religious pamphlets, books and Bibles to help straighten the twisted souls of the convicts, most of whom couldn’t read’.101 There was ample supply of

1. *Exhortations to Chastity*, by Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (Tertullian) (100 copies)102
2. *An Exercise against Lying*103
3. Stephen White’s *A Dissuasive from Stealing*104
4. John Kettlewell’s *Offices for the Penitent*105
5. Edward Synge’s *Religion Made Easy*106
6. Josiah Woodward’s *A Dissuasive from Profane Swearing and Cursing Offered to Such Unhappy Persons as are Guilty of those Horrid Sins, and are Not Past Counsel* (50 copies)107
7. bibles (100 copies)108
8. New Testaments (400 copies)109
9. books of psalms (500 copies)110

97 An engraved portrait of the Reverend Richard Johnson by Garnet Terry (fl. 1770s–1790s), dated 1787, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. P1/854; Digital order no. a1528135).
103 *An Exercise against Lying: For the Use of the Charity Schools* (London: Joseph Downing, 1715).
104 See Steele and Richards, *Bound for Botany Bay*, p. 5.
109 See ibid., p. 4.
10. prayer books (100 copies)\textsuperscript{11}

11. catechism books (200 copies).\textsuperscript{12}

Johnson’s optimism was further reflected by his inclusion of 12 copies of Bishop Thomas Wilson’s \textit{An Essay Towards an Instruction for the Indians}.\textsuperscript{13} All in all, this was ‘sufficient to allow each of the … convicts embarked to borrow six at a time’.\textsuperscript{14}

Needless to say, the Reverend Johnson’s attempts to reform the convicts were not particularly successful. ‘Male convicts were known to use Bibles and prayer books to make playing cards; women convicts turned tracts into hair curlers.’\textsuperscript{15} First Lieutenant Ralph Clark, writing in his journal on Tuesday, 1 May 1792, recounted:

\begin{quote}
[T]wo sharks were caught the morning—in the belly of one of them was found a prayer book quite fresh not a leaf of it defaced on one of the leaves was wrote Frances Carthy cast for death in the year 1786 and reprieved the same day at four oclock in the afternoon.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

(At his trial held in Bodmin, Cornwall, on 14 August 1786, Francis Carty was found guilty of assault and highway robbery, and sentenced to death. The death sentence was commuted to transportation to Botany Bay for seven years. Carty sailed with the First Fleet on the \textit{Scarborough}.\textsuperscript{17} It is likely that it was Carty who tossed his prayer book into the sea.) Ironically, the 1780s saw the most extraordinary spiritual rebirth in Britain since the 17th century; a great flowering of dissenting faiths and Churches in which the Bible was read … as a proclamation of the doctrine of common humanity, and the gospel of compassion for the poor and downtrodden.\textsuperscript{18}

In a letter dated Saturday, 15 November 1788, written to his friend Henry Fricker, Reverend Johnson reveals that 10 months after the arrival of the First
Fleet at Sydney Cove, the physical quality of his housing left a lot to be desired (the Reverend Johnson’s letters ‘are full of … frustrations at the primitive state of things’). Reverend Johnson writes that with much labour & no small cost we have got our little cabbage tree cottage—no small curiosity it is, i assure you, & c[oul]d it be placed on bonfire corner but one day, I dare say it w[oul]d have as many spectators & admirers as ever had Lunardy’s balloon. Am happy, however, that it in some measure answers our purpose, though now and then in excessive rains, we are all in a swim within doors.

When compared with a tent, Reverend Johnson’s cottage represented a more comfortable and secure type of accommodation. Even so, it is reasonable to assume that if Worgan was presented with the opportunity to place his piano in the Reverend Johnson’s cottage, or into a cottage that was similar, he may not have been keen to place the instrument into such an environmentally harsh context.

**George Worgan’s Piano Remains on the *Sirius***

Following his arrival with the First Fleet, Worgan may have kept his piano on board the *Sirius* for as long as he could, in order to ensure that it was housed in a secure and relatively environmentally stable location.

John Curry maintains that ‘at Sydney Cove Worgan lived principally on the ship’. Worgan may sometimes have slept on board the *Sirius*. There was a precedent for this: after his arrival at Sydney Cove with the First Fleet, First Lieutenant William Bradley ‘lived in the *Sirius* and appears to have taken little part in the social life of the new colony’. A watercolour drawn by Bradley, dated 1788, shows the colony’s sparse, rudimentary housing (Bradley used the image to illustrate his journal). Given the basic conditions depicted by Bradley, it is reasonable to hypothesise that Worgan may have kept his piano on board the *Sirius*, where he may have slept—after all, Worgan was a member of the...

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120 ‘Reverend Richard Johnson (1753–1827)’, in Discover Collections at Your State Library.
123 Watercolouring was relatively new—far cheaper than oil paint, watercolour paint was easily portable and dried faster. A boxed set of watercolour cakes was, however, not cheap, selling for 2–3 guineas. See Menezes and Bandeira, *O Rio De Janeiro na Rota dos Mares do Sul*, p. 221, fn. 2. See also Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 7, fn. 11.
ship's company, rather than of the settlement. No documentary source, however, indicates that surgeon Worgan led a reclusive life, or that he lived, or as a general rule slept, on board the *Sirius*. Furthermore, there is no documentary evidence supporting the notions that Worgan's piano was either immediately taken off the *Sirius* or remained on board.

**George Worgan’s Piano is Taken Ashore**

The contextual uniqueness of Worgan's piano, as well as its social, cultural and monetary value, would have required that moving the instrument from the *Sirius* to the shore be undertaken with the utmost care. There may have been some awkward effort, if not only because of the instrument's fragility, but also because of its weight (which was not all that excessive) and its slightly lopsided centre of gravity. Rudimentary wharf facilities would also not have helped. In order to make its journey ashore, Worgan's piano may have been moved in a shallow-draft rowing boat or a flat-bottomed barge.

Following his arrival at Sydney Cove with the First Fleet on Saturday, 26 January 1788, Worgan had two choices in relation to the timing of taking his piano ashore. First, the instrument could have been taken off the *Sirius* at any time during the approximately eight months following the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove, and before the ship's departure on 2 October 1788 'for the Cape of Good Hope, with directions to purchase provisions there'.

Second, Worgan's piano may have been removed from the *Sirius* after its return from the Cape of Good Hope on Saturday, 9 May 1789 (assuming that the instrument made the journey with Worgan).

**The *Sirius* Circumnavigates the World**

Unlikely as it is, Worgan's piano may have remained on board the *Sirius* during its epic global circumnavigation via the Cape of Good Hope and back (Thursday, 2 October 1788 to Saturday, 9 May 1789). If the piano was on the ship during this journey, it may also have been left on board during the 10 months that followed the return of the vessel to Sydney Cove from Cape Town—that is, before the *Sirius* departed on Saturday, 6 March 1790 for Norfolk Island, where the ship was wrecked 13 days later. This, however, is an unlikely scenario.

In his journal, *An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island*, Captain John Hunter reveals that prior to the *Sirius*'s departure from Sydney Cove for the Cape of Good Hope,

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Governor Phillip signified … that it was his intention … that \[the Sirius\] … might be made as light as possible [and] … he desired I would land eight or ten of her guns and carriages, with any other articles which I judged the ship could spare, for the time she might be absent, and which might answer the purpose of lightening the ship and the making of room. In consequence of this order … various … articles … were put on shore at Sydney-cove.\(^{125}\)

Was Worgan’s piano one of the ‘articles’ that was removed from the \textit{Sirius} prior to the vessel’s departure for the Cape of Good Hope because Captain Hunter had ‘judged’ that ‘the ship could spare’ it?

We know that Worgan was on the \textit{Sirius} when the ship made its eastward journey via Cape Horn to the Cape of Good Hope. This is because Captain Hunter writes:

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\text{[I]n the morning of the 2d of January [1789] … at 10 o’clock … we anchored in Table Bay [Cape Town] … Immediately after our arrival, I directed that sick-quarters should be provided for the sick, which was done; and the invalids, to the number of forty, were landed under the care of Mr. Worgan, the surgeon of the ship.}^{126}\]

The large number of ‘invalids’ cared for by George Worgan had been incapacitated by scurvy. ‘The ship’s company was afflicted with scurvy so badly that at one stage there were only thirteen sailors available to man the watch.’\(^{127}\) Because Captain Hunter had ‘made the controversial decision to take the eastern, rather than the western route to Cape Town, across the southern Pacific and Atlantic oceans [the \textit{Sirius} arrived] … in Cape Town in a record time of 91 days’,\(^{128}\) Hunter may have taken the eastern route in order to take advantage of the Roaring Forties, which blow consistently from the west; although he travelled further, the wind was behind him all the way. ‘Sailing east, the \textit{Sirius} had gained a day. The correction was made when the ship crossed the Greenwich meridian in the mid-Atlantic; quite by coincidence this was on the 25 December, and the ship’s company were permitted to celebrate Christmas twice.’\(^{129}\)

After spending 51 days at Table Bay, on 20 February, the \textit{Sirius} departed from Cape Town for Sydney Cove, ‘after having taken on board twelve months provisions for the ship’s company; and, in addition, about six months flour for the whole settlement’.\(^{130}\)

\(^{125}\) Hunter, \textit{An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island}, Chapter IV, ‘A Voyage to Cape of Good Hope September 1788 to January 1789’.
\(^{126}\) Ibid., Chapter V, ‘A Voyage to Cape of Good Hope and Voyage to Port Jackson January 1789 to May 1789’.
\(^{127}\) Keneally, \textit{A Commonwealth of Thieves}, p. 212.
\(^{128}\) Groom, \textit{First Fleet Artist}, pp. 25–6.
\(^{129}\) Ibid., p. 26.
\(^{130}\) Hunter, \textit{An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island}, Chapter V, ‘A Voyage to Cape of Good Hope and Voyage to Port Jackson January 1789 to May 1789’.
One can imagine the emotions of [the ship’s officers and crew] ... as they sailed from Cape Town and turned towards the east. There was no question, of course, where their duty lay—the settlement at Sydney Cove desperately needed the supplies they were carrying—but it must have been tempting to think that by turning in the other direction they could have been back to the comforts of England within a couple of months.131

The *Sirius* was loaded with ‘various stores for the colony, and many private articles for the different officers, &c. &c. in short, the ship’s hold, between decks, every officer’s apartment, and all the store-rooms were completely filled’.132

We do not know if Worgan’s ‘apartment’ contained his piano along with the ‘many private articles’ that had been procured at Cape Town. Regardless of whether or not Worgan’s piano was stored in his cabin, according to Captain Hunter, Worgan’s apartment would have been ‘completely filled’.

On the evening of 9 May 1789, the *Sirius* ‘entered between the heads of the harbour, and worked up to Sydney Cove, where [it] ... anchored before dark, after an absence of 219 days’.133 Having sailed in the belt of westerly winds known as the Roaring Forties, the *Sirius* ‘had fairly gone round the world’,134 ‘thus pioneering the route’.135

During its epic voyage, the *Sirius* endured a particularly violent storm off the South Cape of Van Diemen’s Land. As a consequence, when the ship arrived at Sydney Cove, it was in a damaged state:

She was missing the upper sections of her masts (the fore-topgallant masts), had split the upper parts of her stem [stern?] and lost the figurehead of the Duke of Berwick ...136

Despite the supplies *Sirius* had brought back from South Africa, by November 1789 the ration had to be reduced by two-thirds again. Amongst other factors, the store-house supplies had proved to be very appetizing to rats and to native marsupials—bush rats, potoroos, bilbies and possums. Nonetheless, said Collins, ‘The governor, whose humanity was at all times conspicuous, directed that no alteration should be made in the ration to be issued to the women.’137

131 Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 27.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 Thompson, ‘Statement of Significance’.
137 Ibid., p. 237.
The Wedgwood Medallion

The optimism that must have flowered in the colony immediately following the arrival of the *Sirius* on Saturday, 9 May 1789 was matched, at virtually the same time, in England.

On [Sunday] 16 November 1788 in Sydney Cove, Governor Arthur Phillip sent Sir Joseph Banks138 a box containing red ochre, and also white clay ‘with wch the natives mark themselves, it is found in great plenty, a few feet below the surface … the people use it to cover their houses.’ A second box was described as containing sand ‘found in sinking a well’ which Phillip thought ‘has black lead in it.’139 Banks, in turn, immediately sent the clay to ‘Josiah Wedgwood to be tested for its suitability for making pottery, which Wedgwood reported was excellent’.140 (Had Banks been informed at the time that Worgan had taken a square piano to Sydney Cove, he would most probably have been disinterested; Sir Joseph did not have ‘the slightest taste for music’.)141

In 1789 Josiah Wedgwood issued a medallion (Plate 64) made from the marl collected by Arthur Phillip. ‘Modelled by William Hackwood (fl. 1780–d. 1836) after a design by Henry Webber (1754–1826),’142 the medallion was entitled ‘Hope encouraging Art and Labour, under the influence of Peace, to pursue the employments necessary to give security and happiness to an infant settlement’.

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138 Sir Joseph Banks lived in a house in Soho (or Kings) Square, one block away from the house in which Johann Christian Bach lived until his death in 1782. A portrait of Sir Joseph Banks by Benjamin West (1738–1820), dated 1773, can be seen at PD Art. Wikimedia Commons. Web Gallery of Art.
Plate 64 Josiah Wedgwood (1730–95): medallion made from clay collected at Sydney Cove (1789); 6.7 centimetres maximum diameter.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Call no. P’68; Album ID 825693; Digital order no. a128978.

The bas-relief image on the obverse side of the medallion is allegorical. The female figure on the left, dressed in Grecian-style robes, represents Hope; she stands beside an anchor, the symbol of hope. Hope is addressing Peace, Art and Labour—all of whom are in classical dress. A basket of fruit, a symbol of plenty, pours forth its bounty at the feet of a female figure, Peace, who holds an olive branch, the symbol of peace. Next to Peace, Art is represented by a female figure holding an artist’s palette; last, standing beside Art, the only male figure on the medallion represents Labour—he wears a loincloth, and supports a sledgehammer on his right shoulder. On the left-hand side, behind Hope, a ship under sail can be seen, whilst on the right-hand side, behind Labour, the land bristles with (church?) towers, and buildings rise.
The word ‘Etruria’ in raised (sprigged) text, along with the date of manufacture (1789), sits beneath the image. ‘Etruria’ refers to the name of Wedgwood’s Staffordshire factory, opened in 1769 (Wedgwood’s stately home was called ‘Etruria Hall’).

On the reverse side of the medallion, the following words are impressed:

Made By
Josiah Wedgwood
Of Clay
From
Sydney Cove

An unknown number of medallions were sent to Phillip at Sydney Cove. On Monday, 26 July 1790, Phillip wrote to Joseph Banks: ‘Wedgwood has showed the world that our [New South] Welch clay is capable of receiving an eligant commission, & i return thanks for the … medallions.’

The medallions were produced in three distinct colours—pale cream, brown and black—depending on which clay was used. It is not known how many medallions were produced, but the number is likely to be small.

The Wedgwood medallion became the inspiration for the First Great Seal of New South Wales, which was approved by King George III on Wednesday, 4 August 1790.

George Worgan Puts His Piano on Land

Worgan’s piano was taken off the Sirius between the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove on Saturday, 26 January 1788 and the departure of the Sirius for Norfolk Island on Saturday, 6 March 1790.

A very long letter written by Elizabeth Macarthur to her friend Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791, enables us to deduce that George Worgan’s piano (and George Worgan) did not depart with the Sirius for Norfolk Island on 6 March 1790; Worgan ‘remained at Port Jackson assisting Dr. White at the hospital’. Elizabeth writes: ‘I shall now introduce another acquaintance, Mr Worgan to you, a gentleman I have not hitherto named. He was surgeon to the Sirius, and happened to be left at this place [that is, Sydney] when that ship met with her fate at Norfolk.’

The writing of letters was considered to be both

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144 ‘General Note’, State Library of New South Wales.
part of ‘women’s work’ and an artform that reflected ‘gentility’. Letter writing ‘was part of the literary inheritance of middle- and upper-class women’, letters often being written ‘to be read aloud and to be passed around among relatives and friends’.\(^{147}\) Writers ‘knew how their letters could be “staged” to provide … home entertainment and they shaped their words accordingly’.\(^{148}\) As there is no mention in any contemporaneous source that Worgan’s piano was saved from the shipwreck of the *Sirius*, it is reasonable to assume that by Saturday, 6 March 1790, Worgan’s square piano had been taken off the *Sirius*.

Watkin Tench provides evidence that Worgan was not on board the *Sirius* when it made its journey to Norfolk Island.\(^{149}\) The *Sirius* foundered at Norfolk Island on Friday, 19 March 1790. The officers and crew of the *Sirius*—having been stranded on Norfolk Island for 11 months—departed from the island for Sydney Cove, on board the *Supply*, on Monday, 7 February 1791. They arrived at Sydney Cove on Sunday, 27 February 1791. Tench reports that in August 1790—five months after the *Sirius* had been wrecked, and six months before the officers and crew of the *Sirius* returned to Sydney Cove—

in company with Mr Dawes and Mr Worgan, late surgeon of the *Sirius*, I undertook an expedition to the southward and westward of Rose Hill [Parramatta]\(^{150}\) … Except the discovery of a river (which is unquestionably the Nepean near its source) to which we gave the name of the Worgan, in honour of one of our party, nothing very interesting was remarked.\(^{151}\)

Worgan therefore cannot have left Port Jackson for Norfolk Island on what was to be the final journey of the *Sirius*.

Cobley\(^{152}\) and Edwards\(^{153}\) assert that Worgan left Port Jackson on the *Sirius*, and subsequently ‘spent a year on Norfolk Island after she was wrecked there’.\(^{154}\) There is no evidence to support either Cobley’s or Edwards’ claims—claims that contradict the obvious implications of Tench’s report.

Whatever the exact date Worgan’s piano was moved from the *Sirius* to the shore, no direct evidence has been found to show where the piano was housed

\(^{147}\) Clarke, ‘*Life Lines*’.


\(^{149}\) See W. Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson, in New South Wales, Including an Accurate Description of the Colony; Of the Natives; And of its Natural Productions* (London: G. Nicol & J. Sewell, 1793), Chapter 7.

\(^{150}\) Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, p. 203.

\(^{151}\) Ibid., p. 133.


\(^{154}\) Cobley, ‘Worgan, George Bouchier [1757–1838]’. 
immediately after its removal from the ship. The instrument most probably began its life in Australia in a tent, in conditions that were both confronting and crude.

With the passing of time, Worgan’s piano may have been located in his residence. It is not known exactly where Worgan resided. He may have lived with the other surgeons at the hospital, or he may have lived at the barracks.

Was George Worgan’s Piano Placed in Governor Phillip’s House?

Because of its value, perhaps Worgan’s piano found its way into Governor Phillip’s home. The foundation stone for Governor Phillip’s house—’a small cottage on the east side of the cove’—was laid on Thursday, 15 May 1788. (‘The Lieutenant-Governor, Major Robert Ross, had begun his stone-built cottage a month before.’)

The King’s Birthday Celebrations, 4 June 1789

On Thursday, 4 June 1789—’the anniversary of his majesty’s birthday’—not only did Governor Phillip receive a large cabbage (weighing 12 kilograms) that had been grown at the newly established vegetable gardens at Rose Hill (soon renamed with its Aboriginal name of Parramatta), but he also ‘received the compliments due to the day in his new house, of which he had lately taken possession as the government-house of the colony, where his excellency afterwards entertained the officers at dinner’.

Robert Jordan provides compelling evidence to support his hypothesis that not all the officers in or near Sydney on 4 June 1789 dined that evening with

155 A possibility identified by the eminent Australian historian Joy Hughes during a conversation held with the author on Friday, 6 March 2009.
158 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter VII, para. 21.
160 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter II, para. 2, and Chapter VII, para. 21.
Governor Phillip to celebrate the King’s birthday (the 12-kilogram cabbage would doubtless have featured at the dinner). Jordan suggests that Governor Phillip entertained ‘45 or so’ dinner guests.\textsuperscript{161}

Government House ‘was only one room deep with back skillings’—that is, slight additions to the outside of the cottage.\textsuperscript{162}

There were ‘six main rooms—two front rooms downstairs, two skilling rooms and two rooms upstairs—plus the upper and lower halls, the stairhall and, possibly, subsidiary rooms in the upper part of the skilling.’\textsuperscript{163}

‘The front rooms were approximately 20 by 16.5 feet [6 metres by 5 metres], the hall approximately 9 feet [3 metres] wide. The ceiling height on the ground floor was 9 feet, the height to the top of the double-hung sash windows was 7 feet [2 metres].’\textsuperscript{164}

There would have been more than enough room to install Worgan’s square piano in one of the downstairs front rooms of Governor Phillip’s new home.

The King’s birthday of 4 June 1789 was celebrated with volleys from the marines, and 21-gun salutes from the ships in the harbour.\textsuperscript{165} Captain David Collins, the colony’s Deputy Judge Advocate and Secretary to the Governor,\textsuperscript{166} tells us that the King’s birthday ‘was observed with every distinction in our power; for the first time, the ordnance belonging to the colony were discharged; the detachment of marines fired three volleys, which were followed by twenty-one guns from each of the ships of war in the cove’.\textsuperscript{167}

‘David Collins was a tall, broad-shouldered man with fair, curly hair.\textsuperscript{168} He was described as “remarkably handsome and his manners extremely prepossessing” with a “most cheerful disposition”.’\textsuperscript{169} Collins’ account of the first eight years of the colony is arguably the most comprehensive of the several accounts of life at Sydney Cove that were published towards the end of the eighteenth century.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{162} Broadbent, \textit{The Australian Colonial House}, p. 4.
\bibitem{163} Ibid., p. 3.
\bibitem{164} Ibid., p. 4.
\bibitem{165} Parker, \textit{Arthur Phillip}, p. 168.
\bibitem{166} Collins formed a close bond with Governor Phillip. This is reflected in his statement concerning the Governor, ‘with whom I have now lived so long, that I am blended in every concern of his’. ‘Collins, David (1756–1810)’, in \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography Online} (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in \textit{Australian Dictionary of Biography}, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1966], Vol. 1.
\bibitem{167} Collins, \textit{An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country}, Chapter VII, para. 21.
\bibitem{168} An engraved portrait of Captain David Collins by Antoine Cardon (1722–1813), dated 1804, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an9483647).
\bibitem{169} Egan, \textit{Buried Alive}, p. 88.
\end{thebibliography}
Collins’ duties ensured that he had ‘a close relationship with Governor Phillip and his role of keeping official records and drafting dispatches made him very well informed to document the state of the colony’.  

George Farquhar’s The Recruiting Officer

Collins continues by revealing that during the evening of the King’s birthday, ‘some of the convicts were permitted to perform Farquhar’s comedy of the Recruiting Officer, in a hut fitted up for the occasion. They professed no higher aim than “humbly to excite a smile,” and their efforts to please were not unattended with applause.’

On Thursday, 4 June 1789, after Governor Phillip had ‘entertained the officers at dinner’ as part of the King’s birthday celebrations, not all of his dinner guests—following their culinary adventure with the 12-kilogram cabbage—would have attended the ensuing performance of The Recruiting Officer.

Hypothetically, over forty of the sixty audience-members could have been drawn from the ruling elite. Although the actual number may have been below that, there still remain those immediate adjuncts of the ruling order, the storekeepers and superintendents, the marine sergeants (some of whom had brought their wives to the colony) and their naval equivalents, such as the bosuns and master-gunners. Tench’s reference to an audience of ‘various descriptions’ suggests some common folk were present; but the few places would not have gone far among the theatre-loving sailors and soldiers. There may well have been no convicts whatsoever in the audience, only convicts performing for the delectation of their betters.

This production of The Recruiting Officer, a play written in 1706 by the Irish dramatist George Farquhar (1677–1707), was the first play to be seen in New South Wales. Sadly, we know virtually nothing about the production or who was involved in it.

Though The Recruiting Officer was sufficiently popular to justify its selection on that ground alone, it was also a play that had a special

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171 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter VII, para. 21.
172 Ibid., Chapter II, para. 2, and Chapter VII, para. 21.
174 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 168.
appeal to the military. Its choice may have been a calculated attempt to flatter those who were expected to dominate not only the audience but also the lives of the players.\footnote{Jordan, \textit{The Convict Theatres of Early Australia 1788–1840}, pp. 31–2.}

Within the context of late eighteenth-century political correctness, however, it is astonishing that both Governor Phillip and the NSW Corps allowed the convict actors to present \textit{The Recruiting Officer}. The play ridicules the officer class: Captain Brazen, the principal comic figure in the play, is not only a loud-mouthed fop but also an idiot.

In 1797, several English newspapers reported that John Gay's (1685–1732) \textit{The Beggar's Opera} had been performed in Sydney:\footnote{Oracle, 14 July 1797; \textit{Morning Chronicle}, 18 July 1797; \textit{True Briton}, 20 July 1797; \textit{Star}, 27 July 1797; \textit{Crafts}, 26 August 1797.} 'It is said that the \textit{Citizens of Botany Bay}, begin to \textit{turn their hands} towards theatrical amusements. \textit{The Beggar's Opera}, we hear, is the favourite Play.'\footnote{Quoted in Jordan, \textit{The Convict Theatres of Early Australia 1788–1840}, p. 108.} It seems unlikely that \textit{The Beggar's Opera} would have been performed at the colony, 'since it was widely seen in Britain as politically subversive and a dangerous celebration of the life of crime'.\footnote{Ibid., p. 106.} (Besides, there may not have been available an instrumental ensemble large enough to provide the prescribed accompaniment for the singers.) \textit{The Beggar's Opera}

worked on the principle that if you can destroy the … respect paid to rank and station, those distinctions … may be speedily swept away. On 13 May 1805 the \textit{Morning Chronicle} reported a disturbance during a production of the work at Drury Lane, where Gay's version of 'Greensleeves' (Air 67) 'produced a torrent of applause of an extraordinary kind' and was encored three times:

\begin{quote}
Since laws were made for ev'ry degree,
To curb vice in others, as well as me,
I wonder we ha'nt better company,
Upon Tyburn Tree!
But gold from law can take out the sting;
And if rich men like us were to swing,
'Twou' d thin the land, such numbers to string
Upon Tyburn Tree!\footnote{Ibid., p. 307, fn. 58.}
\end{quote}

It is unlikely the ruling authorities at Sydney Cove would have welcomed such sentiments being espoused on the convict stage.
It is not known who brought a copy of *The Recruiting Officer* to Sydney Cove. It is possible that marine officer First Lieutenant Ralph Clark may have possessed a copy of the play. Clark, ‘a rather prim [and] neurotic officer had volunteered’ for service in Botany Bay ‘in the hope of promotion’. \(^{180}\) We know that during his journey on board the *Friendship*—one of the transports for female prisoners—First Lieutenant Clark spent time reading. ‘He enjoyed … stories in copies of [the] … women’s magazine *Lady*. He … also possessed a copy of *Lady Jane Grey*, a play by Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), ‘first produced in 1715’. \(^{181}\)

In his journal, Clark informs us that on Saturday, 8 December 1787, he ‘read the remainder of Lady Jane Gray—could not help shedding tears for so good a young lady to come with her fond husband to so untimly an end as she did’. \(^{182}\)

Watkin Tench provides a much more elaborate account than Collins of the production of the first play to be performed in the colony.

Tench recounts:

The anniversary of His Majesty’s birthday was celebrated, as heretofore, at the government house, with loyal festivity. In the evening, the play of *The Recruiting Officer* was performed by a party of convicts, and honoured by the presence of His Excellency and the officers of the garrison. That every opportunity of escape from the dreariness and dejection of our situation should be eagerly embraced will not be wondered at. The exhilarating effect of a splendid theatre is well known; and I am not ashamed to confess that the proper distribution of three or four yards of stained paper, and a dozen farthing candles stuck around the mud walls of a convict hut, failed not to diffuse general complacency on the countenances of sixty persons of various descriptions who were assembled to applaud the representation. Some of the actors acquitted themselves with great spirit and received the praises of the audience. A prologue and an epilogue, written by one of the performers, were also spoken on the occasion; which, although not worth inserting here, contained some tolerable allusions to the situation of the parties, and the novelty of a stage representation in New South Wales. \(^{183}\)

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The prologue and epilogue of which Tench speaks have not survived. By referring to ‘the novelty of a stage representation in New South Wales’, Tench implies that he was well aware of the cultural significance for the colony of the production of *The Recruiting Officer*.

**Incidental Music for *The Recruiting Officer***

The addition of a prologue and epilogue to the *The Recruiting Officer* produced the structure of entertainment typically found in many English theatres of the time. ‘The usual preliminaries would have comprised an extended musical introduction from a small instrumental ensemble, followed by an actor advancing in front of the curtain to deliver a prologue.’

If there was ‘an extended musical introduction’, this may have involved the use of George Worgan’s piano. It seems unlikely, however, that Tench would have failed to mention the presence of the piano had it been part of the event in any way (not to mention the presence of its player, George Worgan).

The prologue would almost certainly have been written locally for the occasion. It was commonplace in England for companies touring the provincial towns, as part of the process of ingratiation, to offer such pieces, normally replete with local references. Similarly, special events, such as the opening of a new theatre, were accorded the same treatment.

Typically for late eighteenth-century English theatre, the conclusion of the prologue led immediately into the main play, which was usually taken from the standard repertoire. The main play was commonly followed by an epilogue, a farce or a pantomime, a dance and/or a song, an elaborate scenic spectacle or a combination of all these afterpieces (depending on the resources available at the theatre).

In 1792—three years after the performance at Sydney Cove of *The Recruiting Officer* on 4 June 1789—the text of Farquhar’s play was printed in London. According to this printed text, singing is called for at several stages in the play.

*At the start of Act 2, Scene 3:*

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185 Ibid., pp. 38–9.
KITE sings.

Our 'prentice Tom may now refuse
To wipe his scoundrel master's shous,
For now he's free to sing and play
Over the hills and far away. Over, &c.

[The Mob sing the chorus.]

We shall lead more happy lives
By getting rid of brats and wives
That scold and brawl both night and day,
Over the hills and far away. Over, &c.188

A little later in the same scene:

Enter PLUME singing.

Over the hills and over the main,
To Flanders, Portugal, or Spain;
The king commands and we'll obey,
Over the hills and far away.189

Near the end of Act 2:

Plume. Very well. Courage, my lads Now we'll

[Sings.] Over the hills, and far away.
Courage, boys, it is one to ten
But we return all gentlemen;
While conqu'ring colours we display,
Over the hills, and far away.190

Towards the end of Act 3, Scene 1:

Enter PLUME, singing.

Plume. But it is not so
With those that go
Thro' frost and snow
Most apropos
My maid with the milking-pail. [Takes hold of Rose.]191

188 Ibid., p. 38.
189 Ibid., p. 40.
190 Ibid., p. 45.
191 Ibid., p. 57.
Apart from singing, the sound of a drum is also required in the play towards the beginning of Act 1. The 1792 printed text shows:

All Mob. Huzza!
Kite. Beat drum.

[Exeunt shouting, drum beating a Grenadier’s march.]\(^{192}\)

When describing the performance at Sydney Cove of *The Recruiting Officer*, both Collins and Tench make no observations in relation either to singing or to the use of musical instruments in the play. If any instruments were used at all, their presence may simply have been taken for granted. Traditionally, the English regarded music and spectacle—scenery, costumes and spoken dialogue—as being of equal importance. As the seventeenth-century playwright Peter Motteux (1663–1718) states: ‘English gentlemen, when their ear is satisfy’d, are desirous to have their mind pleas’d, and musick and dancing industriously intermix’d with comedy or tragedy.’\(^{193}\) There is no evidence that this attitude changed markedly between the seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries.

In late eighteenth-century London’s playhouses (as in opera houses), musical instruments were not always placed in front of the stage but could be located outside the stage picture. The location of musical instruments was a flexible affair, and was often determined by the needs of the play; accordingly, music could be heard coming from ‘heav’n’ (above the proscenium), from ‘hell’ (beneath the stage) or was made visibly (or invisibly) behind, in front of or beside the action.

The fact that neither Collins nor Tench mentions singing or the use of musical instruments in the production of *The Recruiting Officer* may be because the presence of these elements was not regarded as being anything special or particularly out of the ordinary. Certainly, it would have been an easy matter to procure at least a drummer (as is required in the 1792 printed text) from the regimental band (‘three marine fife-and-drummers landed with the … *Sirius* in 1788’).\(^{194}\)

If singing took place within the context of the production of *The Recruiting Officer*, it is possible that a fife—or fifes, if not too loud combined—from the regimental band(s) may have (visibly or invisibly) doubled or improvised basic counterpoint against the vocal melodic line.

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192 Ibid., p. 13.
193 Quoted in M. Greenhalgh, Liner Notes for *Henry Purcell: King Arthur or the British Worthy* (Harmonia Mundi France, 1979), vinyl disc, HM 252/53, p. 3.
Although there is no evidence to reinforce the notion, there remains the remote possibility that George Worgan’s piano ‘was carefully carried down to the hut where the performance took place in order to add its voice to those of the actors’.195

How large was this hut? Based on the commonly assumed ratio of 0.23 square metres per person, an audience of ‘sixty persons of various descriptions who were assembled to applaud the representation’196 of The Recruiting Officer results in a total area of 23.23 square metres. Such a floor area seems large for a small convict hut, and there is only one early reference that could point to the existence of something larger. In April 1788 ‘a range of huts’ for women prisoners was begun west of the stream. These sound more like barracks than individual dwellings, but no dimensions are given. However, by November 1790 Parramatta boasted 32 convict barracks, apparently built as part of the expansion of the town in that year and housing 10 to 14 men each. These were ‘of 24 feet by 12 [7.3 metres by 3.6 metres] each, on a ground floor only, built of wattles plaistered with clay, and thatched’. They were distinguished from the ‘small huts’ where convict families of good character were permitted to reside and were divided into two rooms. In April 1792 the work in progress included ‘building brick huts at Sydney for convicts, consisting of two apartments, each hut being twenty-six feet [7.9 metres] in front, and fourteen feet [4.2 metres] in width, and intended to contain ten people’. Despite the paucity of the records the probability is that Sydney had been building cabbage-palm or wattle-and-daub convict barracks from April 1788, using the model then taken up by Parramatta … These … structures … could have had a floor space of 288–364 square feet [27–34 square metres], sufficient (if unencumbered) to accommodate the production.197

If Worgan’s piano was used in the performance of The Recruiting Officer, George Worgan would have been the one to have played it. Had this been the case, such a novel occurrence would probably not have gone undocumented. Watkin Tench only recalls that ‘the play of The Recruiting Officer was performed by a party of convicts’.198 There is no mention of surgeon Worgan playing his piano. Given the lack of evidence concerning all things musical in relation to the performance of The Recruiting Officer, one can only speculate that Worgan played his piano as part of the performance.

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195 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 168.
Australia’s earliest existing printed document is a playbill advertising an evening’s entertainment to be given ‘at the Theatre, Sydney, On Saturday, July 30, 1796’. The playbill ‘was printed by the Government Printer, convict George Hughes, using a small wooden screw press brought to Port Jackson by Captain Arthur Phillip’. The evening’s program comprised ‘Jane Shore (1714), a play by English dramatist Nicholas Rowe … recounting the tragedy of the fictionalized mistress of King Edward IV … The Wapping Landlady, a comic dance … depicting a rotund, capering barmaid and a pair of sailors … [and] The Miraculous Cure, a farce written by Brownlow Forde in 1771’.

The ‘comic dance’—most probably of a slapstick and ribald nature—was performed by George Hughes, the government printer, and convict Richard Evans; both of these gentlemen took on the roles of sailors. The painter W. Fowkes took on the role of the plump ‘Wapping Landlady’, Mother Doublechalk.

It is highly unlikely that the ‘comic dance’ would have been presented without accompanying music. It also seems unlikely that the same instruments that accompanied the dance would not also have been used within the context of the play and the farce that were part of the program.

That music is not specifically mentioned on Australia’s earliest playbill does not mean that musical instruments were not heard during the performance—after all, the use of musical instruments in a play was not regarded as being odd; no mention would need to have been made on the playbill of their use. A precedent may already have been set: it is possible that a similar situation had been contrived within the context of the performance given seven years before on 4 June 1789, of The Recruiting Officer.

If Worgan’s piano was used during the performance of The Recruiting Officer, and if, as Parker suggests, the instrument was ‘carefully carried down to the hut where the performance took place’, from where was the piano carried? Governor Phillip’s house? Tench recalls only that ‘the play of The Recruiting Officer was performed by a party of convicts’. He does not mention that Worgan’s piano was used within the context of the performance, nor does he shed any light on the instrument’s whereabouts.

On 4 June 1788, was Worgan’s piano housed in Government House? Given the uniqueness of Worgan’s piano in the colony, one would expect that at least

200 Ibid., p. 40.
201 Ibid., p. 40.
202 See Russell, The Playbill and its People, p. 16.
203 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 168.
one comment would have been made in relation to the instrument’s presence in Government House. Contemporaneous documents remain silent on the matter, suggesting that it is unlikely that Worgan’s piano was ever placed in Government House, and that it was not used to enrich any of the celebrations held on 4 June 1788.

A theatre—possibly located somewhere on the way to Parramatta—existed in Sydney in 1794. On Saturday, 16 January 1796, a playhouse with a capacity of between 180 and 200 people was opened with a program comprising Edward Moore’s (1712–57) tragedy *The Revenge* and Thomas Vaughan’s (fl. 1772–1820) *The Hotel*.

The construction of the playhouse in Sydney coincided with a boom in theatre-building throughout the British Isles and the British Empire, following the relaxation of regulations relating to theatre in the late 1780s … Theatres sprang up in garrison towns and ports across the British Empire, including Sydney, to entertain Britain’s soldiers and sailors. More than ever before, in the 1790s play-going was the dominant pastime for Britons across the globe and the theatre was the leading cultural industry.

It is clear that ‘despite cultural isolation and an uncertain future, the Australian stage was laying its foundations with resourceful optimism and a vibrant repertoire’.

**The Effect of the Weather on George Worgan’s Square Piano: Weather at Sydney Cove**

The extremes of temperature and rapid changes in humidity that attended the First Fleet during its journey from England to Sydney Cove may well have caused significant damage to Worgan’s piano (cracks in the soundboard and bridge of the 1780/86? Beck square piano bear witness to the effect of such climatic extremes). Following the piano’s arrival at Sydney Cove, the vagaries of the weather were equally as menacing.

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206 Ibid., p. 2. See also D. Collins and P. G. King, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, Volume I. With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country. To which are Added, Some Particulars of New Zealand; Compiled, by Permission, from the Mss. of Lieutenant-Governor King* (London: T. Cadell, jr & W. Davies, 1798), Project Gutenberg eBook, No. 12565, Chapter XXX, January, para. 7.
208 See ‘Soundboard: Condition and Bridge—Condition’, in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
The weather within which Worgan's piano found itself at Sydney Cove is described in detail by a rich body of accounts dating from between 1788 and 1793. These accounts are contained in the journals of government officials, as well as diaries, and include observations made by Lieutenant William Bradley, Captain David Collins, Lieutenant William Dawes, Second Captain John Hunter, Governor Arthur Phillip, Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench and Surgeon George Worgan. William Bradley’s ‘daily noon temperature measurements (Fº)’ were taken on board the *Sirius*, as it lay at anchor in Botany Bay (between 20–26 January 1788) and then in Port Jackson (Sydney Cove) (between 27 January to 13 September 1788). The Board of Longitude supplied the thermometer to Arthur Phillip. ‘Captain Phillip gave a receipt … [for the thermometer], promising to return [it] … to the Board (the dangers of the sea & other unavoidable accident excepted) at his return.’ The thermometer was located in the great cabin, where the timekeeper ‘for keeping the longitude’ was also kept. Bradley reports that William Dawes was ‘always to be present at the winding’ of the timekeeper, ‘at noon’. The reason for this is twofold. First, ‘as is well known … clocks … were crucial to accurate navigation … Secondly, [the timekeeper] had been made in response to the British state’s demand for accurate and robust instruments, and it was the duty of the state’s servants (Admiralty naval officers … ) to use them, test them, and protect them’.

A precedent had recently been set concerning the level of care that was considered appropriate for the security and protection of a shipboard timekeeper.

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210 Bradley, A Voyage to New South Wales, pp. 378–94.
211 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales: From its First Settlement in January 1788 to August 1801.
213 Hunter, An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island.
214 Phillip, The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay.
215 W. Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson … with an Introduction and Annotations by L. F. Fitzhardinge (Sydney: Angus & Robertson in Association with the Royal Australian Historical Society, 1961).
220 Ibid., Frame 11, April–May 1787.
221 Ibid.
In 1772—the year that Western Australia was ‘claimed for France and [King] Louis XV by the intrepid seafarer’ Louis François Marie Aleno de Saint Aloüarn (1738–72)\(^\text{223}\)—the Admiralty ordered Captain Cook to ensure that, within the context of his second voyage to the Pacific, the timekeeper should have three locks. The key for the first lock was to be ‘kept by the commander ... the [second] by the 1st lieutenant [and] ... the third by one of the [astronomers]’\(^\text{224}\).

Thus, as in the launch of a nuclear missile, no single person was entrusted with the use of ... [the timekeeper]; when [the machine] ... was to be wound and its dial to be read, all three men had to gather around the box that contained the watch, unlock its three separate locks, check each other's readings of the time that the watch displayed, and make sure that the watch was wound correctly.\(^\text{225}\)

At Sydney Cove, Dawes’ weather records comprise

up to six daily observations of temperature, barometric pressure, winds and weather remarks ... from [Sunday, 14] September 1788 until [Tuesday, 6] December 1791 ... a weather journal with comparable detail for this period anywhere in the world is a rare find. For the Indo-Australian region, Dawes’s weather journal is only matched by the English East India Company observations made in Madras (Chennai) ... from 1796 onwards.\(^\text{226}\)

Dawes’ measurements were taken at his observatory, which was ‘located at the western side of Sydney Cove, approximately where the southeastern pylon of Sydney Harbour Bridge stands today’.\(^\text{227}\) The location ‘became Point Maskelyne in honour of the astronomer royal. Ultimately it would bear the name of the young Lieutenant who worked there’: Dawes Point.\(^\text{228}\) This is ‘only 500 meters from the modern day Observatory Hill weather station’. Dawes’ observatory was made of wood and canvas, and ‘comprised several well ventilated rooms’, with a conical canvas, revolving roof (containing a canvas shutter for Dawes’ telescope) over an octagonal quadrant room.\(^\text{229}\) Such ‘a tent-observatory was a common portable building for eighteenth century scientific travellers’.\(^\text{230}\)

\(^{228}\) Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 23.
\(^{229}\) Gergis et al., ‘A Climate Reconstruction of Sydney Cove’, p. 84.
An adjacent wooden building served both as accommodation for Dawes 'when he stayed there overnight to make evening observations'\textsuperscript{231} and as a storeroom for instruments. 'It also had a shutter in the roof.'\textsuperscript{232}

None of the observatory's rooms had a fireplace, nor were they airtight or exposed to direct sunlight. Dawes' barometer was probably 'located inside with a thermometer attached, as was standard practice at the time'.\textsuperscript{233}

Lieutenant Dawes was an amateur astronomer.

He had been recommended for inclusion [in the First Fleet] … by the Astronomer Royal, Dr Nevill Maskelyne. He took with him a number of instruments provided by the Board of Longitude, and was particularly entrusted with instructions to observe a comet which was expected to appear during the voyage [to Botany Bay]. He … was intelligent and widely popular.\textsuperscript{234}

‘Dawes spent his time in his lonely little … [observatory,] where he … constantly peered through his telescope for a comet that never appeared.’\textsuperscript{235} Crucially, Dawes would have not only checked the chronometer, but also ‘established the local time so critical for navigational calculations. The new settlement was, thereby, drawn “into the world” of European sailing routes.’\textsuperscript{236} Dawes had already performed this task whilst the Sirius lay anchored in Rio de Janeiro Harbour. He calculated the local time by

- reading the sun and by fixing the exact time of an eclipse of Jupiter’s third moon and comparing it with the astronomical tables which gave Greenwich time for such eclipses. By this means, Dawes found that there had been only an insignificant loss of clock time since leaving Portsmouth.\textsuperscript{237}

‘Long afterwards, Dawes received £100 from the Board [of Longitude] “as an allowance for my observations made in New South Wales”.’\textsuperscript{238}

The climate measurements made by Lieutenants Bradley and Dawes are the earliest weather records kept in the colony.\textsuperscript{239} Comparison between Bradley's
and Dawes’ observations reveals an average difference of 2.1°C.\textsuperscript{240} The lower temperatures recorded by Bradley (on the \textit{Sirius}) during the short period of overlap with Dawes’ observations (14–30 September 1788) are due to the ‘influence of water on daytime temperatures recorded offshore’.\textsuperscript{241}

Unlike twenty-first-century meteorological instruments, late eighteenth-century thermometers did not have Stevenson screens. Stevenson screens ‘shield meteorological [devices] … from the influences of direct heat radiation and provide … ventilation, moderating the registration of extremes’.\textsuperscript{242} The absence of Stevenson screens on the meteorological instruments used by Bradley and Dawes resulted in data that are ‘useful for examining relative (rather than absolute) climate variations experienced during the [colony’s] first years’.\textsuperscript{243}

Cool and wet conditions predominated from January 1788 to winter 1790, and hot and dry weather, a drought, was more prevalent from about the middle of 1790. In all likelihood, this was a reflection of the [El Niño Southern Oscillation] … cycle at that time, initially a La Niña [above-average rainfall] and then the onset of a strong El Niño [drought].\textsuperscript{244}

\section*{1788}

Four days after arriving at Sydney Cove, on Wednesday, 30 January, Smyth remarked that ‘the heat during the whole night was almost intollerable’.\textsuperscript{245}

The next day, Thursday, 31 January 1788, First Lieutenant Ralph Clark noted ‘what a terrible night it was last of thunder lighting and rain was obliged to get out of my tent with nothing on but my shirt to slacking the tent poles … remarkably hott’.\textsuperscript{246}

Six days later, on Wednesday, 6 February, Smyth described a storm that was so extreme that Arthur Phillip and David Collins also mentioned it in their records: ‘one hour after their landing & before they h[d] adjust their tents in order for sleeping in them, there came on the most violent storm of lighteng thunder & rain I ever saw: the lighteng was incessant during the whole of the night, & I never heard it rain faster.’\textsuperscript{247}

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{240} For further discussion, see Gergis et al., 'A Climate Reconstruction of Sydney Cove', pp. 83–98.
\item \textsuperscript{241} Gergis et al., ‘The Influence of Climate on the First European Settlement of Australia’, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Ibid., p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Ibid., p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid., p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Smyth, ‘Journal of Arthur Bowes Smyth’, Part 136.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Clark, Journal Kept on the Friendship during a Voyage to Botany Bay and Norfolk Island, Thumbnail p. 14, Frame 120 (28 January – 1 February 1788).
\item \textsuperscript{247} Smyth, ‘Journal of Arthur Bowes Smyth’, Part 140.
\end{footnotes}
Captain David Collins, in February 1788, wrote: ‘The weather during the latter end of January and the month of February was very cold, with rain, at times very heavy, and attended with much thunder and lightning.’

In his journal (written during the six-month period from Sunday, 20 January to Friday, 11 July 1788), George Worgan describes a wide range of rapid temperature and humidity fluctuations.

Worgan observes:

> It was January that we arrived here which in this part of the globe is midsummer, the weather has been, for the greatest part of the time, serene, moderate & pleasant, & warm tho’ at times the vicissitudes from serenity to squalls of wind, rain, accompanied with terrible thunder & lightning are sudden, and violent and from a dry sultry heat, to a chilly dampness (occasioned by heavy night dews) considerable. The thermometer on shore in the shade has been up to 85 & 90 [29 and 32°C] at noon and by sunset has fallen to 50 or 60 [10 or 15°C], the fall of 25 or 30 degrees is common.

On the other hand, Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench felt (initially at least) that the climate was very desirable to live in. In summer the heats are usually moderated by the sea breeze, which sets in early; and in winter the degree of cold is so slight as to occasion no inconvenience; once or twice we have had hoar frosts and hail, but no appearance of snow. The thermometer has never risen beyond 84 [29°C], nor fallen lower than 35 [2°C], in general it stood in the beginning of February at between 78 and 74 [25 and 23°C] at noon … On the whole, (thunder storms in the hot months excepted) I know not any climate equal to this I write in. Ere we had been a fortnight on shore we experienced some storms of thunder accompanied with rain, than which nothing can be conceived more violent and tremendous, and their repetition for several days … led us to draw presages of an unpleasant nature. Happily, however, for many months we have escaped any similar visitations.

Tench’s ‘thermometer, whence [his] … observations were constantly made, was hung in the open air, in a southern aspect, never reached by the rays of the sun, at a distance of several feet above the ground’.

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248 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter 1, February, para. 33.
250 Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay, pp. 130–1.
251 Tench, 'A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson', p. 234.
Nor was the cold and particularly blustery winter of 1788 any less uncomfortable. Sometimes the temperature fell to 10ºC at noon.252 ‘August [1788] started with rain-storms so severe that all work had to stop for some days. The brick-kiln fell in under the torrent and a large number of bricks was destroyed.’253 In a letter to the Undersecretary of State in the Home Office, Sir Evan Nepean (1752–1822), Governor Phillip remarked that ‘this country requires warm clothing in the winter; the rains are frequent and the nights very cold’.254

At the very beginning of October 1788, William Bradley described weather that can only have been detrimental to the fabric and stability of Worgan’s piano: ‘We found very great & sudden changes in the degree of heat a shift of wind would rise or lower the thermometer 14º[f] in less than 10 minutes on board the Sirius & on shore considerably more.’255

Watkin Tench commented that: ‘In the close of the year 1788 … the thermometer has been known to stand at 50º [10ºC] a little before sunrise, and between one and two o’clock in the afternoon at above 100º [37.7ºC].’256

1789

Following this summer, the winter of 1789 evidenced extraordinary cold. William Dawes’ measurements reveal that, on Friday, 12 June, the temperature fell to –13.9ºC. (‘The lowest official June temperature recorded at Sydney’s Observatory Hill since 1876 is 9.7ºF [–12.38ºC], on June 13, 1899.’)257

1790

‘By September 1790, the settlers were fast realising just how unpredictable Australia’s weather could be.’258 ‘Drought-affected gardens yielded little … and the haul from the Harbour did not offset the hunger. “Fish is by no means plenty”, wrote a miserable Captain William Hill in July 1790 … “should one be offer’d for sale, ’tis by far too dear for an officers pocket.”’259 (The fish in the

253 Ibid., p. 155.
256 Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 130.
258 Gergis et al., ‘A Climate Reconstruction of Sydney Cove’, p. 94.
harbour had been disappearing since April 1788; this may have been due to the extreme El Niño Southern Oscillation event, which replaces ‘cold water with nutrient-poor warm currents’.

**Summer 1790–91**

Even though, in 1788, Tench initially thought the climate to be ‘very desirable’, during the summer of 1790, in December, the temperature soared to 40ºC. On Monday, 27 December 1790, Tench described the wind as feeling ‘like the blast of a heated oven’, and the heat as ‘intolerable’.

The extremes of temperature and humidity within which George Worgan’s piano sat during the summer of 1790–91 are described by Elizabeth Macarthur, in a letter written to her friend Bridget Kingdon dated Monday, 7 March 1791. Elizabeth reveals that the environment surrounding Worgan’s piano was (to say the least) extreme:

> The intense heat of the weather … has not permitted me to walk much during the summer. The months of December, and January, have been hotter than I can describe, indeed insufferably so. The thermometer rising from an 100 to 112 degrees [38–44ºC] is I believe 30 degrees above the hottest day known in England. The general heat is to be borne, but when we are oppress’d by the hot winds we have no other resource but to shut up ourselves in our houses and to endeavor to the utmost of our power to exclude every breath of air. This wind blows from the north, and comes as if from an heated oven. Those winds are generally succeeded by a thunder storm, so severe and awful, that it is impossible for one who has not been a witness to such a violent concussion of the elements to form any notion of it … it is so different from the thunder we have in England … a thunder storm has always the effect to bring heavy rain, which cools the air very considerably.

The heatwave summer of 1791 was even hotter. On Thursday, 10 February and Friday, 11 February 1791, David Collins observed that ‘the thermometer stood in the shade at 105º [40.6ºC]’.

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260 Sydney Harbour ‘still has one of the largest and most diverse range of fish in the world’. Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 3.
261 Ibid., p. 40.
262 Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 130.
265 Ibid., p. 234.
Two months later, in his journal entry for April 1791, Watkin Tench lamented: ‘I scarcely pass a week in summer without seeing [the thermometer] … rise to 100º [37.8ºC]; sometimes to 105º [40.6ºC]; nay, beyond even that burning altitude.’\(^{268}\) Tench observed that the weather ‘is changeable beyond any other I ever heard of … clouds, storms and sunshine pass in rapid succession … torrents of water sometimes fall … I have often seen large hailstones fall … Frequent strong breezes from the westward purge the air’.\(^{269}\) These conditions were all potentially disastrous for Worgan’s piano.

1791

In 1791, the thatched wattle-and-daub huts making up the majority of dwellings in the colony would have been very cold during the winter months. We know that Worgan’s piano was housed in one of these huts, in a dwelling occupied by John Macarthur (1767–1834) and his wife, Elizabeth.\(^{270}\) Because a fire in the colony’s blacksmith’s shop had resulted in the loss of many irreplaceable tools, a law was subsequently passed that made it illegal to have a chimney in any house that had a thatched roof.\(^{271}\) The Macarthurs’ thatched wattle-and-daub hut would therefore have had no fireplace for heating during winter.

During the winter of 1791, on Tuesday, 19 July, Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench wrote:

\[\text{At a quarter before four in the morning [the thermometer] … was at 26º \([-3ºC]\); at a quarter before six, at 24º \([-4ºC]\); at a quarter before seven, at 23º \([-5ºC]\); at seven o’clock, 22.7º \([-5.17ºC]\); at sunrise, 23º \([-5ºC]\) … Nothing but demonstration could have convinced me, that so severe a degree of cold ever existed in this low latitude. Drops of water on a tin pot, not altogether out of the influence of the fire, were frozen into solid ice, in less than twelve minutes.}\(^{272}\)

Only 11 weeks earlier, Worgan’s piano had been subjected to temperatures of 40.6ºC.\(^{273}\) The sheer extent of temperature fluctuation cannot have been favourable for Worgan’s fragile, atmospherically sensitive and vulnerable piano.

\(^{269}\) Ibid., p. 235.
\(^{271}\) See Parker, \textit{Arthur Phillip}, p. 155.
\(^{273}\) See ibid., p. 183.
1792

A year later, on Wednesday, 30 May 1792, Deputy Judge Advocate Richard Atkins (1745–1820) wrote: ‘Fine frosty weather and cold.’274 A few days later, on Sunday, 3 June, Atkins described conditions as: ‘Fine, with a hard frost at night.’275

Seven months had passed when, during the summer of 1792, Atkins wrote, on Wednesday, 5 December:

A burning westerly wind, obliged to keep the windows shut, unless we have rain soon the late crops of Indian corn will be totally burnt up. 10 o’clock a heavy gale of wind from the w.ward and as hot as the mouth of an oven. At 12 o’clock the ther[mometer]: in the shade 94º [34.4ºC] and in the air 114º [45.6ºC]. It begins to thunder.—Light showers.276

The Drought Breaks

From August 1794, the drought began to break. By January 1795, heavy rains began to soak the floodplains of the Hawkesbury River. By this stage, ‘more than 8,500 hectares of land around Sydney Cove had been appropriated by the colonists’.277

David Collins observed:

In consequence of the heavy rains, the river at the Hawkesbury rose many feet higher than it had been known to rise in other rains ... At Parramatta the damage was extensive; the bridge over the creek, which had been very well constructed, was entirely swept away; and the boats with their moorings carried down the river. At Sydney some chimneys in the new barracks fell in.278

John Macarthur, writing to Captain John Piper (1773–1851) at Norfolk Island, described the havoc caused by the ensuing floods:

A tremendous flood has swept away and spoilt almost all the wheat at the Hawkesbury and the crop of Indian corn at that settlement is entirely destroyed. Pigs innumerable have been drowned. In short, it is

274 Quoted in Cobley, Sydney Cove 1791–1792, p. 264.
275 Quoted in ibid., p. 268.
276 Quoted in ibid., p. 348.
278 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, etc. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter 2, para. 8.
a calamity that threatens the very existence of the colony and let what will be done to alleviate the general distress many unhappy families must be ruined.\textsuperscript{279}

‘The first major drought experienced by … European settlers had finally come to an end.’\textsuperscript{280} Food remained a major problem for the colony ‘until after the breaking of … the drought … when farming began to prosper’.\textsuperscript{281}

1796

The logbooks of the ships at Sydney Cove provide a reasonably clear picture of the summer weather for mid-January 1796. On Tuesday, 12 January, there was a violent storm with thunder and lightning. By the sixteenth the clouds were building up again and over the next few days the lightning returned, then squalls, developing into another violent storm. It was classic semicyclonic Sydney January, with the rain or threat of rain keeping down the temperatures a little, but … causing the most appalling humidity.\textsuperscript{282}

From the first days of the colony, the weather was ‘changeable beyond any other I ever heard of’.\textsuperscript{283} There can be little doubt that the climatic extremes to which Worgan’s piano was subjected during its first few years at Sydney Cove would have resulted in significant and potentially damaging levels of stress being imposed upon the instrument (especially upon the soundboard). At the very least, extreme changes in humidity levels and temperature would have resulted in some degradation of the instrument’s cloth and leather components.

Protective Measures for Pianos

In 1810, Captain Thomas Williamson recognised that the soundboards of pianos located in India—where an environment similar to that found at Sydney Cove may be encountered—were particularly vulnerable to extremes of temperature and humidity. As a protective measure, Williamson suggested vigilance and the use of heavy blankets:

\textsuperscript{279} Quoted in Wannan, \textit{Early Colonial Scandals}, pp. 88–9.
\textsuperscript{280} Gergis et al., ‘The Influence of Climate on the First European Settlement of Australia’, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{281} Dunn and McCreadie, ‘Australia’s First Fleet—1788’.
\textsuperscript{283} Tench, ‘A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson’, p. 235.
[M]uch may certainly be done ... by clamping the case with metal, both within and without; but ... this has little connection with the ... sounding-board; which cannot be much strengthened without considerably deteriorating the tone, and causing a piano to be ... condemned, for want of that richness which cannot be given to one whose vibrations are obstructed. The only chance is, to keep a piano well covered with blankets during the heats, as also in very damp weather, and to un-cloathe it gradually, when about to be opened for performance. By such precautions, the instrument may remain tolerably in tune, and not sustain much injury from the variations of seasons; after two or three years, the danger may be less; but it will be prudent never to relax in point of prevention, lest the instrument should suddenly fail.284

Sometimes, the insulating effect of heavy blankets was augmented by the type of covering advertised for sale in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser on Tuesday, 2 April 1839, as ‘rich Oil Cloth Covering for Piano Fortes’.285

Oilcloth was often made from cotton duck, linen or cotton canvas that had been impregnated with linseed oil. ‘The canvas could be coated in oils, waxes, clays, or other materials to make it waterproof, and then used to wrap valuable materials for sea journeys or to make weather resistant outerwear.’286 It was sometimes dyed, painted or printed in a limited range of colours prior to the oil treatment, but was principally ‘designed for function, rather than beauty’.287

Purpose-made oilcloth coverings for pianos acted as an impervious barrier to fluctuations in humidity, and made up the outermost layer of temperature-insulating blankets.

Captain Williamson also recommend that structural alterations be made to any pianos that were bound for extreme climates:

I have ... found that the instruments made for exportation could never be depended upon, unless clamped at every joint with plates of brass, and secured, in the more delicate parts, by means of battens well screwed and cemented to the sound board. Experience has satisfied me,

285 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 2 April 1839, Vol. 37, p. 3.
287 Smith and Harris, ‘What is an Oilcloth?’. See also Amistaadt, ‘Making Oil Cloth’.
that the pianos most appropriate for hot climates are made by Clementi, Kirckman, and Tomkinson,\textsuperscript{288} at their respective manufacturies in London.\textsuperscript{289}

For some years, Clementi added metal-strengthened corners to instruments that were destined for Russia; this provided protection against the potentially destructive expansion and contraction resulting from the overheating commonly encountered in Russian salons. The only extant Clementi ‘Russian model’ grand piano is currently part of the keyboard instrument collection owned by Mr Ralph Schureck, Berowra Heights, Sydney; the piano was made in ca 1806–10, and was taken out of Russia just prior to the Napoleonic invasion of 1812.\textsuperscript{290} During the mid twentieth century, the only other extant Clementi ‘Russian model’ grand piano was the instrument that had belonged to the composer Mikhail Glinka (1804–57); Glinka’s Clementi piano was destroyed by the SS, for no reason other than spite, during World War II.\textsuperscript{291}

In the 1830s, perhaps with extreme climates and certainly sound in mind, Ignaz Pleyel made square pianos whose soundboards comprised three very thin crossed layers (rather than a single layer), the top layer being of mahogany.\textsuperscript{292}

The first mention in Sydney of a piano specifically made for extreme climates is found in an advertisement printed in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* dated Saturday, 14 December 1816:

\begin{quote}
To be sold by auction by Mr. Bevan, at the Residence of the late judge advocate, on Thursday the 19th of December, at eleven precisely, the very valuable household furniture … Also, a very superior toned fashionable piano forte, made by Broadwood, particularly suited for a hot climate.\textsuperscript{293}
\end{quote}

The next mention occurs 22 years later, in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 26 May 1838: ‘A handsome Spanish mahogany round cornered ornamented square pianoforte, with grand piano touch, adapted to any extreme climate by late improvements and metallic plates.’\textsuperscript{294}

\textsuperscript{288} This surname is an error (sometimes observed in the literature), and should be ‘Tomkison’. Thomas Tomkison (fl. 1798–1851) was an important London piano maker, who built more than 9000 pianos. See Clinkscale, *Makers of the Piano*, Vol. 2, p. 378.
\textsuperscript{290} See ‘Grand Piano by Clementi & Co. (London, ca 1806–10, Serial Number 526)’, in Appendix J, Volume 2 of this publication.
\textsuperscript{291} This information is derived from a conversation held between the author and Ralph Schureck.
\textsuperscript{292} I am indebted to Gavin Gostelow for this information. Gostelow’s relatively small but significant keyboard instrument collection is housed at his home in Canberra.
\textsuperscript{293} *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 14 December 1816, Vol. 14, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{294} *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 26 May 1838, Vol. 36, p. 4.
There is no evidence that George Worgan had any radical structural modifications incorporated into his piano to protect it from climatic extremes prior to his departure with the First Fleet. Perhaps he selected the instrument from already completed stock at Frederick Beck’s workshop. And yet, the uniqueness of the campaign-furniture-inspired hinged cabriole legs of Worgan’s piano allow for the supposition that he requested the legs to be included prior to his taking delivery of the instrument. We may never know why Worgan did not at the same time commission additional structural elements to be incorporated into his piano in order to protect it from damage resulting from climactic extremes. Perhaps his reticence was based on financial considerations.

Worgan cannot have known about the atmospheric conditions at Sydney Cove. He would, however, have been aware of the sudden changeability of weather at sea, and would have heard about the extremes of temperature and humidity in India (which had been adversely influencing the structural integrity and sound of harpsichords there for more than 50 years). In London, not only would there have been talk concerning the ‘impregnable monopoly’ on trade enjoyed by the prominent and influential East India Company (‘also known as John Company’), but also tales of life in India would have been recounted by those who had spent time there.

The return home was an integral part of the Anglo-Indian experience. Most employees of the [East India] Company went out with the intention of making sufficient money to live in comfort after their return to England. It was by no means unusual … to make a second trip to India to replace a lost fortune. Few … thought the possibility of remaining in India an option worthy of consideration.

By the 1780s,

the Calcutta piano trade was founded on well-established lines of supply. London piano makers would sell, sometimes at a discount for bulk purchases, to officers of East India Company ships … who had

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295 Protective structural elements evolved during the nineteenth century. Worgan’s piano was a typical late eighteenth-century instrument, and therefore did not incorporate structural modifications designed to protect it from climatic extremes. In late 2014, an extremely rare example of a ‘tropicalized’ eighteenth century square piano by Longman & Broderip, serial number 435, was sold in England. ‘There is no veneer nor inlay used on this piano—nothing decoratively extraneous that could cause problems in a hostile climate. There are a number of strategically placed bolts/fixings, reinforcing the piano’s construction’. Email from Ian Pleeth to the author, 24 July 2014. ‘This piano was used by the BBC in its … period production “Captain Collins”; the story of the First Fleet and the transportation of the first convicts to Australia in 1788’. ‘Square Piano by Longman & Broderip Serial Number 435’, in Antique Keyboard Instruments (n.d.).


purchased an ‘investment’ in a Company voyage. Each officer had an allowance of space on his ship, and his ‘investment’ would be stored during the voyage … Upon arrival in Calcutta … officers would notify by post those for whom they had specific commissions, and then an extraordinary scramble would take place, as they sought to off-load their investments … For artifacts such as pianos and harpsichords, a quick sale was absolutely essential, because of the speed with which [owing to climactic extremes] the product could become unsaleable.\textsuperscript{299}

In 1810, Captain Thomas Williamson observes that the climate in India ‘is unfavourable to instruments of every kind, especially to pianos, and offers a most formidable bar to the indulgence of a musical ear’.\textsuperscript{300}

At the time Worgan purchased his piano, all London piano makers (and doubtless Worgan himself) would have been aware of the climactic extremes found both at sea and in India. ‘Everyone knew what a few years in India could do to the tone of instruments.’\textsuperscript{301} Based on this knowledge, Worgan may have privately entertained concerns that the as-yet-unknown weather at Botany Bay would prove to be hazardous, if not disastrous, for his new piano.

The crudely repaired cracks in and downwards movement of the soundboard of Worgan’s 1780/86\textsuperscript{2} Beck square piano, as well as the crack in the curve of the bridge, testify to the deleterious effects of the weather on the instrument.\textsuperscript{302} It is not known if these cracks appeared during the voyage from England to Sydney Cove, during the first few years of the instrument’s life in the colony or at a later date.

\textsuperscript{299} Ibid., pp. 19–20.
\textsuperscript{300} Williamson, \textit{East India Vade-Mecum}, Vol. 1, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{301} Woodfield, \textit{Music of the Raj}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{302} See ‘Soundboard: Condition’ and ‘Bridge: Condition’ in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
Chapter 8

Some of the Music Heard during the Fledgling Colony’s First Two Years

Despite the fact that characteristically rapid changes in temperature and humidity levels at Sydney Cove may have played havoc with the wooden components of any musical instruments that had travelled with the First Fleet, the colony, from its inception, had music.

The Official Reading of Governor Phillip’s Commission, 7 February 1788

As early as Thursday, 7 February 1788—13 days after the fleet’s arrival at Sydney Cove—there was music at the official reading of Governor Phillip’s commission. On that occasion, fifes and drums were probably used (three marine fife and drummers had travelled on board the *Sirius*)¹ when ‘all the officers of guard took post in the marine battalion, which was drawn up, and marched off the parade with music playing, and colours flying, to an adjoining ground, which had been cleared for the occasion’.² It is not known specifically what tune was piped as the marine battalion was marched off the parade ground.

In his journal, George Worgan describes the music that was heard within the context of the ceremony: ‘The battalion fired 3 volleys of small-arms, the band playing the first part of God Save the King, between each volley.’³

Exactly what Worgan means by the term ‘band’ is unclear. In England, military regiments were commonly associated with particular kinds of musical activity. A typical British regiment comprised

- eight infantry companies and a company of grenadiers. Each company was allowed two drummers who beat calls, kept cadence during marches, and signaled formations and commands via drumbeat patterns during battles … In addition to its drummers, the grenadier company had two fifers, usually boys, who played popular airs over the drummers’ cadence during marches. These juvenile fifers had no role in battle.

² Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 65.
³ Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon*, ‘Sat 9th’ (February 1788).
Officially, no other regimental music was authorized; however, most regiments also had bands of wind instruments, privately paid for ... by regimental officers. Such bands usually contained two oboes, two bassoons, two clarinets, and two horns.4

The French Revolution boosted the position of the wind band, now employed for public singing and other republican entertainment. Napoleon later drew upon the excellent French wind players in his military bands and directed the creation of new cavalry bands which relied mostly on brass instruments. English, Austrian and German bands were influenced profoundly by the French musicians who, like them, often played in the front lines to inspire the soldiers to fight.5

In England, military tradition dictated that each regiment had its own fifes and drums (within the British military musical context, fifes and drums were ubiquitous; daily, regimental drums ‘beat the reveille at 6.00am and tapto at 8.00 or 9.00pm’).6 For their troubles, drummers were paid an additional three-quarters of a penny per day.7

The First Fleet travelled with four Royal Marine regiments; three of these regiments had nicknames: ‘The Jollies’, ‘Boot Necks’ and ‘Blue Bottles’.8 If military norms had been upheld, these regiments would have had 18 drummers and two fifers each—which means that when simultaneously on parade, the four regiments may have been inspired by the extraordinary sound created by 72 drummers and eight fifers. There is no evidence supporting the existence either of such numbers or of such sonic opulence in relation to the ‘band’ at Sydney Cove. It is known, however, that three marine fife and drummers travelled to Sydney Cove on board the Sirius.9

At the official reading of Governor Phillip’s commission on 7 February 1788, and as the ‘band’ played the first part of ‘God Save the King’ between each of the three volleys of small arms,10 the (eight?) fifes of the regimental band(s) were used for the interspersions of ‘God Save the King’.

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5 Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, p. 144.
10 Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon*, ‘Sat 9th’ (February 1788).
This context would not have been the first within which European musical
sounds had been released into the Antipodean environment. In 1773, Captain
Cook ‘set out to impress natives onshore at Dusky Sound [New Zealand] by
asking “the bagpipes and fife to be played and the drum to be beat”’.11

This flatulently rattling flourish does not represent the only connection
between music and Captain Cook. James Burney (1750–1821), the musicologist and
eldest son of the music historian Charles Burney, ‘sailed on Cook’s second and
third naval voyages, learning Polynesian and recording Polynesian music in his
journal to help solve the problem [of] whether harmony and counterpoint was
understood in the South Seas’.12 Prior to the commencement of Cook’s 1772–74
journey around the world, Cook visited Charles Burney at his home at Queen’s
Square, Bloomsbury. Burney made a note of the visit:

I had the honour of receiving the illustrious Captain Cooke to dine with
me in Queens-Square, previously to his second voyage round the world.

Observing upon a table Bougainville’s Voyage Autour du Monde, he
turned it over, and made some curious remarks on the illiberal conduct
of that circumnavigator towards himself, when they met and crossed
each other; which made me desirous to know, in examining the chart of
M. de Bougainville, the several tracks of the two navigators; and exactly
when they had crossed or approached each other.

Captain Cooke instantly took out a pencil from his pocket-book, and
said he would trace the route, which he did in so clear and scientific
a manner, that I would not take fifty pounds for the book. The pencil
marks having been fixed by skim milk, will always be visible.13

It is not known if music was made as a part of this convivial gathering. We do
know, however, that 16 years later, during the very earliest days of the colony
at Sydney Cove, military music filled the air.

‘The Rogue’s March’, 9 February 1788

Two days after the ceremonial reading of Governor Phillip’s commission, fifes
and drums would have been used as accompaniment to the punishment and
public disgrace of a serviceman and his accomplices. In fact, apart from ‘God
Save the King’.

11 Macgibbon, Piano in the Parlour, p. 9. Macgibbon takes the quotation from: Beaglehole, The Journals of
Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery, Vol. 2.
the earliest piece of music known by name to have been performed in Australia is *The Rogue’s March*, played by a marine fifer and drummer ‘at the drumming out’ on Saturday, 9 February 1788 of a sailor, carpenter and a cabinboy belonging to the *Prince of Wales*, ‘who had been caught in the female convicts’ tents’.14

In a rough colony devoid of any entertainment whatsoever, ‘fornication was one of the few joys more or less readily available’.15 The violating sailor, carpenter and cabinboy ‘were drummed through the camp with their hands tied behind them, the boy dressed in petticoats’.16

‘The Rogue’s March’, a lively melody in 6/8 meter (Plate 65), was traditionally played to accompany the ritual dishonouring of military or civil offenders. Throughout the ritual, the march would be played by the largest number of fifers and drummers that could be assembled. The offender, with his hands bound behind him and wearing his coat inside-out as a mark of shame, would be stripped of rank, insignia and buttons, and marched to the entrance of the encampment. The final disgrace would come in the form of a farewell kick in the behind from the youngest drummer.


Source: Transcribed by the author.

14 Rogers, ‘Australia’s First Piano, Clavierübung’.
The King’s Birthday Celebration, 4 June 1788

Four months after the musical drumming out of the hapless sailor, carpenter and cabinboy, Governor Phillip hosted a king’s birthday celebration dinner at Government House, on Wednesday, 4 June 1788. George Worgan mentions that there was background music at this function. Governor Phillip had previously given a general invitation to the officers to dine with him; and about 2 o’clock we sat down to a very good entertainment … In the course of the afternoon the Governor had occasion to step into an adjacent room, when; it was intimated by some one to pay him a flattering compliment, and every gentleman standing up & filling his glass, we all with one voice gave, as the toast, the Governor and the settlement, we then gave three huzza’s, as we had done indeed after every loyal toast, the band playing the whole time.17

That Worgan was included in Governor Phillip’s invitation to ‘the officers to dine with him’ has implications for Worgan’s seemingly unusual status in the colony. Normally, Worgan, as a warrant officer, would not have been classified as an officer, and would therefore have been ineligible to attend the Governor’s dinner. It appears that uncommon attitudes existed in New South Wales.18

In order to celebrate the King’s birthday, the convention of the day dictated that in the afternoon, and stretching into the evening, members of the ruling elite gathered, by invitation, at Government House for a formal dinner, with toasts and music. In 1788, and apparently until the numbers became too great, the invitation extended ‘to all the officers not on duty, both of the garrison and His Majesty’s ships’.19

Repertoire Played at Social Functions

We do not know specifically what repertoire was played during such social occasions. Perhaps the music comprised strathspeys, cotillions (the forerunner of the quadrille), country dances, minuets, ‘sentimentally homesick airs and martial songs of a conventionally patriotic kind’.20 It is unlikely that a waltz would have been played as part of the King’s birthday celebration dinner hosted

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17 Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon, ‘Wed. 4th’ (June 1788).
18 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
20 Covell, Australia’s Music. Quoted in Rogers, ‘Australia’s First Piano, Clavierübung’.
by Governor Phillip on 4 June 1788. Seven years later, in England, the waltz (considered indecent) and its effect received a mention in The Times of Sunday, 25 January 1795: ‘The balls at Southampton are exceedingly lively, and well-attended. The young ladies are particularly favourable to a German dance, called the Volse: for squeezing, hugging, &c., it is excellent in its kind, and more than one lady has actually fainted in the middle of it.’\(^{21}\) In London, attitudes to the waltz were not as liberal as those in Southampton: ‘the waltz was not accepted in London until 1812 because it was regarded as indelicate.’\(^{22}\) On 4 June 1788, at Sydney Cove, any waltz heard as part of the background music provided for the King’s birthday celebration dinner may well have offended the sensibilities of those present.

**The Quadrille in Sydney**

Quadrilles—‘a dance for four couples in square formation that allowed for many [intricate] variations’\(^{23}\) —were not heard, danced or seen in Sydney (or in Europe) until the early nineteenth century.

Sydney enjoyed the onset of the new vogue of the quadrille almost in tandem with London, where the dance had been introduced to Almack’s famous dance club\(^{24}\) around 1815,\(^{25}\) by the leader of the orchestra James Paine … both Almacks and the quadrille were still being mentioned as bywords of fashion over a decade later.\(^{26}\)

The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 28 October 1820 contains the first mention in the Sydney press of a quadrille:

> French language and dancing.—M. Girard, of Paris, presenting compliments to the families of Sydney, most respectfully informs them that he gives instruction in his native language, and also in quadrilles,

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\(^{24}\) Murray (*An Elegant Madness*, p. 48) describes Almack’s as ‘The Seventh Heaven of the Fashionable World’.

\(^{25}\) The quadrille ‘was introduced in France around 1760, and later in England around 1808 by a woman known as Miss Berry. It was introduced to the Duke of Devonshire and made fashionable in 1813.’ ‘Quadrille’, in *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia* (n.d.).

waltzes, &c. all kind of elegant dances, at Mr. Nott’s Academy, 44, Castlereagh-street; and those families, who desire it, may be waited on at their own houses.27

Three years later, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 4 September 1823 reported that quadrilles had been danced within the context of a grand social occasion:

On Thursday last, the 26th Ultimo, a splendid ball was given by William Cox, Esq. of Clarendon, near Windsor, which was attended by a large party of ladies and gentlemen from Sydney, and other parts of the country. The town of Windsor exhibited the day previous, and on the day the ball was given, a most pleasing sight of carriages, of all descriptions, passing through it.—The ball-room was tastefully fitted up; the newest quadrilles danced, and country dances gone through, with an unusual degree of spirit and liveliness, occasioned by the excellent music provided.28

The next year, on Thursday, 1 July 1824, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* published an account of a sumptuous ball hosted by the physician, banker and landowner Sir John Jamison (1776–1844). At this gathering, quadrilles were danced with enthusiasm:

The ball and supper, given by Sir John Jamison on the evening of Thursday last, was of the most fascinating and splendid description. The ball-room was fancifully fitted up for the occasion. The company flocked in from 8 to 9: the carriages were rolling rapidly down our streets between those hours. Captain Piper, with his usual zeal in these cases, had his own band in attendance upon the noble host. Dancing, consisting of country dances, quadrilles, and Spanish waltzes, presently commenced, and was maintained with the utmost animation till midnight, when the guests were ushered in to the supper-room, which was entitled to the palm for superior taste in the disposition of the various arrangements that were most happily executed. All the rare and choice delicacies that Australia possesses, whether natural or imported, decorated the festive board, which groaned beneath the weight of excessive luxuriance: upwards of 170 sat down to supper.29

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‘M. Girard, of Paris’ continued to instruct those fashionable members of Sydney society who desired to master the technical intricacies associated with dancing the quadrille (the difficulty of the dance’s steps ensured that ‘there was a long preparatory training with great lots of temper, and loss of fiddle-strings on the part of the teacher’). On Thursday, 28 April 1825, ‘Monsieur Girard’ advertised in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*:

French language and dancing. Quadrilles, country dances, waltzes, &c. taught at No. 4, Macquarie-Street.

Monsieur Girard, in presenting his sincere Thanks to the Public for the very liberal encouragement which he has uniformly experienced, begs to suggest the advantage which ladies and gentlemen would derive, by being furnished, a few days previous to any ball, with select quadrilles, &c. in exercising which mistakes would be effectually prevented. As M. G. has a thorough knowledge of the manner in which French and English balls are conducted, he respectfully offers his services for this purpose, and will undertake to conduct them in the finest style.

N. B.—As many ladies and gentlemen, who are somewhat advanced in life, may have, from a variety of reasons, neglected to acquire a proper knowledge of dancing, M. G. would undertake to teach such, in three months, so that they might appear in a ball-room with perfect grace.

In the same newspaper (and on the same page), an advertisement appears in which the first quadrilles composed for Australia are mentioned:

Mr. Reichenberg [b. 1789], Music Master of the 40th Regiment, respectfully informs the ladies and gentlemen of the colony, that he has composed a first set of quadrilles for Australia, with proper figures adapted to it, for the pianoforte, flute, or violin; also, for a full band. The same may be had in manuscript, from Mr. Reichenberg, at the Military Barracks; or at Mr. Campbell’s, No. 93, George-street, by giving one day’s notice.—Price 6s.

The ‘one day’s notice’ mentioned towards the end of the advertisement allowed for copying from the original.

Girard’s strength of purpose catalysed a pronounced change in Sydney’s cultural life. By the late 1820s, the quadrille had become a popular ballroom dance. Newspaper reports reveal the dance’s journey towards popularity. On

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30 *The Empire*, 24 October 1863, No. 3754 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 3.
32 Ibid. Robert Campbell was Sydney’s first dedicated music retailer.
Wednesday, 1 March 1826, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* was able to report: ‘Yesterday evening His Excellency and Mrs. Darling33 gave a splendid ball and supper to a large party of civil and military officers, and other gentlemen, and their ladies. The music consisted principally of French quadrilles, which were tastefully executed by the Pandean Band.’34

Approximately two months later, on Wednesday, 26 April 1826, Governor Darling and his wife hosted a ball at Government House in celebration of the King’s birthday. The ball ‘commenced with quadrilles [which] … were the favourites of the ladies, and the Band of the 3d (Buffs) exquisitely performed them. The ladies skipt “on the light fantastic toe” with all imaginable grace and spirit. It was supposed that 200 individuals occupied the saloon at one time.’35

By 1829, nine years after Girard brought the quadrille to Sydney, the dance had become an accepted part of Sydney society’s balletic activities. For example, *The Sydney Monitor* of Saturday, 25 April 1829 describes a ball held in celebration of the King’s birthday: ‘Jockey and Racing Club Ball.—Sixty or seventy ladies, and … the same number of gentlemen, all testified their love for sociabilit[y] by assembling at the Royal Hotel, George-street, to dance quadrilles, and enjoy the pleasures of conversation.’36

Who was the extraordinary Girard, the man who appears to have introduced the quadrille to Sydney society?

**Mr Girard**

‘Mr Girard, of Paris’,37 was the French-born convict ‘Francis Girard, *alias* de Lisle’38 (1793–1859), who, eight months before he first advertised his services as a quadrille instructor,39 had received a sentence of transportation for seven years40 ‘for stealing two gold watches from a London jeweller’.41 Girard arrived

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33 That is, Governor Sir Ralph Darling (1772–1858) and his wife, Eliza.
37 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 4 September 1823, p. 3.
39 See *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 28 October 1820, p. 2.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

in Sydney on Friday, 22 September 1820, on the transport ship *Agamemnon*.42 Four and a half years later, on Wednesday, 20 April 1825, Girard was granted a conditional pardon.43

The influence of Girard’s French cultural roots looms large within the context of his life in Sydney. Shortly after his conditional pardon, Girard brought his endeavours as a dancing teacher to a close, and became a baker. He is mentioned in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 10 November 1825, as having appeared in court for selling underweight bread: ‘F Girard, baker, in Hunter-street, who had exposed for sale certain loaves, deficient in weight in the aggregate 14 ounces and a half, was fined in the mitigated penalty of two shillings and sixpence per ounce, amounting to £1 2s. 6d.’44

Despite this embarrassing lapse in integrity, Girard eventually gained not only the contract ‘to supply all the military and convict establishments in Sydney with bread’,45 but also ‘contracts to supply [bread for] the troops and convicts at Parramatta and Liverpool’.46 Girard’s bread-baking inclination proved to be so lucrative that he ‘erected a windmill on Woolloomooloo Hill (later Kings Cross) for the milling of grain’.47

In September 1826, Girard opened ‘a coffee-room, *á la Francaise*.48 On Wednesday, 13 September 1826, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* reports:

> We are glad to see that Mr. Girard, whose enterprising character is pretty generally known amongst us, is to open a coffee-room, in the French style, for the reception of the Sydney beaux and belles, where will be had not only coffee at any hour of the day, but comfits, jellies, sweet wines, and fruits in their seasons. There is little doubt but Mr. Girard will experience every encouragement, as something of the kind which he is about to undertake, is really wanted in our Australian capital.49

Apart from coffee, Girard also offered ‘hot French rolls’50 for the delectation of his customers.

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42 See Brown, *Agamemnon 1820*; ‘Convict Ships—A*, in *Free Settler or Felon?* (n.d.).
45 Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.
47 Ibid.
48 Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.
50 Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.
Two years later, the 1828 census records Girard as being ‘the proprietor of the Sydney Hotel,’ specialising in superior French wines. That there was a demand for ‘superior French wines’ indicates that Sydney had become a place where a certain degree of epicurean sophistication could be found. On Saturday, 3 March 1827, Christiana Brooks (née Passmore), writing from her home at ‘Denham Court, a property near Liverpool’, described Sydney: ‘This place which 10 or 12 years ago was a quiet country looking, thoroughly English looking town, is now a crowded bustling business like city—the shops are well supplied generally speaking.’

By 1837, Girard ‘was plying the North Coast of New South Wales with his three ships; the primary trade being the cutting, transporting, and milling of cedar’. Subsequently, Girard was influential in opening up the Clarence River to settlers. After 1844 he became a pastoralist specialising in sheep and bought the Branga Park Station near Walcha. The willow trees planted by Girard along the banks of the Cobrabald River, flowing through Branga Park, are said to have come from seedlings imported from St Helena, where Napoleon died in exile.

It appears that the man who introduced the quadrille to Sydney’s social elite was a man of many talents; he was not only a convict, but also a French-language teacher, dancing master, baker, coffee-shop owner, publican, wine connoisseur, shipping entrepreneur and pastoralist. Girard also ‘influenced the naming of Napoleon Street, Darling Harbour’.

At the King’s birthday celebration dinner held at Government House on Wednesday, 4 June 1788, the quadrille, however, had not yet become a part of social gatherings.

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51 A hand-coloured lithograph entitled The View from the Sydney Hotel, by Augustus Earle (1793–1838), dated about 1825, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an6065557). As the only professional artist in Sydney, Earle was the first ‘to clearly portray chained prisoners working in the open air supervised by armed guards’. In this, ‘he was an exception, as others strove to present an Arcadian view of Australia’. Menezes and Bandeira, O Rio De Janeiro na Rota dos Mares do Sul, p. 220.
52 Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.
53 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 81.
55 Clarke, ‘Australian Colonial Dance: François Girard’.
‘National’ Airs

The selection of repertoire usually heard as background music—that is, music that was not intended to accompany dancing—would have been influenced by the fashion for ‘national airs’, specifically Scottish and Welsh airs. A distinctly English national musical style had been recognisable since the early eighteenth century. The famous German composer Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), for example, in his libretto for his lost cantata ‘Wie? Ruhet ihr, versteckte Saiten? [How? Rests Her Hidden Strings?]’,\(^{58}\) described the nature of several contemporaneous national musical styles:

The flattery of Italy’s pieces,
The unrestrained liveliness
That flows from French songs;
Britain’s leaping, obliging nature.\(^{59}\)

The ‘leaping’ nature of British music arises from idiosyncratic melodic contour, and is an integral aspect of much of Britain’s folk music (this is especially so for Scottish folk music). Telemann’s reference to the ‘obliging nature’ of British music may refer to the following commonly encountered British musical characteristics:

1. dance-like regular phrasing without sequential extension
2. an endearing tunefulness achieved through the use of simple and affecting melody.\(^{60}\)

‘Of the folk-songs heard in London the most popular seem to have been sentimental Scots strophic ballads of disappointed or lost love.’\(^{61}\) Already in 1755, the Geneva-born French enamellist Jean André Rouquet (1701–58), in his L’état des Arts, en Angleterre (The State of the Arts in England), had observed:

Les Anglois aiment préférablement les compositions tendres, pathétiques ou languissantes; ils aiment moins celles qui sont plus legeres, & qui expriment plus de gaieté.

[The English generally prefer compositions which are tender, pathetic and languid; they are not nearly so fond of those that are lighter, and more expressive of gaiety.]\(^{62}\)

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\(^{58}\) (TVWV 20:13)


\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 133.

Typically, Scottish ‘airs’ revealed

1. drone basses
2. the idiosyncratic ‘Scotch snap’\(^{63}\)
3. ‘distinctive modal twists’\(^{64}\)
4. fermatas\(^{65}\) on climactic notes.

Throughout the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, Scottish and Welsh airs remained popular in England. Such airs were also popular with the colonists in Sydney. That Scottish airs remained popular in Sydney is suggested by the fact that in 1821, the Sydney auctioneers ‘McQueen and Atkinson offered Captain Simon Fraser’s [1773–1852] collection of [232] Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland, and the Isles, recently published [in 1816] in Edinburgh. The same work was also on sale at the Hobart Town Gazette office.’\(^{66}\) ‘Hobart … was often at the forefront of colonial culture from the 1820s’;\(^{67}\) ‘a balanced colonial microcosm of late Georgian British culture supported sophisticated architecture, furniture makers, silversmiths, frame makers, saddle makers … portrait painters’\(^{68}\) and a surprising number of musicians. This was ‘largely due to the fact that until the settling of the Swan River colony [Western Australia] in 1829, all merchant ships from Asia and Europe came to Sydney via Hobart first’.\(^{69}\)

Sometimes a flute was used to accompany the singing of national airs. For example, in

\(^{63}\) A two-note rhythmic figure in which the first note is of a shorter value than the second. The first note is dynamically emphasised. For example, within the context of a crotchet (quarter note) rhythmic value, the Scotch snap comprises a semiquaver (a sixteenth note) followed by a dotted quaver (a dotted eighth note). The semiquaver (sixteenth note) is dynamically emphasised. A well-known song whose melodic line includes many Scotch snaps is ‘Comin’ through the Rye’.

\(^{64}\) McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn, p. 134. In Scottish ‘airs’, the inclusion of intervals derived from modes (a ‘mode’ is particular type of scale) produces a characteristically exotic and emotive ‘flavour’. As typical examples, four well-known songs with modal melodic lines are: ‘Are You Going to Scarborough Fair?’, ‘Black is the Colour of My True Love’s Hair’, ‘Whay, Hay, and Up She Rises’ and ‘When Johnny Comes Marching Home’. See ‘Mode’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.

\(^{65}\) The notational symbol representing a fermata—commonly called a ‘pause sign’—comprises a dot with an arch-like semicircle around it. The fermata symbol is usually placed above (rather than below) a note, a chord, a rest or a bar line. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the performative meaning of a fermata was determined by its musical context. Within the context of the performance of Scottish airs, a fermata indicates that an elongation of the rhythmic value of a note should occur; the extent of elongation is left to the performer’s discretion.


\(^{68}\) J. Jones, Robert Dowling: Tasmanian Son of Empire (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2010), p. 15.

\(^{69}\) J. Hawkins, ‘Transported to the Colonies: A Look at High Society in Van Diemen’s Land through the Decorative Arts’, in World of Antiques & Art (Sydney: André Jaku, 2012), No. 82 (February–August), p. 69.
the last years of the eighteenth century the wife of an officer at Parramatta wrote of dining at the home of Sir John Jamison, near Nepean … After dinner the guests sat in the garden of the house and listened to ‘sweet airs sung by a young lady to the accompaniment of a pipe’.70

More commonly, however, pianos or harps were used to accompany the voice or other instruments in Scottish and Welsh airs—airs such as the evergreen and trendy ‘Bonnie Wee Thing, ‘I Hae Laid a Herring in Salt’ and ‘Fy Gar Rub Her o’er with Straw’. ‘Who can now guess the appeal of … “The Tight Little Fellow that wears the Blue Jacket” or the wisely anonymous glee “Palala, sum, nootka gunza”[?] … “Dear Boy Throw that Icicle Down” must surely have moved the coolest listener.’71

The popularity of Scottish and Welsh airs is probably bound up with social identity. For late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century bourgeois listeners, the performance of a national air helped to create ‘a temporary, socially distinct alternative self’, the effectiveness of whose identity depended ‘on its clear distance from the “real” self, the security of which [was] … reinforced by contrast with the briefly imagined one’, which was suggested by a music whose roots lay in folk culture. A national air could reassure bourgeois listeners ‘of what they were not’.72

On the other hand, a national air may have helped to create both nostalgia and a yearning sense of Britain, the nurturing mother country whose rich variety of music traditions included Scottish and Welsh airs.

Between 1788 and the end of the 1790s, in Sydney—and within the context of any given social occasion—the performance of Scottish and Welsh airs may have been interspersed with arrangements of works by popular composers such as the violinist Pietro Castrucci (1679–1752), Gluck, Händel, Haydn, Schobert and Vanhal.

In London, between 1695 and the 1770s, ‘a number of collections of band music, consisting of popular marches and airs, were published … with titles like XXIV Favourite Marches in Five Parts, as They are Perform’d by His Majesty’s Foot and Horse Guards (London, 1770)’.73 Perhaps, at Governor Phillip’s King’s birthday celebration dinner held on 4 June 1788, the band played selections from such a collection.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the boundaries between ““classical” and vernacular musics were less strictly policed than later in the [nineteenth] century … a good deal of what might now be claimed as

70 McKinlay, Sweet & Simple Pleasures, p. 6.
71 Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, pp. 229–31.
72 ‘The Dilemma of the Popular: The Volk, the Composer, and the Culture of Art Music’, in Gramit, Cultivating Music, p. 83.
73 Ogasapian, Music of the Colonial and Revolutionary Era, p. 137.
“popular” music (dance and band tunes, national, sentimental, and patriotic and national songs)\textsuperscript{74} was subsumed under the category of ‘music’, and comprised the broad range of repertoire that was available for use within the contexts of formal and informal social situations. Although late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century colonists in Sydney Cove did not have easy access to the musical developments that were taking place in Vienna through the work of composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert (1797–1828), they did not exist in a musical–cultural wilderness.\textsuperscript{75} The colonists had, instead, access to contemporaneous English music culture, which comprised the rich trove of music composed and/or heard in London. No-one, on hearing this distinctive music, can fail to notice its accessibility … its sociability of tone … [and its] amiability … Our still largely Romantic sense of the role and function of music has tended to make the … amiable and social suspect in their own right, unless they are ‘deepened’ in some demonstrable way. We readily assume that profundity is to be equated with the overtly serious in tone or the melancholy; it is harder for us to accept that what may be modest or inviting or sociable is just as valid a tone of artistic voice as that which presents itself more earnestly.\textsuperscript{76}

It is a curious quirk of the psychology of our fallen nature that when we hear [a musical] … work [that] enshrines that fallen nature, we feel better …

The major philosophical systems since the French Revolution have been tragic systems. They have metaphorized the theological premises of the fall of man … To philosophize after Rousseau and Kant, to find a normative, conceptual phrasing for the psychic, social, and historical condition of man, is to think ‘tragically.’\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{74} Skinner, Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{75} For example, the colonial press took an interest in Beethoven: on Thursday, 9 June 1825, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser (Vol. 23, Trove, National Library of Australia, p. 4) published a biography of Beethoven; on Thursday, 29 March 1827, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser (Vol. 25, Trove, National Library of Australia, ‘British Extracts’, p. 3) published information concerning a Berlin performance of one of Beethoven’s late string quartets. Since the notice states ‘[t]his sublime piece is dedicated to Prince Galitzen’, the unidentified quartet is either Beethoven’s Opus 127 in E-flat major, Opus 130 in B-flat major or Opus 132 in A minor. On Friday, 19 October 1827, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser (Vol. 25, Trove, National Library of Australia, ‘Beethoven’, p. 3) published news concerning Beethoven’s final illness. And on Saturday, 11 August 1827, The Hobart Town Gazette (Vol. 12, Trove, National Library of Australia, p. 4) announced Beethoven’s death.


Late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century contexts within which music was heard (including the theatre and concert venues) were places of ‘pleasure and display, devoted to social interaction and public self-representation. Most audiences … were doubtless inattentive at times, by modern concert standards; the music’s functions comprised not only stylistic innovation and expressive depth but also, precisely, entertainment.\(^{78}\)

A Dinner Party, 1 January 1789

Governor Phillip appears to have arranged for music to be played during the infrequent occasions when he dined with his officers at luncheon or dinner. Watkin Tench informs us that during a dinner party given by Governor Phillip on New Year’s Day 1789, ‘a band of music played in an adjoining apartment and, after the cloth was removed, one of the company sang in a very soft and superior style’.\(^{79}\) (The table would have been laid with two tablecloths, one of which was removed before the dessert.) On this occasion, the removal of ‘the cloth’ may have signalled that the singing could commence. It is tempting to assume that the band accompanied the singer, but in the absence of documentary evidence, this is not certain.

Although Phillip was ‘not extraordinarily interested’\(^{80}\) in music, his straightforward generosity in providing background music for the delight of his dinner companions is very much in keeping with both his personality and his status.

The Portuguese Viceroy in Rio de Janeiro, Marquis de Lavradio … gives one of the most extended discourses on [Phillip’s] … character that we have … ‘he is an officer of education and principle, he gives way to reason, and does not, before doing so, fall into those exaggerated and unbearable excesses of temper which the majority of his fellow countrymen do … [he is] an officer of great truth and very brave; and is no flatterer, saying what he thinks, but without temper or want of respect.’\(^{81}\)

In his retirement,

Phillip, it appears, enjoyed wine and carriages—as a connoisseur of the former and devotee of the latter … he laid down some 30 dozen ‘singularly choice’ Madeira, sherry and port which were ‘fifteen to thirty five years in bottle’. And he acquired a particularly smart and colourful carriage for getting around town.

\(^{78}\) Webster, ‘Haydn’s Symphonies between Sturm und Drang and “Classical style”’, p. 227.

\(^{79}\) Tench, ‘Transactions of the Colony until the Close of the Year 1789’, p. 98.

\(^{80}\) Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 224.

\(^{81}\) Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 43.
Like most Georgian gentlemen, Phillip possessed fine china, crystal and glassware and a ‘large and valuable quantity of silver’. He also had an extensive collection of books.

The Kinds of Music Predominantly Played at Social Occasions in the Colony

The kinds of music played in the colony were similar to those played in other transplanted British colonies around the world. In Sydney, as in New York, for example:

[T]he local musical tastes ran chiefly to the traditional and popular musics inherited from the former mother country: English, Irish, and Scottish ballads, glees, folk tunes, show tunes, sentimental tunes, comic tunes, dance tunes, marching tunes, and whatever other kinds of tunes constituted the current crop of vernacular music.

The ‘Subscribers’ Ball’, 20 October 1810

Descriptions specifying the repertoire played at social functions held during the first decades of colonial life in Sydney are rare. One of the few accounts is found in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 20 October 1810, where a description is given of a ‘Subscribers’ Ball’ held in celebration of Sydney’s ‘first liberal amusement’—that is, in celebration of Sydney’s first race meeting: ‘the full band of the 73rd played off “God save the King” in exquisite style, and between the country dances filled the room with other melodious and appropriate airs.’

‘The 73rd Regiment served in New South Wales from 1810 to 1814 under Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice O’Connell, Lieutenant-Governor of the colony.’ The 73rd replaced the mutinous NSW Corps. ‘O’Connell’s wife, Mary Putland, was the widowed daughter of the deposed Governor William Bligh.’

The Ball Held at ‘Bellmont’

Another account specifying the repertoire played at a social function was published on Friday, 5 April 1822 in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*. It comprises a description of a ball given in ‘Bellmont’ for a large party of ladies and gentlemen; the Windsor band attended; and the dance was led off to the tune of ‘Rivers, I am beyond your reach.’ On Wednesday following, William Cox, Esq.,87 of Clarendon [near Windsor], invited a large party of his friends to celebrate the christening of his son, and closed the evening with a lively dance, to the tune of ‘The Golden Fleece,’ or ‘The Merino Breed is pure.’ On the Friday following … [at] Clifton Cottage, the residence of Captain Brabyn … in the evening a sprightly dance commenced, led off by Miss Brabyn, to the tune of ‘Speed the Plough,’ which was played by the Windsor band with animated glee.88

‘The Band’

During the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, regimental musicians in ‘the band’ would most likely have developed their instrumental skills through the experience of their daily work. For members of the military, there was no systematic musical training available until ‘the foundation of Kneller Hall, a school for military musicians’,89 in 1857.

In 1794, typically for a military musician, Edward Frost, for example, joined a recruiting party as a fifer ‘having previously learnt to play a few tunes.’ He then also learned the clarinet, and after four years was selected for a regimental band.90

He now began to feel the effects of harmony (not having heard a military band before) and directly set about composing marches and other military pieces, in which he succeeded tolerably well as to the melodies, but the arrangements in parts were certainly curious: for, having heard musicians talk of discords without explaining their relations to harmony, he imagined that no two intervals, disagreeing in themselves, could be tolerated together; his chief care, therefore, was to avoid all discords, consequently his productions were monotonous enough.

87 An undated watercolour portrait of William Cox by an unknown artist, on ivory, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 382; Album ID: 823396; Digital order no. a1087003). 88 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 5 April 1822, Vol. 20 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 3. 89 Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians 1750–1850*, p. 73. 90 Ibid., p. 73.
He found that, to be able to arrange music effectively for a band, it required a knowledge of the various instruments to be introduced, and this he was not able to obtain till he was appointed master, which situation he enjoyed about twelve years; when, by experience, he found that even the worst performer in a band may be set off to the best advantage.91

In Sydney during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, regimental bands ‘provided music for official functions and private celebrations among the members of the garrison, and occasionally they also played in the streets on warm summer evenings’.92 ‘Band members also provided music for church services and were the colony’s first music teachers.’93 The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 22 May 1819 announced:

> The death of Serjeant Harry Parsons who arrived here in the marines a mere youth thirty years ago, took place three weeks since at Sydney. He … was Master of the Band; and remained in each succeeding regiment on account of his very great utility to the colony as Instructor of Sacred Music to the little female orphans, and their constant leader at divine worship.94

Fifteen months earlier, on Tuesday, 17 February 1818, Robert McIntosh, a member of the regimental band,

advised that he gave music lessons at his house in York Street. He charged 2s 6d for piano lessons and 2s for lessons on the violin, clarinet, hautboy and other wind instruments. He was also able to tune instruments and could supply music for balls and private entertainments ‘at a short notice and with a moderate rate of charge’.95

It is not known if the regimental band that played background music at Government House on New Year’s Day 1789 was under the directorship of a band ‘master’ who was skilled in musical arrangement and/or composition. If so, it is possible that the works heard at Government House during social occasions were written in more than one part, especially if the band was an ensemble of wind instruments deserving of the title ‘harmonie’. Traditionally,

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a *harmonie* comprised two oboes, two horns, two clarinets and two bassoons. ‘A typical core instrumentation for British military bands at the time was pairs of oboes, horns, clarinets, and bassoons, with flute, trumpet, and serpent.’

There is no evidence that any member of the band that played background music at Government House had studied with an experienced musician. If the band comprised only fifes and drums, it is probable that the musical textures and harmony heard within the context of background music at Government House were rudimentary, perhaps comprising (when deemed appropriate) thirds or sixths running parallel with the melodic line. If, however, the band comprised several different wind instruments, the musical textures and harmony may have been more sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing (especially for the connoisseur). A sense of orchestrational opulence would have been guaranteed if there were also violins (often, the musicians in military bands were ‘capable of playing several instruments, both wind and string’).

### Lieutenant-Governor Erskine’s Concert, September 1818

In early September 1818,

> a concert was given by His Honor Lieutenant Governor [James] Erskine to a numerous party of ladies and gentlemen, which was succeeded by a splendid ball. His Excellency the Governor, and Mrs. Macquarie, participated in the elegancies of the festival, as did likewise all the principal officers, ladies, and gentlemen in Sydney and its vicinities; the company being in number 80 persons … The full Band of the 48th attended upon the amusements of the evening: and several singers, who were introduced in masquerade, added not a little to its harmonies.

‘As with Erskine’s concert, so with most of the private balls and dinners given during the Macquarie period. Music was supplied by the bands of whichever regiment was currently garrisoning in Sydney.’ The specific repertoire performed at Erskine’s concert is not known.

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97 Ibid., p. 81.
The Queen’s Birthday Ball, 23 January 1819

The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 23 January 1819 contains a description of the music making associated with a ball hosted by Governor Lachlan Macquarie (1762–1824), the colony’s first non-naval governor, at Government House in celebration of ‘the birth of our revered and gracious Queen’. At Governor Macquarie’s ball, violins were used in conjunction with wind instruments. We read that, following supper, ‘about 170 ladies and gentlemen were

[re-summoned to the sprightly dance by the novel and attractive sound of the Pandean pipes, whose shrill tones were mellowed by the softer cadences of flutes, clarinets, and violins; the company returned to the ballroom, where the dancing continued with uncommon vivacity and spirit until four o’clock in the morning, when the party retired highly gratified with the superior and truly fascinating amusements of the evening.

Typically, the music would have been played by the regimental band.

This account contains clues related to the ‘presence’ of the background music within the context of the occasion’s overall soundscape. Pandean pipes are mentioned as being used to martial the revellers (after supper) back to the ballroom for dancing. Presumably, Pandean pipes were also used within the context of the ensuing dance music.

The Pandean pipe is a wind instrument comprising usually five or more parallel pipes bound together. Each pipe is stopped at one end and produces a note that sounds one octave lower than that produced by an open pipe of the same length. The sound is produced by blowing across the open end of each pipe.

The sound of Pandean pipes is not as piercing as that of the wind instrument most commonly used in regimental bands, the fife. This may explain the use of Pandean pipes indoors—even though the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 23 January 1819 describes their sound as being ‘shrill’.

Unfortunately, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser does not tell us how many Pandean pipes were played; several sets of Pandean pipes

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100 An undated oil-on-canvas portrait of Lachlan Macquarie by an unknown artist is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML 37; Digital order no. a128471).
101 A watercolour drawing depicting Government House, Sydney, by Joseph Lycett (1774? – ca 1828), dated 1819, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. 1/Pub/Gov H/5; Digital order no. a928164).
103 Ibid., p. 3.
104 Ibid., p. 3.
sounding simultaneously may indeed have produced a shrill sound. Nor does the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* tell us what the pitch range of the Pandean pipes was; if the range was especially high, it is possible that one instrument alone may have sounded shrill (not to mention the combined effect of several instruments sounding simultaneously).

What the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*’s account of Governor Macquarie’s ball strongly suggests is that the Pandean pipes could be heard over the sound that would have been generated by ‘about 170 ladies and gentlemen’\(^{105}\) conversing and dancing.

Flutes, clarinets and violins complete the sonic picture. We do not know how many of each was played. We are told that the intense effect of the ‘shrill’ sound of the Pandean pipes was mollified by these other instruments. This may be because

1. the Pandean pipe player(s) adjusted their dynamics in order to blend with the ensemble
2. the dynamic contrast between the ‘shrill tones’ of the Pandean pipes and the sounds made by other instruments in the ensemble was particularly evident to those present.

The description published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* leads one to assume that the Pandean pipes did not play all the time.

‘The Band’ at St Mary’s Cathedral in 1825

In about 1870, the builder, undertaker and amateur historian Columbus Fitzpatrick (1810–78) described the instruments making up the ensemble that accompanied the choir at St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney, in 1825.\(^{106}\) His description not only links the ensemble with regimental bands, but also reveals that regimental bands included a wide variety of instruments.

In 1825 there were a great number of soldiers in this country and as it happened, the Bandmaster (Mr. [Thomas] Cavanagh [also Kavannah, Kavanagh, Kavenagh; ca 1800–?]) of the 3rd Buffs [that is, the 3rd—East Kent—Regiment] was a Catholic, as also the Bandmaster (Mr. [Joseph] Richenberg [Reichenberg; ca 1789/92–1851]) of the 40th Regiment, an Italian and a great musician. Both regiments were stationed in Sydney at

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the time, and as Mr. Richenberg was only a hired bandmaster to the 40th Regiment he used to devote all his leisure hours to the instruction and formation of a real good choir, and I can say with truth that his exertions were crowned with success, for he had taught us to sing with his bandsmen, and it was a common thing to have five or six clarinets, two bassoons, a serpent, two French horns, two flutes, a violoncello, and first and tenor violin, and any amount of well-trained singers, all bursting forth in perfect harmony the beautiful music of our Church.

The ensemble at St Mary’s Cathedral in 1825 provides an indication of the instrumentation that was traditionally available within the context of regimental bands. It is possible that a similar instrumentation (or something approaching it) had been available, via the regimental bands, from the very earliest days of the colony.

‘The halls of poetic justice have many doors’, that the ensemble at St Mary’s Cathedral in 1825 was so extraordinarily fine symbolises the entrance into the colony of virtue rewarded: ‘two Catholic priests … who [voluntarily] sought permission [from Lord Sydney] to accompany the convicts of the First Fleet [at their own expense] to attend to the religious needs of the members of their own faith were not … successful. Their application was rejected; or rather, Government entirely ignored it’—and this despite the claims of Father Thomas Walsh (one of the priests) that at least 300 convicts were Roman Catholic.

Laws originating in the Reformation and directed against Catholicism, although no longer rigorously enforced, still existed in Britain. To have allowed Catholic priests into New South Wales would have aroused considerable opposition. Moreover, there was the fear that priests might become the rallying point for the Irish convicts who had every reason to resent the existence of British rule in Ireland.

Ironically, the British Government’s refusal to cater for the spiritual needs of the First Fleet’s Catholic convicts was rewarded 38 years later with a flowering of musical and liturgical richness at Sydney’s St Mary’s Cathedral.

107 The 40th Regiment was never stationed in Sydney. In 1825, a detachment from the 3rd Regiment was stationed in Sydney: ‘The 3rd (East Kent) Regiment served from 1821 to 1828 in separate detachments in Sydney and districts, Bathurst and in Van Diemen’s Land. The regiment was reunited in Calcutta.’ Rickard, ‘Lifelines from Calcutta’, p. 90.
110 See Mackaness, Some Letters of Rev. Richard Johnson.
111 See ibid.
113 See Swan, To Botany Bay, pp. 149–50.
Chapter 9

Women and the Piano

At Sydney Cove, music constituted an indispensable part of the fledgling colony’s creative activity; English cultural values had been transplanted onto antipodean soil, and music was an intrinsic part of these values.

In late eighteenth-century England, music was commonly linked with women. A woman who skillfully made music demonstrated that she had enjoyed favourable economic circumstances, as well as the leisure time within which to practice her art.¹ Three years after Worgan’s piano arrived at Sydney Cove with the First Fleet, the instrument came into the possession of Elizabeth Macarthur—one of the colony’s most socially distinguished women. Within a decade of acquiring Worgan’s piano, Elizabeth had both money and time enough to practice and develop her pianistic skills.

That the next chapter in the life of Worgan’s piano includes the intelligent, well-educated Elizabeth Macarthur is not as peculiar as it may at first seem. During the late eighteenth century, the rapidly developing piano was immutably linked not only with women, but also with notions of good taste. Good taste was regarded as a consequence of the ‘cultivation of the intellectual and aesthetic faculties’.² Finely honed taste helped to

defend aesthetic discernment from the swamping of luxury … any good student could learn it, but only years of practice and cultivation could ensure a proper level of judiciousness. The mastery of taste depended on a proper education, good company, leisure, travel and wealth …

The rise of the language of taste was especially significant for female assertiveness … a reputation for taste, sometimes tinged with enlightenment, and shared with a husband or a coterie, was much more flattering to the cosmopolitan pretensions of ladies than old-fashioned huswifery. After all, it was far more exciting to design the curtains than to make and clean them.³

¹ See Ritchie, Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England, p. 53.
³ Vickery, Behind Closed Doors, pp. 144, 165.
Women with conspicuous good taste usually had myriad talents to exhibit, not the least of which was playing the piano. For example, in the eighth chapter of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Charles Bingley describes the skills a woman must possess if she is to be regarded as ‘accomplished’:

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved.⁴

One could reasonably say that being able to play the piano was a skill that occupied pride of place in Bingley’s list of female accomplishments.

A woman could obtain a ‘thorough knowledge of music’ within the context of learning to play the piano. Furthermore, it was common practice for a young lady to accompany herself at the keyboard as she tastefully sang.

The central premise of … social behaviour [exemplifying good taste] was that the body was an instrument of pleasure. Interaction was conceived as a process of seduction—not necessarily a pursuit of overt sexual expression, but rather an exchange in which individuals sought to engage and delight each other with an artfully conducted repertoire of pleasing poses, gestures, expressions, and conversation. The goal was to … gratify the aesthetic and social sensibilities of others, while at the same time demonstrating reciprocal pleasure in response to similar efforts on their part … It meant pleasing others, and being pleased by them, without seeming to be pleased with oneself. Moreover, this cycle of mutual pleasing was to be conducted in a way that seemed utterly natural, as if agreeable [actions] … were innate rather than learned … The best way to suggest … social privilege was to seduce, and be seduced, with an acute self-awareness masquerading as selfless ease.⁵

No wonder young women spent so many hours attempting to perfect their pianistic skills. The piano was an active protagonist ‘in an elaborate game of cultivated sociability. The instrument facilitated a process of alluring self-presentation and elegant communication that was central to the formation of’ a socially acceptable identity.⁶

That a lady’s ability to play a keyboard instrument rendered her marriageable is revealed in an advertisement published in *The Times* of Thursday, 7 February 1793:

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⁵ Koda and Bolton, *Dangerous Liaisons*, p. 17.
⁶ Ibid., p. 15.
A card

Addressed to those among the female sex, whose desires are neither romantic nor extravagant, who stand in need and wish for such an opportunity as is now offered.

A single gentleman who is blest with an independence, adequate to every real comfort in life, and having none to provide for, prefers permanent friendship and protection to a lady possessing the following requisites: age not exceeding 35, person well shaped, teeth sound and regular, good voice, a stranger to the hackneyed tricks of the town: good temper, constancy, a social disposition, engaging manners, a turn to economy, and a knowledge by experience of domestic concerns, a taste for simplicity and elegance in dress, spruce in her person, and attentive to neatness in others; free from incumbrance, affectation and unpleasant habits: a pleasing countenance, if the face should neither be beautiful nor pretty—musical talents, vocal and instrumental—and she who may be the greatest proficient on the pianoforte or harpsichord ... if in other respects equal, will claim the preference.7

Playing the piano was not only a private, individual activity. It was also easily integrated into family and community life. Not only was the piano able to cross the boundaries that existed between amateur and professional, but it also functioned ‘as a medium through which social spheres that stood in opposition to each other could nonetheless nourish each other’.8 Significantly, for example, the piano was able to transcend boundaries of gender: although it was thought of primarily as a woman’s instrument from the point of view of amateur music-making, its primary professional exponents were men. Women made up a good proportion of the piano-related market, be it for instruments or music. By the end of the eighteenth century many women were competent keyboard players, so much so that an anonymous writer in ... European Magazine wrote that ‘what were once called difficulties ... are now subdued at every boarding-school by young ladies hardly in their teens’9 ... Conduct books of the time describe pianistic ability as being a desirable feminine accomplishment, but music as a profession for men was not to be encouraged, as it was to yield prosperity ‘in proportion to the difficulties to be surmounted’10.11

Many late eighteenth-century keyboard works composed for the Continental and English markets manifested ‘difficulties’ that were ‘subdued at every boarding-school by young ladies hardly in their teens’.12 In 1796 Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld (1750–1821), speaking of Vienna and Prague, observed that ‘today’s composers mostly go in for obstacles and demand from students a power that is often difficult for the master’.13

Late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Viennese music publishers’ catalogues reveal that English keyboard music was available in Vienna, suggesting that the virtuosic works of Clementi, John Baptist Cramer (1771–1858) and Dussek had become fashionable. On Saturday, 2 February 1805, the Zeitung für die elegante Welt [Newspaper for the Elegant World] described the state of affairs: ‘The easier keyboard music of Pleyel, Wanhall, [and] Kozeluch is entirely out of style. Compositions of Clementi, Cramer, Beethoven and Dussek have taken its place.’14

In Vienna, Clementi’s music was printed and distributed by three local music publishing houses:

1. Artaria
   a) in 1782, the sonatas Opus 7
   b) in 1783, the sonatas Opus 9
   c) up to 1799, 32 different works.

2. Torricella
   a) in 1783, the sonatas Opus 10.

3. Mollo
   a) in 1802, the sonatas Opus 40
   b) in 1804, the sonatas Opus 41.

In total, seven editions of Cramer’s music were distributed during the 1790s by Artaria, Traeg and Torricella. Inexplicably (when compared with Clementi and Cramer), Dussek’s music is under-represented in Vienna before 1800.

The ‘difficulties … subdued at every boarding-school’ on the Continent ‘by young ladies hardly in their teens’15 were also an integral part of musical life in late eighteenth-century London. The rise of the virtuoso woman pianist in England was a cultural phenomenon to be reckoned with.

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In late eighteenth-century London, most women who owned a piano referred to themselves as ‘polite’ or ‘genteel’—as distinct from women in the aristocracy. Such women usually had ‘moderate social eminence … combined with an emphasis on outward behaviour’.16 Sometimes, the financial position of these women changed significantly.

The daughters of wealthy merchants frequently portrayed in conduct books, who might experience some financial volatility, were often explicitly enjoined to learn music only as a supplementary accomplishment, after acquiring useful needlework skills. This specious designation of music as a ‘supplementary’ activity for women of unstable fortune, though often taken at face value by cultural critics, is frequently belied or undercut by the same texts that so designate it.17

In 1722, the English dancing master John Essex, in The Young Ladies Conduct: Or, Rules for Education, under Several Heads, remarked that music ‘is certainly a very great accomplishment to the ladies; it refines the taste, polishes the mind; and is an entertainment, without other views, that preserves them from the rust of idleness, that most pernicious enemy to virtue’.18

In 1753, Jacques du Boscq (d. 1660) states that music dismissed ‘troublesome and irregular thoughts’: ‘there is no one so void of common sense but must own, that without some of these choice qualifications’—that is, music, history and philosophy—‘tho’ women may be of an excellent disposition, yet they often find it embarrass’d with troublesome and irregular thoughts’.19 Du Boscq also suggests that music

banishes sloth while it disciplines the body in the perceptible habits of a polite appearance. According to most late eighteenth-century conduct books, music is not a labor, but a pleasurable activity which quantifies the precise degree to which labor is absent in the lives of its practitioners, since those women with greater leisure are in greater need of moral discipline. The display of a genteel woman’s musical training might therefore be considered equally appropriate to public and private occasions, since it enacts an audible and visual confirmation of the stability of class hierarchies—an important aspect of social harmony.20

The importance of women in the acceptance and use of the piano can hardly be exaggerated.

Keyboard instruments had been their special province in the home since Elizabethan times … and in the [late eighteenth] … century many a famous composer relied for the greater part of his income on teaching the piano to young ladies. This association … made it easier for female pianists … to [perform within the context of] the professional world than for women who played [non-keyboard] … instruments.

… The intensity of feeling which some women, in particular, invested in their piano playing is brought out in many [contemporaneous] novels and poems.21

Learning the Piano

For aristocratic and wealthy women, there were (typically) four distinct phases in relation to learning the piano.

1) Private Lessons Given at Home throughout Childhood

A governess would initially give lessons (a governess took on the responsibility for educating a family’s children in order that the mother might have more time at her disposal, as befitted a genteel lady).22 When the young student had mastered the rudiments of piano playing, a professional musician ‘of quality’ was employed to visit the student’s home to give lessons. ‘In London, extended visits by musicians are a clear sign of a good personal relationship’ with the employing family, ‘while deep in the country, an overnight stay by the music teacher was often a necessity’.21 ‘The success of a teacher was, in part, defined by the number of aristocratic pupils that they instructed.’24 For some musicians, providing private piano lessons to students from aristocratic and wealthy families was a successful means for accumulating wealth. When he returned to London in 1784 after a long piano performance tour on the continent, Muzio Clementi took up teaching and claimed to have given lessons 16

hours per day. By the turn of the century, he had amassed a fortune of some £15,000—capital to finance his entry into music publishing and later piano manufacturing, which increased his wealth even more.25

By 1790, in London, a select group of musicians was regarded as being the finest and most socially acceptable piano teachers. Clementi was amongst them. His status is confirmed, for example, by the Reverend Dr John Trustler (1735–1820). In his _The London Adviser and Guide …_, Trustler recommends the following:

_A list of ladies’ teachers, the most capital in London._

Dr. Arnold, (Singing and Piano-forte), No. 480, Strand.

… M. Mazzanti, (Italian Singing and Piano-forte) Adam-street, Portman-square.

Mr. Storace, (Singing and Piano-forte) No. 23, How-land-street.

Mr. Clementi, (Piano-forte).

Mr. Corre, (Singing and Piano-forte) Dean-street, Soho.

Mr. Hook, (Piano-forte) Charlotte-street, Bedford-sq.

Miss Legoux, (Piano-forte) No. 52, Poland-street.26

Clementi was so famous that Trustler did not need to include the maestro’s address.

Within the domestic context of the piano lesson given by a visiting professional musician, the governess would act as chaperon. During the periods between each lesson, the governess was responsible for supervising the student’s practise.

In a letter dated September 1803, Miss Margaret Fowke (1758–1836) of the Anglo-Indian Fowke family, writing to her brother Francis (1755–1819),27 lists what were commonly understood as being the rudiments of piano playing: ‘the fingering (or rather thumbing) of all the keys major and minor, the manner of fingering broken chords and other common passages; to know by heart the flats and sharps belonging to each key major and minor, and some little … general

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25 Scherer, _Quarter Notes and Bank Notes_, p. 64.
... idea of the principles of modulation.' 28 In other words, Margaret Fowke, a very fine pianist, regarded the knowledge and application of fingering within the following contexts as the essential and foundational elements of piano playing: 1) scalic passagework; 2) broken chords; and 3) arpeggios—as well as an understanding of key signatures and basic harmony.

In a letter dated September 1783, Margaret Fowke writing to her father, Joseph (1716–1800), 29 reveals just how boring the supervision of piano practise must often have been for a governess. Writing of her guardian, Mrs Kitchen, Margaret states: ‘She has often watched over my practice for half an hour … and seemed to have found a reward for this tedious employment when I rattled off my piece with some ease.’ 30

On Monday, 21 May 1804, Margaret Fowke wrote to her daughter Elizabeth (1793–?), giving specific instructions concerning how she was to practise:

Be very attentive to your music. Practise constantly, and never play the whole piece, till you have attacked the difficult passages. Be equally attentive to your very short lessons [that is, pieces], which surely should be performed with the greatest precision and alacrity, by a girl in her 11th year. 31

In 1799, the educator, writer, moralist, ardent evangelist and social reformer Hannah More describes the following practice regimen:

Suppose your pupil to begin at six years of age, and to continue at the average of four hours a-day only, Sunday excepted, and thirteen days allowed for travelling annually, till she is eighteen, the state stands thus: 300 days multiplied by four, the number of hours amount to 1200; that number multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours! 32

Hannah More goes so far as to state that the quantified hours of practice, as ‘a general calculation … will perhaps be found to be far from exaggerated’. 33

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28 British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Ormathwaite MS D546/27.
29 Joseph Fowke was ‘a middle-ranking official in the service of the East India Company, [and] was distantly connected to the Clive family’. Woodfield, The Calcutta Piano Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century, p. 8, fn. 15.
30 British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Fowke MS E4, 462.
33 Ibid., p. 80, fn.
(The pith of More’s story lies in the fact that the ‘pupil’ who devoted 14 400 hours to slaving over scales and arpeggios at the piano eventually married a man who disliked music.)

In her *Practical Education*, the novelist Maria Edgeworth,

in an imagined conversation … addresses herself to a fashionable lady:

‘Would not you, as a good mother, consent to have your daughter turned into an automaton for eight hours in every day for fifteen years, for the promise of hearing her, at the end of that time, pronounced the first private performer at the most fashionable and the most crowded concert in London?’

‘I would give anything to have my daughter play better than anyone in England. What a distinction! She might get into the first circles in London! She would want neither beauty nor fortune to recommend her! She would be a match for any man who had a taste for music.’

Evidence suggests that a minimum of 10 000 hours of practice is required to achieve a level of mastery associated with being a ‘world-class’ professional pianist.

The evidence … in favor of the view that practice makes perfect … comes from research on how much training the experts or high achievement people actually do … experts in music require lengthy periods of instruction and practice in order to acquire the skills necessary to truly excel. In several studies, the very best conservatory students were found to have practiced the most, sometimes twice as much as those who weren’t judged as good.

It was simply expected that young ladies would spend hours practising the piano. In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, Lady Catherine, speaking to Mr Darcy of his sister Georgiana, remarks that ‘she cannot expect to excel, if she does not practice a great deal’.

A letter written in April 1786 by the 15-year-old Maria Josepha Holroyd (1771–1863) to ‘Serena’ reveals, representatively, the prominence of music in the daily life of many female students of keyboard instruments:

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36 See D. J. Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), Ch. 7.
37 Ibid., Ch. 7, p. 196.
I get up at 8, I walk from 9 to 10; we then breakfast; about 11, I play on the harpsichord or I draw. 1, I translate, and 2, walk out again, 3, I generally read, and 4, we go to dine, after dinner we play at backgammon; we drink tea at 7, and I work or play on the piano till 10, when we have our little bit of supper and, 11, we go to bed.39

This amounts to four or five hours a day spent in front of a keyboard instrument; practising was a way of life.

Maria Holroyd mentions that her daily practice involved both a harpsichord and a piano. During the late eighteenth century, for families who owned both types of instrument, the role of the harpsichord was probably purely that of a practice instrument. Having possibly been part of the family's furniture for some years, the harpsichord may have been relegated to an upstairs room, the more modern and fashionable piano taking pride of place in the drawing room downstairs.

Even though ‘the benefits of repetition and practice to the inculcation of principles of order, virtue, religion, and self-discipline, were widely lauded, the degree of accomplishment and rational engagement with the elements of music … was not as uniformly defined’.40 As might be expected, standards of performance ranged from the virtuosic to the incompetent.

For example, during a voyage to India in 1764, Robert Clive, First Baron Clive (1725–74), was forced to endure the daily practice regime of a talentless (and yet fearsomely determined) female would-be harpsichord player, who incessantly practised ‘two hum drum tunes for four hours every day without the least variation or improvement’.41 It appears that if this aspiring ‘musician’ had hoped to develop a level of accomplishment at the harpsichord that might render her marriageable, her unmarried status was destined (it would seem) to remain unaltered; Clive described her as ‘a woman of a most diabolical disposition; ignorant, ill tempered, and selfish to the highest degree [who] seem’d possess’d of every disagreeable quality which ever belong’d to the female sex without being mistress of one virtue (chastity excepted) to throw into the opposite scale’.42

Unfortunately, not all young women were well taught. The anonymous writer of Euterpe; Or, Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Music, as a Part of Modern Education despairingly laments:

41 Quoted in Woodfield, The Calcutta Piano Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century, pp. 5–6.
42 Ibid., p. 5. Woodfield sources the quotations from: British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Clive MSS, G37, Box 15/1. See ibid., p. 6, fn. 10.
[T]he younger part of the female sex, who discover the least propensity for music, or shew any marks of having a good ear, should certainly learn music … to amuse their own family … to relieve the anxieties and cares of life, to inspire cheerfulness, and elevate the mind to a sense and love of order,—virtue,—and religion … But, alas! how far these ends are answered by the modern mode of learning modern music, let those declare who have seen and heard.\textsuperscript{43}

In 1791, the musician, songwriter, actor, dramatist and novelist Charles Dibdin relates with horror how ‘The regular progression of rules … are totally neglected, and Miss, the very first day, sits down to play abstruse passages out of Haydn and Pleyel … Passages, and not music then, are what young ladies are now taught.’\textsuperscript{44} Later he refers to ‘a lady of fashion’ who ‘in short … could play arpegios and consecutive octaves, with the right hand by wholesale, but not one single favourite air;—she could not even count the time of it.’\textsuperscript{45}

The organist and composer Richard John Samuel Stevens remembered that, in 1793, he attended a domestic concert at the concert room of ‘Mr. Blencowe … an intolerable miser, tho’ a well-educated man; and of considerable landed property’.\textsuperscript{46} The standard of playing at ‘this most eccentric meeting’\textsuperscript{47} subdued the impenitent visitor,\textsuperscript{48} and left much to be desired:

[A] short fat girl, mounted the music stool, to entertain us with a harpsichord lesson; and Mr. Peter Denys … was to accompany her on the violin … I believe that this lesson lasted nearly twenty minutes. Little Fatty could not play in time; her face, naked elbows and neck, were soon as red as a boiled lobster: while Denys (who is an admirable performer on the violin) was pale with vexation and disgust … and the young lady, whose legs were so very short … was obliged to put them upon the stand of the harpsichord to rest them during her performance.\textsuperscript{49}

‘Little Fatty’s’ musical inadequacies may well have been the result of deficient teaching (combined also, it appears, with a lack of talent).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{43} Quoted in Ritchie, \textit{Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England}, p. 55.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Argent, \textit{Recollections of R. J. S. Stevens}, p. 92.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 93.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 93.
\end{itemize}
The vacuity of ‘Little Fatty’s’ flawed music making was more commonly encountered within performative contexts than many would have wished. One critic, for example, contemptuously writes:

Only the very fewest have even the slightest idea that true musical cultivation contributes essentially to the ennoblement of the inward being and is capable of drawing the spirit cleansingly out of everything common; most drag the queen, born to rule and govern on one of the most splendid thrones in the realm of the spiritual, down with their unconsecrated hands into the filth of their own sinful lives, and force her, stripped of her heavenly beauty and made up like a common strumpet, to dance around them and so draw the eyes of the curious rabble upon them.50

2) Intermittent Periods of Intensive Application

The second phase, for a woman, of learning the piano comprised intermittent periods of intensive application designed to develop the proficiency necessary both for social acceptance and (eventually) for the rituals associated with courtship. (This phase of study was sometimes undertaken away from home.)

One of the problems associated with bringing a male piano teacher into the home at this stage was that it introduced potential sexual dangers. Male piano teachers were secretly feared, being ‘unofficially’ regarded as not quite gentlemen; the education that they offered ‘frequently extended beyond the musical to the sensual’.51

This fear extended to musicians in general. In 1762, the composer and music critic John Potter (fl. 1754–1804), who composed songs for the Vauxhall pleasure gardens,52 commented on the prevalent contempt for musicians: ‘The elegant art of music, when consider’d as an occupation, is by some thought to have little dignity.’53 Potter gives reasons for the prevailing attitude:

51 Ibid.
The contempt thrown on music, arises from two objections: The one, representing it as not being in general so profitable and reputable as many other professions, as having for its object nothing better than pleasure and entertainment. The other, that it not only requires a particular genius to excel in it, but also a great deal of time to make any progress, and by this means hinders and disqualifies a person for anything else.54

Disdain for those musicians whose love of music outweighed financial concerns was the reason for the low social status of musicians. In 1791, Gebhardt Friedrich August Wendeborn (1742–1811), a German Lutheran clergyman living in London, observed the general feeling:

No wonder … if the greatest part of the English, whose *summum bonum* is money, are tasteless in the arts, and treat them with neglect, or even look upon them with a kind of disdain; no wonder if a tradesman or merchant, favoured by liberty, regards the accumulation of money above all, and considers a man of talents and learning, or an artist endowed with excellent genius, as beings far below him.55

The English phobia concerning music as a male professional domain continued well into the twentieth century. For example, Wilfrid Blunt, senior drawing master at Eton College, in his autobiography, *Slow on the Feather*, conveys his surprise that at Eton during the 1930s and 1940s (and despite an ethos at Eton that was biased against the arts) painting was regarded as being less dangerous than music:

I find it strange that, in general, music seems to be more suspect than the visual arts; for at least there are no nudes in the symphonies of Beethoven. An old Etonian, unknown to me personally and well before my time, wrote to me … ‘In one of my reports, m’tutor wrote—”All his many shortcomings must, I suppose, be attributed to his musical temperament”’; and Lord Harewood, who when at Eton helped me with my gramophone concerts at the Drawing Schools, likes to quote the remark made by his uncle (the Duke of Windsor): ‘It’s very odd about George and music. You know, his parents were quite normal.’56

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54 Ibid., pp. 65–6.
A familiar theme presented in eighteenth-century libertine literature is that the piano lesson provided a context for sexual transgression. In Choderlos de Laclos’ (1741–1803) *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, for example, the music lesson provides the callow Chevalier Danceny with an opportunity to seduce the innocent, weak-willed, convent-educated ‘rosebud’ Cécile Volanges. In 1754, a satirical article in the *Connoisseur* announced the invention of a ‘female thermometer’ for measuring ‘the exact temperature of a lady’s passions.’ The device, created by a Mr. Ayscough of Ludgate Hill, consisted of a glass tube filled with a mixture of distilled extracts of lady’s love, maidenhair, and ‘wax of virgin-bees.’ It could supposedly detect the full range of feminine response, from ‘inviolable modesty’ to ‘abandoned impudence,’ and was remarkably accurate, claimed the author, when used at the theatre and the opera.

That ‘Mr Ayscough’ conceived such a device reveals the pervasiveness of concerns about the dangers of private music lessons—dangers ‘against which the only defense was parental vigilance’. The actions of some piano teachers did not help to alter the general perception that not only music teachers, but also all musicians had little social value, suspect morality and not much respectability. As much visual art from the period reveals, behaviour by piano teachers that exceeds the bounds of propriety seems to be typical. Many piano teachers married one of their piano students—Muzio Clementi, Jan Ladislav Dussek, Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel, Daniel Steibelt (1765–1823) and Johann Schroeter being a few of the more famous.

English professional musicians were much more likely to marry wealthy or titled persons than to be descended from them. Documentation reveals that in no recorded instance was marriage the only source of upward social mobility for professional musicians. From 1750 to 1850, all the musicians who married aristocrats had achieved substantial financial and professional success prior to their marriages.

Aristocrats do not seem to have formed such alliances with poor or even moderately successful musicians. Such marriages almost always entailed the discontinuation of professional musical employment.

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57 See Koda and Bolton, *Dangerous Liaisons*, p. 45.
58 Isacoff, *A Natural History of the Piano*, p. 53.
59 Ibid., p. 53.
60 Dussek was extremely handsome. He ‘was known as ‘le beau Dussek’ [the beautiful Dussek], and … introduced the fashion of pianists playing sideways to the audience because he wished his listeners to enjoy the beauty of his profile’. Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment*, pp. 74–5.
The case of Johann Schroeter’s marriage to his English piano student Rebecca Scott (1751–1826) provides a colourful and representative example. Schroeter came to London from Germany, first appearing in concert in London in 1773. Charles Burney remarked that ‘Schroeter may be said to have been the first who brought into England the true art of playing [the pianoforte]’. Another observer described Schroeter’s playing as follows: ‘His touch was extremely light and graceful so that, just to watch him play, became a pleasure in itself … His presentation of adagio movements was unparalleled except perhaps by Abel on the gamba.’

Schroeter eloped with Rebecca Scott, the daughter of a rich merchant. Rebecca was a typical, wealthy, ‘middle-class’ woman; she was rich, pampered and an heiress to a fortune. Understandably, her family was devastated when she eloped with her piano teacher.

The family tried to stop the wedding, Rebecca’s mother and brother taking her to court in order to ensure that she would never receive her huge dowry.

After the wedding, Schroeter surrendered all rights to his wife’s property in exchange for a yearly allowance of £500. This was done on condition that Schroeter cease his career as a public piano virtuoso, thereby saving the family from the ignominy of having a professional musician as one of its members.

Eventually, Schroeter was appointed as the ‘Master of the Queen’s Musick’. This meant that subsequently Rebecca achieved a level of respectability that her stuffy family was forced to acknowledge.

To be fair, some male piano teachers were not the only ones who attempted to lead their female students astray. On occasion, the tables were turned. For example, Joseph Haydn told his biographer, Georg August Griesinger (1769–1845), that:

[W]hen he was sitting once at the [harpsichord] … and the beautiful Countess Morzin was bending over him to see the notes, her neckerchief came undone [an unlikely accident]. ‘It was the first time I had [seen] such a sight; it embarrassed me, my playing faltered, my fingers stopped on the keys. “What is it, Haydn, what are you doing?” cried the Countess. Full of respect, I answered, “But, your grace, who would not [lose his composure in such a situation]?”’

Despite the potentially lubricious perils of private piano lessons, ‘all authorities agreed that musical training for young women was indispensable’.\(^{65}\) If, as part of the second phase of learning the piano, a young woman undertook intensive study away from home, this may have taken place in Europe, where there were many renowned teachers. The *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*\(^{66}\) reported that the cost of musical tuition was much lower on the Continent than in England.\(^{67}\)

The ‘opinion everywhere prevalent in England, [is] that it is essential to [pianists] … to visit foreign countries, receive foreign instruction, and earn a character in foreign lands, and in Italy especially, before their countrymen can be expected to see and appreciate and applaud their merit’.\(^{68}\)

During the late eighteenth century, however, very few women musicians studied abroad. European study had the disadvantage of providing a context within which it was impossible to establish contacts within professional circles in London. Such contacts were essential for women musicians, for whom performance ‘opportunities were scarce if they wanted to avoid the [potential] social stigma of the stage’.\(^{69}\)

3) Being Perceived as an ‘Accomplished’ Player

The third phase, for a woman, in relation to learning the piano was, at the time of marriage, enjoying the social value and status of being perceived as an ‘accomplished’ or ‘finished’ player. ‘The piano and the pianist became the focal points in the drawing-room: not to own a piano became socially remiss and not to be able to perform upon one, for a young girl, a mark of lack of breeding.’\(^{70}\)

4) A Protracted Decline

The fourth phase, for a woman, in relation to learning the piano involved a protracted decline, after marriage, resulting from a focus on maternal duties.

The fourfold pattern of rise and decline, ‘peaking’ during young adulthood, was created by the knowledge that marriage prospects may be hampered by any lack of pianistic accomplishment. That learning to play the piano was motivated by marriageability, rather than by purely musical aspirations, must often have

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\(^{65}\) Isacoff, *A Natural History of the Piano*, p. 53.


\(^{68}\) Ibid., p. 406.

\(^{69}\) McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, p. 185.

\(^{70}\) Hyde, *New-Found Voices*, p. 31.
been a source of frustration to sensitive piano teachers. For example, in 1829, Thomas Danvers Worgan, the eldest of the two sons of Dr John Worgan and his second wife, Eleanor, wrote:

If those who turn their eyes towards the profession are unable to discover the intellectual dignity of the art in its teachers, the reason of this is on the surface. Music languishes and degenerates under the misgovernment of unintellectual fashion. The exclusive demand for practical tuition is imperious and irresistible. Musical education is wholly effeminate, and the teacher of music sinks into the manufacture of female ornament.\(^71\)

In 1798, in their tract on progressive methodologies of education, *Practical Education*, Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth make it quite clear that the ongoing development of pianistic skills immediately ceases after marriage:

Out of the prodigious number of young women who learn music ... how many are there, who ... after they have the choice of their own amusements, continue ... for the pure pleasure of the occupation? As soon as a young lady is married, does she not frequently discover, that 'she really has not *leisure* to cultivate talents which take up so much time.' Does she not complain of the labour of practising four or five hours a day to keep up her musical character? What motive has she for perseverance; she has, perhaps, already tired of playing to all her acquaintance. She may really take pleasure in hearing good music; but her own performance will not then please her ear so much as that of many others. She will prefer the more indolent pleasure of hearing the best music that can be heard for money at public concerts. She will then of course leave off playing, but continue very fond of music. How often is the labour of years thus lost for ever?\(^72\)

That musical pursuits ceased after marriage in favour of domestic responsibilities is also revealed, for example, by Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis (1779–1852), the adopted daughter of George Washington. As a child during the 1790s, Eleanor spent many hours each day practising the harpsichord. Approximately two decades later, in a letter dated Friday, 14 July 1817, written to her childhood friend Elizabeth Bordley Gibson (1777–1863), Eleanor expressed her hope that the soon-to-be-married Elizabeth would ‘not give up music & painting, for pickling, preserving, & puddings although I have done so in great measure’.\(^73\)

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There can be no doubt that in a less restrictive society, many women, after marriage, may ‘have continued to play to considerable acclaim for many years’.74 There does not appear to have been any distain directed towards young ladies who became keyboard virtuosi. The context within which they performed, however, was a crucial factor in society’s acceptance of such virtuosi.

Performances Given by Women Virtuosi

Salwey asserts that public recitals given outside the home by married women virtuosi were both déclassé and morally suspect, as were the women who gave them. Salwey states that any married woman

who became an accomplished performer signalled a variety of changes in her relationship to her husband and her place in society. She became visually prominent, especially if she performed outside the drawing room, particularly if she gave a public recital, thus upstaging her husband and, implicitly, suggesting to her husband’s friends that she was out of control, leading a life of her own not defined by domestic regulations and responsibilities. A well-bred woman who took music so seriously constituted a threat to social boundaries.75

The concept of virtuoso women pianists being restricted to performing within a domestic context has been for a time an accepted truism of eighteenth-century cultural studies.76

Ritchie, however, presents a contrary view:

A public performance by a woman [either unmarried or married] was not considered to be a … sign of depravity. Indeed, public performances [given] … by women for civic occasions or charitable institutions could signal compliance with established social and gender ideals and generate social approval for the women engaged in these activities …

In fact, a wide range of music composed and performed by women in the eighteenth century enjoyed cultural prominence, as expressed in the production, publication, and performance of music and lyrics written by women, and in writing about women’s engagement in music. Women’s

75 Ibid., p. 275.
participation in music was not confined to the domestic sphere, but stretched from the stage to the drawing room in a flexible continuum of various performance spaces and repertoire.  

This performative continuum comprised contexts such as casual family gatherings; impromptu parties amongst friends, visitors, and neighbours; musical societies’ meetings; concerts [‘held in private residences, in the company of men and women, and in the company of varying musical skill’] featuring a combination of amateur and professional musicians [‘the scale of such … concerts, which one might imagine to include a select handful of the ton, was often quite grand’]; so-called private concerts featuring professional musicians and tickets; music festivals or other occasional performances (such as St. Cecelia’s Day celebrations); subscription-only concerts in public venues; ticketed performances in ecclesiastical, recreational, and theatrical spaces; regular religious services; and, finally, the circulation and/or publication of musical compositions, often printed with references to their original performance occasion, for further performance in any of these situations. Study of these performance occasions shows that [contexts within which women made] … music reached far beyond domestic music-making.

Mary Morrow presents six categories related to domestic musical life in eighteenth-century Vienna. Morrow’s categories may also be applied to eighteenth-century English domestic contexts within which women made music. Morrow’s categories are

1. spontaneous social music
2. the more formalised after-dinner entertainment
3. special parties and celebrations including performances of music
4. participatory chamber music
5. gala occasions with elaborate productions
6. musical salons, or regular formal concerts.

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78 Ibid., p. 61.
79 Ibid., p. 63.
80 Ibid., p. 57.
81 Morrow, Concert Life in Haydn’s Vienna.
82 See Woodfield, Music of the Raj, p. 102, fn. 73.
Surprisingly, very little is known about the way in which casual concerts in the home were run, either socially or musically, ‘yet these were the occasions upon which aspiring young [women] musicians … routinely presented their efforts for appraisal’.83

‘The ability to accompany was an important skill for women keyboard players, but their highest goal remained that of appearing as soloist in the fashionable chamber repertoire of accompanied sonatas and concertos.’84

Within the context of the accompanied sonata, women usually led the ensemble (commonly a duo or piano trio) by playing the keyboard part; men played the accompaniment (‘whilst this suggests a late-18th century equivalent of “100 Things to Do with a Useless Man”,’85 the context would never have been perceived as such). Domestic music making—‘a little dance music after dinner’, an accompanied sonata ‘or a song or two in the family circle—was considered unexceptional and many wealthy tradespeople86 bought pianos and looked for tuition.

Statistics concerning women making music in public during the second half of the eighteenth century reveal an unexpected prominence. Of the ‘622 advertised performances on the piano and harpsichord in London between 1750 and 1800, 210 were by women’87 (some of these women were married, others not). This represents more than one-third of the total public performances,88 and suggests that many English female keyboard instrument players ‘could hold their own with their native male counterparts’.89 (That so many women pianists were involved in public performance not only counters commonly held notions of societal restriction and repression, but also contradicts some contemporary ‘feminists’ manipulation [via] … political correctness to mould culture [and history] to their likeness’).90

‘During the 1780s, and indeed through to the end of the [eighteenth] century, women pianists played an increasingly significant public role on London’s concert platforms.’91 For example, Elizabeth Weichsel (1765?–1818), Maria F. Parke (b. 1772 or 1773), Jane Mary Guest (1762–1814?), Maria Hester Park

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83 Ibid., p. 102.
84 Ibid., p. 93.
86 Southey et al., The Ingenious Mr Avison, p. 119.
88 See ibid., p. 274, fn. 4.
89 Ibid., p. 273.
Chapter 9

(née Reynolds; 1760–1813) and Cecilia Maria Barthélemon (1767–1859) were familiar to the concert-going public, and enjoyed considerable popularity and acclaim.\(^{92}\) The admiration and approval of the public attest to the fact that these women were true virtuosi; after all, the public concert ‘was essentially a re-creation of domestic upper-class music making on a larger scale, and that change in scale could easily expose inadequacies of performance that might be overlooked in a salon’.\(^{93}\)

An example of a woman virtuoso pianist who consistently performed in public is Jane Mary Guest (ca 1765 – after 1814), daughter of a Bath tailor and a student of Johann Christian Bach. Guest was evidently able to present herself as a young lady of quality, for in 1780 Fanny Burney was invited to hear her play at her own house in Bath: she went on to achieve a more than satisfactory career in London as a solo pianist and teacher of royalty.\(^{94}\)

No female pianist who performed in public, however, comes close to achieving the prominence of Elizabeth Weichsel, whose 18 appearances account for more than half of the public piano performances during 1777–78. For the entire second half of the eighteenth century, this number of performances is matched only by Jan Ladislav Dussek.\(^{95}\)

Women pianists were rarely outshone by their male counterparts, and when this did occur it can be largely explained by the exclusive use of one of the leading foreign male pianists for a particular concert series. If the leading members of the London Pianoforte School\(^{96}\) [that is, Clementi, Dussek, Cramer and Field] are excluded one finds that women pianists are as prominent as the English male pianists.\(^{97}\)

During the 1790s, more than one-quarter of the pianists who appeared in public were female, and the technically and conceptually difficult works of Dussek and Cramer featured prominently amongst the repertoire they performed.\(^{98}\)

\(^{92}\) See ibid., p. 282.
\(^{93}\) ‘The Threat from Within: The Virtuoso’, in Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, p. 149.
\(^{94}\) McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, p. 185.
\(^{95}\) Salwey, ‘Women Pianists in Late Eighteenth-Century London’, p. 289.
\(^{96}\) Nicholas Temperley (‘General Introduction’) informs us that the so-called “London Pianoforte School’ consists of 49 composers whose combined careers span almost a century (from 1766 to 1860). Five pianists stand out as being the most important composers of the London Pianoforte School. These are: i) Muzio Clementi; ii) Johann Ladislav Dussek; iii) Johann Christian Bach; iv) Johann Baptist Cramer; and v) John Field. It’s ironic that none of these pianist-composers actually came from London (or, for that matter, from England). Perhaps the only two things that link these five pianists together as a “School” are: i) they all had strong and lasting associations with London; and ii) they all composed piano music for the London market some time during the first hundred years of the piano’s popularity in London.’
\(^{97}\) See ibid., p. 286.
\(^{98}\) See ibid., p. 286.
One of the first English women pianists of the nineteenth century to make a reputation for herself was Catherine Bisset (1795–1864), who made her London debut in 1811, and subsequently played in Paris. More outstanding, however, was Lucy Andrews (1797–1878) who made her debut with the Philharmonic Orchestra in the same year as [Felix] Mendelssohn [1809–47] made his debut in London [1829], playing the Hummel Concerto in B minor. It was she who introduced Beethoven’s *Emperor* concerto to England.99

Musical performance contexts gave women virtuoso pianists ‘a strong, clear voice in’ London’s music culture.100

Daily, both in England and on the Continent, many women spent hours honing their musical skills to extraordinary levels of technical and interpretative ability. In her autobiography, the Viennese novelist Caroline Pichler (1769–1843) states as much: ‘so many women … occupy themselves … auspiciously in musical performance at the keyboard, at other instruments, or in song.’101

In some ways, the restrictions placed upon women in relation to the contexts within which they might perform seem to be inconsistent, given the ‘whole ceremonial atmosphere of a classicist civilisation which valued the theatre as a secular ritual’.102

In as much as late eighteenth-century [musical] theatre concerned itself with the doings of gentlefolk and the nobility, a sophisticated mastery of it could be read as a sign of social superiority in a spectator, or … in a performer. Sensitivity to genteel behaviour and its codes, to the nuances of a [musical work] … and to the distinctions of … genre were among the abilities that were required.103

In late eighteenth-century England, there was a close relationship between ‘high social status, “civility”, and education on the one hand’ and concert-going and music making on the other. ‘[S]tatistics and economic evidence … point in this direction, notably in the case of London.’104 The participation of women virtuoso pianists in English cultural life—within both domestic and public contexts—in

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104 Ibid., p. 8.
some cases acted as a stimulant for the development of piano design, and at times gave rise to experimental musical composition. As one would expect, the unique personality and abilities of each individual performer either reinforced traditions of instrument design, piano technique, composition and performance context or acted as a catalyst for departures from the norm.

In nearly every music treatise published in England during the second half of the eighteenth century,

social and musical harmony were, if not equated, then strongly related to one another … Women's participation in this discourse of how one might achieve social harmony using musical means produced a range of responses, from works consonant with societal ideals of charitable, natural, and national order, to downright dissonance with such ideals.105

The situation for women virtuoso pianists on the Continent was similar to that found in England. Women virtuoso pianists were an integral part of society’s cultural fabric. Both in England and abroad, however, women composers were regarded with negativism. Society’s attitude towards women composers is representatively revealed by an announcement published in Carl Friedrich Cramer’s *Magazin der Musik* (1786); the composer Corona Schröter (1751–1802) writes:

I have had to overcome much hesitation before I seriously made the decision to publish a collection of short poems that I have provided with melodies. A certain feeling towards propriety and morality is stamped upon our sex, which does not allow us to appear alone in public, and without an escort: Thus, how can I otherwise present this, my musical work to the public, than with timidity? For the complimentary opinions and the encouragement of a few persons … can easily be biased out of pity. The work of any lady, moreover, will indeed arouse similar pity to some extent in the eyes of other experts.106

Women virtuoso pianists in England, when weighed against women composers, fared comparatively well. This was a result of the fact that in the minds of many, the piano, piano repertoire and piano performance were incontrovertibly linked with women and notions of good taste.

Chapter 10

George Worgan and the Macarthurs

Every Australian child is taught that the Macarthurs created the Australian sheep industry—an industry that became the backbone of the new colony’s—and eventually, for a while at least, the nation’s—wealth. It is not commonly taught, however, that the Macarthurs were closely connected with George Worgan and the First Fleet piano.

Following Worgan’s arrival at Sydney Cove, his piano probably stayed with him (wherever his accommodation was) until about January 1791, at which time he placed the instrument into the care of Elizabeth Macarthur.

Elizabeth Macarthur

Elizabeth Macarthur was born Elizabeth Veale in the town of Bridgerule in Devon, England, on Thursday, 14 August 1766. Her father, Richard Veale, was ‘a yeoman farmer who owned Lodgeworthy, a mixed-farm of some 94 acres in Bridgerule near Kilkhampton’.1 After the death of her father, and her mother’s remarriage, Elizabeth went to live with her maternal grandfather,2 John Hatherley, when she was six years old. ‘Soon afterwards she was taken into the home of the Reverend John Kingdon’, the vicar of Bridgerule, a master of arts and fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, where, as a ‘charity child’, ‘she had a simple, quiet, moral upbringing in the household of a minor country parson’.3

Within this context she was educated along with the Reverend Kingdon’s daughter Bridget. Bridget Kingdon, ‘who had brothers but no sister close to her in age’,4 ‘became a lifelong friend and correspondent’.5

Taking a poor relation or a ‘charity child’ into one’s home, to act as unpaid companion to an ailing wife or daughter, was a relatively common practice in Georgian England …

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2 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 20.
3 ‘Elizabeth Farm: John and Elizabeth Macarthur’, in Historic Houses Trust: Discover Elizabeth Farm (n.d.).
Elizabeth was luckier than most charity children, because the Reverend John Kingdon treated her as though she was his own daughter … In return for being a companion to Bridget, young Elizabeth received an excellent education at a time when most ‘genteel’ girls were only taught reading, writing, sewing and needlework, plus a smattering of French and arithmetic.

Elizabeth Veale was taught Latin and Greek, studied ancient and modern history, geography, natural history and elementary French.6

**John Macarthur**

When John Macarthur first met Elizabeth, he was a young ‘ensign from a disbanded Corps of Foot’,7 on half-pay.

As one of fourteen children of a Plymouth mercer and draper he had few prospects, no fortune, and only his own sense of superiority to support him while endeavouring, in the five years after the American War of Independence, to obtain another military post.

Spending the years between the ages of sixteen and twenty one in seclusion in rural Devon, he probably felt cheated of the opportunities which may have presented themselves to him had the American war continued.8

According to his fourth son, James (1798–1867), during the five years when John Macarthur was on half-pay, ‘he spent his days riding and hunting, studying history and contemplating a legal career’. It seems that during this time ‘he acquired his knowledge of farming’.9

John earned extra money by tutoring at Kilkhampton Grammar School, 13 kilometres from Bridgerule, in Cornwall; that he possessed the necessary knowledge was the outcome of the education he had received at a private school.10 As a tutor at Kilkhampton Grammar School, John Macarthur became friends with the Reverend John Kingdon’s son Thomas. It is probable that through this

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7 Broadbent, *Elizabeth Farm Parramatta*, p. 5.
8 Ibid., pp. 7–8.
contact he met Elizabeth, who was a pupil at the grammar school.11 ‘Elizabeth … lost her virginity to the young officer who was awaiting a transfer to Gibraltar. We do not know Elizabeth’s reactions when she found herself pregnant.’12

Until 1753, a promise to marry was traditionally regarded as being as binding as a marriage, and on the strength of it, a couple could be compelled to have the promise sanctified by a minister of religion.13 The town of Bridgerule was isolated and provincial; changes in the law in 1753 regarding marriage may not have had much impact on traditional understandings and practices. If John and Elizabeth had promised marriage to one another, they would probably have regarded themselves as being married months before their actual marriage ceremony took place. That Elizabeth became pregnant prior to the marriage ceremony was probably not scandalous in Bridgerule. ’Many marriages started out with the bride well advanced in pregnancy and with as good a chance of a reasonably happy union as any couple can hope for nowadays—probably better.’14

There is no doubt that Elizabeth loved John ‘very deeply, as the whole of the rest of her life was to testify’15 (Elizabeth was to enjoy 46 years of marriage, even though she ’was pitied for her husband’s inappropriate behaviour within the colony [at Sydney Cove], from the time of their arrival’).16

John Macarthur’s widowed father would not have been impressed by the fact that his penniless son wanted to marry a girl who lacked a dowry …

Elizabeth’s mother was far from enthusiastic about her daughter’s marriage to … [a] junior officer with big pretensions and a low income … Elizabeth later admitted that her mother had claimed that, ’Mr Macarthur is too haughty and arrogant’ …

Although Elizabeth’s situation looked difficult, the Reverend Kingdon clearly approved of their relationship as, a few months before the Macarthurs’ wedding, he asked John and Elizabeth to act as godparents to his baby daughter …

11 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 52.
12 Ibid., p. 53.
15 King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 8.
On [Monday] 6 October 1788 [five months after the First Fleet departed for Botany Bay] … Elizabeth Veale and John Macarthur … were married at the Anglican church at Bridgerule by Reverend John Kingdon.17

A few months before their marriage, John Macarthur ‘secured … full pay … by joining the 68th Regiment, stationed in Gibraltar, still an ensign at twenty one as he had been at fifteen’.18

Macarthur did not join his regiment in Gibraltar, but—determined to enhance his rank and prospects—in June 1789 ‘transferred as a lieutenant’ to the 102nd Regiment, the newly created NSW Corps, ‘then being enlisted for duty at Botany Bay’,19 on an annual salary of £79.20

Joseph Holt, the Irish political convict, was probably not far wide of the truth when he wrote, from personal knowledge of early New South Wales, that soldiers from the military prison known as the Savoy, and other characters no less unsavoury, ‘who have been considered as disgraceful to every other regiment in His Majesty’s Service’, were thought suitable persons for this corps.21

The NSW Corps was established to replace Governor Phillip’s marines at Port Jackson, and ‘there was no dearth of young men anxious to join a regiment in which, if there were no prospects of military action, there seemed to be excellent opportunities for promotion and aggrandizement’.22

The Macarthurs Sail to Sydney Cove with the Second Fleet

On Sunday, 17 January 1790, John Macarthur, his wife, Elizabeth, their first son, Edward (1789–1872; who, having been born on Wednesday 18 March 1789 at Bath,23 was eight months old at the time), and a servant girl left England for Sydney Cove on board the Neptune with the notorious Second Fleet. The Macarthurs’ son Edward ‘is believed to be the only person who sailed in the Second Fleet of whom we have a photograph. He was probably also the last survivor of the voyage.’24

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17 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, pp. 54–5.
18 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 8.
19 Ibid., p. 8.
21 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 42.
22 Ibid., p. 42.
23 Hughes, The Macarthurs, p. 4.
It was a miserable time for the Macarthurs who were bundled into quarters on the lower deck that had been divided into two parts. One side for Macarthurs and the other crammed with women convicts. It was an extremely disagreeable situation, not only because of the stink and bad language of the convict women, but a narrow passageway was the only way to reach the open deck above.

The Captain of the ship in a fit of malice after an argument with John Macarthur turned this passageway into a sick bay so it was necessary then for the family to step over the filth and vomit of dying convicts in order to reach the fresh air. Elizabeth refused to leave her cabin and after many days confined therein John demanded that his family be transferred to another of the ships in the fleet while they were becalmed in the doldrums. On the 19th February 1790 they were shifted over to the Scarborough and although they could not stand upright in the small cabin they had been allotted, at least they could enjoy fresh air on deck.

As the voyage was nearing its end Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter. Unfortunately the baby only lived for about an hour and was buried at sea.25

Overwhelmed by her context, Elizabeth ‘had no reserves of sympathy left for the starving, vermin-infested, brutally treated convicts’.26 The Macarthurs arrived at Sydney Cove on Monday, 28 June 1790. John Macarthur was 22 years old.

What Did John and Elizabeth Macarthur Look Like?

Two Authenticated Portraits

Two authenticated portraits of John and Elizabeth Macarthur exist (Plates 66 and 67).27 The portrait of John Macarthur is a copy (dating from about the 1850s) of an authenticated miniature held in a private collection.

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25 Kennedy, ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’. Of the Macarthurs’ ‘nine children, seven survived infancy and only two ever had children of their own … [The Macarthur] family would never be gathered together at one time. [The Macarthurs’ eldest son,] Edward left the colony at the age of eight, returning to NSW only for two brief visits during his parents’ lifetime, while Macarthur’s second son John, who departed the colony at the age of seven, in 1801, was never again seen by his mother.’ Geraghty, A Change in Circumstance, p. 36.
26 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 21.
27 These are housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, as part of the Dixson Collection.
Plate 66 Unknown artist: John Macarthur (n.d., ca 1850s). Authenticated portrait. Oil on canvas; 125 x 100 centimetres.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
Plate 67 Unknown artist: *Elizabeth Macarthur* (n.d., ca 1850s). Authenticated portrait. Oil on canvas; 90 x 70.5 centimetres.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
Plate 68 Unknown artist: John Macarthur (?) (n.d.). Unauthenticated portrait.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Reproduced by permission of Stewart Symonds. Photo by the author.
Plate 69 Unknown artist: *Elizabeth Macarthur* (?) (n.d.). Unauthenticated portrait.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Reproduced by permission of Stewart Symonds. Photo by the author.
The portrait of Elizabeth Macarthur shows her to have been a woman of striking beauty and refined taste in both dress and deportment. That Elizabeth should be portrayed thus is (in large part) due to the fact that social positioning was associated with

the self-presentation of the individual. Self-presentation was a matter of manners, deportment, dress and general care of the person, as well as the style of speech, the use or absence of a dialect, the degree and type of education and the display of it. Finally, it was a matter of the degree of social ease in culturally-defining situations.

Two Unauthenticated Portraits

There is contention in relation to the identity of the personages represented in two contemporaneous portraits (Plates 68 and 69). The owner of the portraits believes them to be representations of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. The two portraits appear to have been painted by the same (unknown) artist, possibly at the same time (such pairs of portraits were commonly painted either to commemorate or in association with a significant event). Perhaps these two paintings were completed prior to John Macarthur's departure on 29 March 1809 for England on board the Admiral Gambier.

Comparison between the authenticated and unauthenticated sets of portraits reveals striking similarities in

1. the nose
2. the shape and colour of the eyes
3. the shape of the mouth.

Certain similarities between the authenticated and unauthenticated sets of portraits are particularly obvious

1. In relation to John Macarthur, the
   a) hairline
   b) keen, penetrating eyes
   c) pugnacious mouth

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30 These portraits are owned by Stewart Symonds, Ermington, Sydney, NSW.
d) firm, squared jaw  
é) prominent ear lobes.

2. In relation to Elizabeth Macarthur, the  
a) high forehead  
b) height of the eyebrows  
c) corners of the mouth  
d) prominent chin  
e) long neck  
f) slope of the shoulders.

Both sets of portraits speak of vigour, wealth and self-confidence.

Some experts in Australian art history have not accepted the unauthenticated portraits as being representations of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, denouncing the works as unimportant—a state of affairs analogous with that revealed in the documentary film *Who the #$&% is Jackson Pollock?*.  

**The Macarthurs at Sydney Cove**

Upon disembarkation at Sydney Cove, Elizabeth Macarthur thought the colony to be ‘completely wretched’.  

The filthy ships in the Cove, the rude lines of sodden barracks, the … tents that held the sick sagging in the downpour along the waterfront; the night fires in the region of the Rocks, a sink of evil already and more like a gypsy encampment than part of a town … the stumps and fallen trees, and the boggy tracks wending their way around rock and precipice; the oozy Tank Stream spreading itself over the sand by the head of the Cove.  

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31 Moses, H. (dir.), *Who the #$&% is Jackson Pollock?*, [Film], Produced by D. Hewitt, S. Hewitt and M. Lynne, Starring T. Horton (Distributed by Warner Bros, 2006). ‘After semi-truck driver Teri Horton bought a large splatter painting for her friend for $5, she was forced to sell it in her own garage sale when her friend said she had no place for it. Eventually someone commented on the painting stating it might be an original Jackson Pollock … [The] documentary follows Teri, her son, and a forensics specialist as they attempt to prove to the world, or more specifically the art community, her painting is a true Jackson Pollock.’ ‘Synopsis of the Movie’.


33 Quoted in ibid., pp. 164–5.
Elizabeth Macarthur was ‘the second woman of her [social] class to go to … [Sydney Cove]. The first was probably the [“somewhat tart-tongued”]34 wife of the Reverend Richard Johnson, although almost nothing is known of her.’35 (The Reverend Johnson’s wife ‘bore him a daughter whom he called by an Aboriginal name, Milbah, born in 1790, and a son, born in 1792’.36)

Initial Accommodation

If Elizabeth Macarthur had anticipated comfortable accommodation when she disembarked, her hopes would soon have been dashed upon the rocks of disappointment. Sometime ‘after disembarking’—that is, after Monday, 28 June 1790—‘the Macarthurs were given a hut vacated by an officer who was being transferred to Norfolk Island’.37 ‘The hut was on the west side of the Tank Stream, with the parade ground and the settlement’s storehouses between them and the convicts.’ De Vries locates the Macarthurs’ hut ‘along George Street (then known as Spring Row)’.39

Instead of glass, the windows of the hut would have had a lattice of twigs. The outline of the hut ‘might have been drawn by a child; [a] simple square [building] … about nine feet by twelve [2.7 metres by 3.6 metres] with a central door on one side and a window each side of it’. A letter written by a distressed female convict describes the type of hut as ‘the most miserable huts you can possibly conceive of … Windows they have none … so that lattices of twigs are made by our people to supply their places’. (Convict women were not all illiterate; ‘over a quarter of the women who arrived on the First Fleet and who married within the next two years were able to write their names in the marriage register’.) Sanitation was of the most primitive kind.

During this time, Elizabeth Macarthur writes that there was ‘no female friend to unbend my mind to, nor a single woman with whom I could converse with any satisfaction to myself’.43 On the nights when John Macarthur ‘was duty

34 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 30.
37 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 61.
38 Ibid., pp. 61–2.
40 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 134.
43 Quoted in de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 62. Also quoted in King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 17.
officer, he had to stay in the Military Barracks and Elizabeth was left alone in her shack', 44 keeping company with the ever-present spiders, ants and insects. Sydney Cove was no place for a nervous lady. In a letter to her mother dated Friday, 18 November 1791, ‘Elizabeth remarks that during this period she keenly felt “the want of female society”’. 45 Gentlewomen did not look to female servants for company. Servants were not considered proper companions. Even in the isolation of colonial life, gentlewomen distanced themselves from the servant class; gentlewomen ‘could not regard domestic servants as their equals and their notions of gentility held strongly over their longing for female company’. 46

Elizabeth Macarthur Seeks Company

‘As the only officers’ wife in the colony’, 47 Elizabeth sought the company ‘of the marines officers, presumably the better behaved’. 48

The officers were a mixed lot, varying from the suave, polished … [Captain] John Piper to the blustering Anthony Fenn Kemp [1773–1868], said to have been a pawnbroker, and who was ‘qualified for any huxtering or dealing.’ Many joined [the NSW Corps] with the deliberate intention of making what money they could out of their overseas service. 49

We know that the officers were generally friendly and polite. 50 From within this group of officers, Elizabeth formed close friendships with ‘the perceptive author Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench’, whom she visited almost every day, ‘and the amateur astronomer and anthropologist Lieutenant William Dawes’. 51

William Dawes was a man of many talents. A patron of Dawes described some of his abilities: ‘He understands the Spanish and Portuguese languages, as also French and Italian; he has studied botany some considerable time together, with mineralogy; he is a tolerable good astronomer and draws very well.’ 52 In 1792, William Dawes

went to Sierra Leone … as advisor to the Governor, and he … took over that post later the same year. In 1793 … he became mathematics master

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44 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 60.
48 Ibid.
50 See M. A. Parker, *A Voyage Round the World in the Gorgon Man of War, Captain John Parker, Performed and Written by His Widow; For the Advantage of a Numerous Family* (London: John Nichols, 1795), p. 92.
at Christ’s Hospital and helped to train missionaries for the Church Missionary Society. In 1813 he went to Antigua as a correspondent of the Church Missionary Society, established schools for the children of slaves and travelled to Dominica and St Vincent. He died in Antigua in 1836.53

Dawes may well have been impressed by Elizabeth Macarthur’s intelligence, curiosity and the fact that she was a well-educated woman. Not only did he show ‘her stars and constellations unknown in the northern hemisphere’,54 but he also taught the curious Elizabeth ‘about botany and exotic flora and fauna’.55

Elizabeth was hungry for knowledge. She wrote to her friend Bridget Kingdon: ‘I have arrived so far as to be able to class and order all common plants. I have found great pleasure in my study; every walk furnished me with subjects to put in practice that theory I had before gained by reading.’56 Dawes may have ‘told the young wide-eyed Mrs Macarthur about the unusual [antipodean] cycle of the seasons [and of] … kangaroos,57 koalas and platypuses’.58

Elizabeth’s socially isolated context and her desire for stimulating company were probably the catalysts that resulted in her first meeting with surgeon George Worgan and his piano. It is not known when Elizabeth became aware that Worgan had brought his piano with him to Sydney Cove; perhaps it was during her first conversation with him (Worgan may even have been introduced to Elizabeth specifically as the owner of the colony’s only piano). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century social world, ‘introductions between strangers tend[ed] to be formal, predictable affairs’. The parties greeted and acknowledged one another ‘according to accepted rules. In this nicely regulated verbal world every antecedent phrase [had its] … consequent’.59 ‘Choices about one’s friends [and] … patterns of speech and gesture … were … fraught with significance … women’s friendships and appearances in public were believed to reveal insights into their moral character.’60 Depending on the nature of George Worgan’s initial discourse with Elizabeth Macarthur (as well as the context within which the conversation took place), the introduction of the subject of his piano may even have represented a violation of social decorum. Perhaps the subject of Worgan’s piano was not raised until a subsequent meeting, at which time the two new friends sought to become better acquainted with one another.

53 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 275.
54 Ibid., p. 62.
55 Ibid., p. 62.
56 Quoted in King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 17.
57 ‘Captain John Shea [d. 1789] seems to have been the first man to shoot [a kangaroo] … and bring it to the camp.’ Ibid., p. 133.
58 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 62.
60 Tague, Women of Quality, p. 175.
Chapter 10

The Macarthurs’ New Thatched Wattle-and-Daub Hut

In January 1791, six months after their arrival at Sydney Cove, the Macarthurs moved from their initial rudimentary accommodation into a new, slightly larger house: a thatched wattle-and-daub hut.61 In a letter written by Elizabeth to Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791, Elizabeth Macarthur described the event: ‘in January we were remov’d into a more convenient House.’62

The Macarthurs’ new hut probably had a relatively light timber frame comprising ‘saplings covered with a woven mesh of twigs or lathes split from the acacia tree’, combined with mud ‘and walls plastered with clay’—which was plentiful about 2 kilometres south of Sydney Cove63—to keep out the wind and rain. This method of building was ‘common in England at least from Saxon times’.64 ‘In a cove to the east, which … the colonists would [come to] know … as Rushcutters Bay, there were rushes that could be cut and thatched.’65 The hut’s thatched roof was most likely made of ‘cabbage-tree fronds or rushes or bark plastered over with clay’.66 Any pretentions to architectural distinction at Sydney Cove were severely limited by a lack both of resources and of skills.67 ‘Thatched roofs … were neither durable nor weatherproof and they frequently caught fire in dry summer weather or from ill-built chimneys so that the building of chimneys in thatched huts was finally forbidden.’68

It is not known exactly where the Macarthurs’ new hut was situated, nor is it known how close it was to the hut they had vacated. Their new thatched wattle-and-daub hut may have been located up the hill to the west of the fledgling colony’s parade ground. The parade ground was positioned at what is now the corner of Bridge and George streets.69

During the first half of the 1790s,

it appears that building activity at Sydney was concentrated on the erection of the military barracks and the houses of the principal officers

61 See Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 77.
63 See Bridges, Foundations of Identity, p. 28.
64 Ibid., p. 31.
65 Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 27.
66 Keneally, Australians, p. 83.
67 See Bridges, Foundations of Identity, p. 68.
68 Ibid., p. 30.
69 Information derived from a conversation held on Thursday, 11 February 2010 between the author and Gary Crockett, Curator, Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Queens Square, Macquarie Street, Sydney.
George Worgan was not one of these] and superintendents. An observer in the mid-1790s, Daniel Paine [b. 1770], the colony’s boatbuilder, wrote about the appearance of the settlement at that time: ‘The houses and public buildings are generally without much attention to order or regularity; the Governor’s house is of stone, and situated on a rising ground on the left-hand side of the Cove, and has a pretty appearance’. He mentions the hospital, a temporary prefabricated wooden structure, the brick house for the Principal Surgeon, and ‘the stores three in number’ situated at the upper part of the Cove, two of which he considered rather inconveniently placed, being too distant from the wharf. The house of the military commandant, the Lieutenant-Governor, was ‘pleasantly situated, and sufficient space is left before the parade’.70 ‘The Barracks’, he wrote, ‘are the most regular buildings and situated on rising ground at the back of the Cove they are built of brick’. The church was merely a ‘low thatched barn’. Though the houses of the principal military officers and convict superintendents were built of brick, they were confined to a single storey. ‘Other houses in general’, he observed, ‘are built of posts stuck in the ground at convenient distances to support wattles and thatched roofs, and any other material they could find or scrounge.71

Thus it appears that the bricks being made were used mainly in the official buildings, and that emancipists, free settlers, ex-marines and convicts alike had to make do with lath and plaster walls, thatched or shingled roofs, and any other material they could find or scrounge.72

On Saturday, 13 December 1794, a report written by an anonymous soldier says that the town at Sydney Cove included ‘700 good comfortable huts’, besides ‘numerous brick buildings, the property of the Government’.73 ‘While 700 looks like hyperbole (as does “good comfortable”), this statement suggests a conspicuously large number of households (narrowly defined), in which convicts and others lived in relatively independent fashion, sheltered by timber, mud and thatch.’74

Perhaps the Macarthurs’ new thatched wattle-and-daub hut ‘plaistered both inside & out’,75 into which they moved in January 1791, was one of these dwellings.

71 Ibid., p. 34.
75 Knight and Frost, The Journal of Daniel Paine 1794–1797, p. 34.
George Worgan’s Piano in the Macarthur’s New Home

George Worgan had his piano moved into the Macarthur’s new thatched wattle-and-daub hut. It is possible that the Macarthur’s new accommodation presented a physical environment that was kinder to the piano than that within which, to that point, Worgan had been forced by circumstance to place it. The officers’ dwellings were rudimentary, rough timber buildings, constructed in such a way that they could be improved at a later date. On Sunday, 28 September 1788, Governor Phillip wrote: ‘The … officer’s houses … are buildings that will stand for some years, as they will hereafter be walled up with brick or stone, if limestone can be found in the country, or if sent out as ballast in the transports.’ (Then again, the Macarthur’s new abode may have been similar to the officers’ houses.)

Perhaps Worgan’s close friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur (and/or his innate kindness) resulted in his placing his piano in the Macarthur’s hut. Apart from the musical joys that the instrument would have catalysed, the presence of a piano in the Macarthur’s house would—as a symbol of gentility, and as the colony’s only piano—have lent Elizabeth and John considerable social prestige.

Worgan was 34 years old, unmarried and, within the seven months that followed the Macarthur’s arrival at Sydney Cove, had formed a close friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur.

The navy offered medical officers few opportunities to find a wife while they were on active service afloat. Although they would have occasionally enjoyed the pleasure of mixed company when invited to balls and dinners in the ports where they briefly docked, theirs was much more a man’s world than the army. By the time they [retired] … many must have become confirmed bachelors, who were happy to return home and set themselves up as local celebrities, who had sailed the seas.77

There is no evidence to suggest that Worgan’s friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur in any way exceeded the bounds of propriety. In fact, in a

small colonial society which delighted in petty gossip … [Elizabeth Macarthur] was not touched by any. Scarcely another woman in the colonial world escaped criticism for some breach of taste in dress, manners or propriety. Impossible though it may seem … [Elizabeth] does not appear to have been mentioned by contemporaries except in praise.78

76 Britton, Historical Records of New South Wales, p. 189.
77 Brockliss et al., Nelson’s Surgeon, pp. 31–2.
78 Conway, ‘Macarthur, Elizabeth (1766–1850)’. 
How incongruous and yet pleasing Worgan’s piano must have looked in the Macarthurs’ new home, ‘sitting probably on a beaten earth floor—maybe on a rug of some kind’.79 ‘The standard carpeting for the period was loose (rather than fitted) and invariably described as “Turkey” rugs.’80

Luxury, hand-knotted carpets were imported into London from the Middle and Far East and were fairly readily available from the early eighteenth century. Carpets woven on a loom with a looped pile, rather than individual knots, were made in England from the mid-eighteenth century. They were cheaper than hand-knotted carpets and woven in strips, which could be sewn together to fit rooms of any size.81

If there was any rug at all in the Macarthurs’ new hut, it is probable (given their modest financial situation) that it was of the cheaper kind.

When Did George Worgan Place His Piano into the Macarthurs’ Thatched Wattle-and-Daub Hut?

It is not known exactly when Worgan’s piano was placed into the Macarthurs’ thatched wattle-and-daub hut; however, a letter written by Elizabeth to her friend Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791,82 enables us to posit a time frame within which Worgan’s piano may have come into Elizabeth’s care. Elizabeth writes:

Still, I wanted something to fill up a certain vacancy in my time, which could neither be done by writing, reading, or conversation … I shall now tell you of another resource I had to fill up some of my vacant hours. Our new house is ornamented with a pianoforte of Mr. Worgan’s.83

In the same letter, Elizabeth recounted to Kingdon: ‘in January we were remov’d into a more convenient house’.84 It is reasonable to conclude therefore that Worgan’s piano was moved into the Macarthurs’ new hut between January 1791 and 7 March 1791.

79 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 77.
80 Riding, Mid-Georgian Britain 1740–69, p. 28.
81 The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.
Elizabeth’s Piano Lessons

Elizabeth’s letter to Bridget Kingdon was one of many she wrote to her childhood friend. In her letter to Bridget dated Monday, 7 March 1791, Elizabeth writes, concerning Worgan’s square piano: Worgan ‘kindly means to leave it with me, and now under his direction I have begun a new study, but I fear that without my master I shall not make any great proficiency’.85

Elizabeth’s statement ‘I have begun a new study’ is perplexing. Either: 1) Elizabeth was resuming piano lessons, having not had any for a time; or, more probably, 2) under Worgan’s tutelage, she was beginning piano lessons for the first time in her life.

Given that playing the piano was regarded as a necessary ‘polite accomplishment’86 for young women (ensuring that, amongst other things, they would be rendered more eligible for marriage), that Elizabeth Macarthur could not play the piano seems unusual for the time. It is possible that the financial situation of the Reverend John Kingdon (in whose home Elizabeth was raised) did not allow for the purchase or hire of a piano, or for the payment of a piano teacher. The Reverend Kingdon’s income came from clerical ‘livings’,87 and would therefore have been limited.

We do not know how many piano lessons George Worgan gave Elizabeth Macarthur, nor do we know if he charged Elizabeth for the privilege. In England, piano lessons were usually expensive. In 1791, for example, Joseph Haydn, whilst in London, was astonished to realise that he could charge a guinea (£1 1s—that is, 21 English shillings) per hour for piano lessons.88 Haydn said, ‘Da machte ich große Augen’ (a colloquial translation would be, ‘My eyes popped out of my head’).89 In Haydn’s Vienna, ‘the standard fee appears to have been one florin [2 English shillings], or one-tenth what Haydn charged in London. From his more affluent Viennese students, on the other hand, Mozart obtained one-half gold ducat per hour, or about [£1 5s—that is, 25 English shillings].’90 In 1791, a guinea (£1 1s) was ‘more than a week’s earnings for an English building craftsman’.91

86 See Collins, *A Voyage to New South Wales with Governor Phillip 1787–1788*, p. 44.
88 See Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, p. 64.
90 Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, p. 64. ‘In a provincial capital like the Salzburg of Mozart’s day, an annual income of five hundred florins—that is, £50 or 1000 English shillings—“could provide a small family with a decent life; in Vienna such a yearly sum could sustain only one person in comfort.” R. W. Gutman, *Mozart: A Cultural Biography* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. xvi.
91 Scherer, *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes*, p. 64.
In London, a run-of-the-mill teacher would not have charged as much as the internationally famous Haydn. Nevertheless, in England, piano lessons were never cheap, and some piano teachers (regardless of their status) earned sufficient income to live well. Muzio Clementi, following his return to London in 1784 after a concert tour on the Continent, taught for 16 hours a day. This gruelling regimen enabled him to amass ‘a fortune of … £15,000’.92

For the time, Clementi’s earnings are miraculous; in both London and Vienna, teaching the piano was normally ‘limited to the winter season and was a highly undependable source of income’.93 Clementi did, however, charge more than Mozart for lessons.94 On the Continent, keyboard instrument teachers were sometimes ‘so poorly paid, that they were often forced to earn extra income by selling lottery tickets or painting portraits’.95 The Italian composer and keyboard instrument teacher Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802), ‘whose music Mozart quoted admiringly in his opera Don Giovanni, traveled to Russia at the request of Empress Catherine II and was rewarded with his own village in the Ukraine. But that was unusual.’96

Haydn’s surprise at the amount of money that could be earned as a piano teacher in England’s capital city is indicative of the feelings of many Continental virtuosi who found London to be a veritable goldmine of financial opportunity. In 1791—the same year in which Worgan’s piano was placed in the Macarthurs’ thatched wattle-and-daub hut—Gebhardt Friedrich August Wendeborn wrote: ‘Many foreign singers, fidlers, and dancers, are extravagantly paid: and, if they are the least frugal, they are enabled to retire to their own country, where they may live in affluence, enriched by English money.’97

Perhaps, with Latin and Greek on the educational curriculum, the Reverend Kingdon decided that there was not enough time (or need) to provide an education in music for his daughters, Bridget and Elizabeth. Eighteenth-century conduct books commonly portray the ‘genteel’ daughters of wealthy merchants (whose financial situation was unstable) as being encouraged ‘to learn music only as a supplementary accomplishment, after acquiring useful needlework skills’.98 It appears that the Reverend Kingdon—who was not a wealthy merchant, and whose financial situation was fragile—regarded Latin and Greek as more desirable skills for his daughters to learn than either music or needlework.

92 Ibid., p. 64.
94 See ibid., p. 95.
95 Isacoff, A Natural History of the Piano, p. 67.
96 Ibid., p. 67.
Chapter 10

George Worgan Gives His Piano to Elizabeth Macarthur

The date of Elizabeth Macarthur’s written remark that Worgan ‘kindly means to leave it [the piano] with me’⁹⁹ (7 March 1791) and the date of Worgan’s departure from Sydney Cove for Plymouth aboard the Dutch ship Waaksamheyd (‘Wakefulness’) (Wednesday, 27 April 1791) suggest that Worgan informed Elizabeth of his intention to give his piano to her as a gift at least seven weeks prior to his embarking upon his return journey to England.

‘Anthropologists have long recognized the role of gift-giving in cultures to create ties of reciprocal obligations’,¹⁰⁰ and yet no evidence suggests that Worgan had any ulterior motives for leaving his elegant and valuable instrument with Elizabeth Macarthur. During the late eighteenth century, networks of gift exchange commonly existed amongst aristocratic women.

[Ex]changes of gifts often functioned as an informal system of credit, by which purchases could be made on behalf of one individual in the knowledge that eventually the roles of giver and recipient would be reversed.¹⁰¹

Gifts exchanged between women of ‘quality’ often comprised small items, often decorative or combining decorative with more utilitarian functions’. Such gifts ‘were thus outside the category of large, dynastic purchases with which men were most involved’. Gifts sometimes ‘included small furnishings such as mirrors, small tables or screens, and books’.¹⁰²

That George Worgan not only gave his piano away, but also gave the instrument to a woman who was not a member of his family and with whom he had no romantic attachment ‘complicates any attempt to distinguish between [late eighteenth-century] … personal or emotional meanings of consumer goods and their significance as indicators of status or fashion’.¹⁰³

Perhaps for Worgan the piano had been too much of a nuisance on the trip from Portsmouth to Sydney Cove, and he did not want to be encumbered with the responsibility of caring for the instrument during his homeward voyage.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Egan, Buried Alive, p. 229.
¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 137.
¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 136–7.
¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 139.
Perhaps the journey had proved to be too harmful a context for the maintenance of the instrument’s physical integrity; maybe some damage to the fabric of the instrument had occurred during the journey, and Worgan was not keen to risk further damage being done.

Perhaps the soundboard of the instrument had already split because of temperature and humidity extremes, and Worgan felt that the instrument had been damaged to such an extent that not only was it beyond repair, but also it was not worth taking back to England. (Several cracks in the soundboard and bridge of Worgan’s 1780/86 Beck square piano have been crudely repaired.104 Because of climatic extremes both at sea and at Sydney Cove, it is possible that these cracks had appeared prior to 7 March 1791—that is, prior to the date of Elizabeth’s letter in which she remarks that Worgan ‘kindly means to leave it with me’.)105

Perhaps there was no room for the instrument on board the tightly packed Waaksamheyd106 (the ship was ‘totally destitute of every accommodation and every good quality which could promise to render so long a voyage either comfortable or expeditious’).107

Perhaps altruistically, Worgan felt that the future cultural development of the new colony would be aided by the presence of his piano. The successful establishment of British cultural ideals in New South Wales was considered of utmost importance in the minds of the educated early arrivals.108

Worgan’s decision to give his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur may also have arisen from his character as an officer—albeit a warrant officer. ‘The basic requirement was that an officer had to be a gentleman … Gentlemen might not be of high birth, they might lack land, they might even be without money, but they needed some education, courage, generosity, unselfishness and, most importantly, a high sense of honour.’109

Perhaps it was Worgan’s ‘generosity, unselfishness and … high sense of honour’110 that precluded him from selling (rather than giving) his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur. He may also have thought twice about selling the instrument to Elizabeth because of the influence of the context within which he found himself:

**Botany Bay was designed as a self-sufficient economy in which money would not be required. Convicts would labour to feed and clothe their**

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104 See ‘Soundboard: Condition’ and ‘Bridge: Condition’, in Appendix A, Volume 2 of this publication.
110 Ibid., p. 104.
gaolers and themselves, they would then be emancipated and would move on to small grants of land where they would be able to survive with minimal government assistance. New South Wales was provided with no treasury, a surprising fact at a time and in a country where ‘money beareth all the stroke’.111

Perhaps Worgan did not regard his piano as representing a particularly expensive outlay, and so did not consider it necessary to recover his expenditure by selling the instrument to Elizabeth Macarthur.

Perhaps Worgan, as a music educator, was loath to take his piano from a student who had, within a short period, exhibited both aptitude and rapid development.

Perhaps Worgan suspected that by 1791 his piano may have become somewhat old-fashioned, and was embarrassed to take the instrument back to London (even though he had had no opportunity since leaving England to have seen a more ‘modern’ instrument with which to compare his own). Regardless, had the instrument returned to London with Worgan, it would doubtless have generated much interest because of its association with the antipodean colony.

One wonders how often George Worgan played his piano for the Macarthurs’ delight as it sat in their thatched wattle-and-daub hut. He may have visited the Macarthurs specifically to keep the instrument in tune (but not played it for them once the tuning had been accomplished). He may also have tuned the piano just prior to his playing it. He may also have tuned the instrument just prior to giving Elizabeth Macarthur a piano lesson.

‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’

If we assume that Elizabeth began piano lessons for the first time in her life once she had moved into her new hut in January 1791, her letter to Bridget Kingdon dated Monday, 7 March 1791, attests to a remarkable pianistic progress.

Elizabeth states: ‘I am told however I have done wonders in being able to play off “God Save the King” and “Foot’s Minuet”, besides that of reading the notes with great facility.’112

From a purely educational perspective, it seems odd that Worgan selected ‘God Save the King’ as part of the repertoire that he used to teach Elizabeth. Amongst the better contemporaneous teaching works available in London at the time were the two volumes of A Set of Progressive Lessons (1780–85) by Samuel Arnold, and the

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112 Quoted in Egan, Buried Alive, p. 229.
first part of James Hook’s (1746–1827) *Guida di musica* (ca 1785), containing ‘twenty-four progressive lessons’. ‘God Save the King’ has no unique or special pedagogical qualities that make it particularly relevant to the development of piano technique. Perhaps it was the melodic simplicity of the anthem that caused Worgan to select it as a teaching piece. Writing to George Saville Carey, Marquis of Halifax (1743–1807), on Saturday, 13 June 1795, Dr W. Harrington of Bath (d. 1757), Somerset, voiced his enthusiasm for the lack of complexity in ‘God Save the King’:

[N]o laureat or composer has furnished the world with any production more complimentary or more popular: which must ever be the consequence of concise elegance and natural simplicity, both of which are too much neglected and despised in the present fantastic, unaffected compositions, more adapted to the swift hand than the feeling heart. But I am broaching old heresy, and may be brought to the stake: so piano, piano, for the executioners of music are powerful and many.114

As both Australia’s first piano teacher and Elizabeth Macarthur’s good friend, Worgan may have used ‘God Save the King’ from a desire to reinforce a shared cultural tradition. Perhaps the song reminded them both of the ‘global power of a puissant England’—an England that Worgan and Elizabeth would have unhesitatingly regarded as being morally and culturally superior to all others, the ‘divinely ordained inheritor of the imperial and civilizational traditions of … Europe’. After all, Worgan had ‘judged [the] indigenous people [of Sydney Cove] as being largely un-musical because of their lack of sustained interest in European music’.117

The drum was beat before them, which terrified them exceedingly, they liked the fife, which pleased them for 2 or 3 minutes. Indeed music of any kind does not attract their attention, long together, they will sometimes jump to it, and make a grunting noise by way of keeping time to the tune.118

As the British Empire expanded across the globe,

a peculiar illogicality seized the British: we rule more of the world than any other nation, therefore we must be superior to any other nation. In

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114 Quoted in R. Clark, *An Account of the National Anthem Entitled God Save the King! With Authorities Taken from Sion College Library, the Ancient Records of the Merchant Tailors’ Company, the Old Cheque-Book of His Majesty’s Chapel, &c. &c. &c. Selected, Edited, and Arranged by Richard Clark, Gentleman of His Majesty’s Chapels Royal, Deputy Vicar Choral of St. Paul’s Cathedral, and of Westminster Abbey, and Secretary to the Glee Club* (London: W. Wright, 1822), p. 11.
116 Ibid., p. 2.
fact, of course, it was technological advance and entrepreneurial flair which gave birth to the empire. But a belief in some moral preeminence offered reassurance to the anxious imperialist.\footnote{Paxman, \textit{Empire}, pp. 9–10.}

Britain’s military and commercial successes, and the expansion of its territorial power, produced a triumphalist mentality, and ‘God Save the King’ was immutably linked with patriotism and triumphalism. A mere five months after Elizabeth Macarthur had penned her letter to Bridget Kingdon on Monday, 7 March 1791, a ‘pantomimical interlude’ was presented at the new Street Theatre in Birmingham, on Monday, 22 August 1791. As a forerunner to the cinema newsreel genre, this entertainment was advertised as a pantomime exhibition called Botany Bay; or, A Trip to Port Jackson, with entire new scenery, painted for the occasion … in which will be introduced a picturesque view of the coast of New South Wales … arrival of the Grand Fleet, landing, reception, and employment of the convicts. To conclude with the ceremony of planting the British flag, on taking possession of a new discovered island, with a dance by the convicts, and the grand chorus of ‘God Save the King’.\footnote{See Black, \textit{Culture in Eighteenth-Century England}, p. 231.}

Furthermore, the notion of England’s triumphant supremacy extended into matters spiritual, for there was a ‘tradition prevalent in eighteenth-century English sermons and theological writings that equated England with [the new] Israel’.\footnote{Pelkey, ‘Music, Memory, and the People in Selected British Periodicals of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries’, p. 69.} ‘As for the opiate of global mastery, nineteenth- and … twentieth-century Britain would remain hopelessly hooked’;\footnote{S. Schama, \textit{A History of Britain: The British Wars 1603–1776} (London: BBC, 2001), p. 524.} Britain was ‘gluttonous of universal dominion’.\footnote{West, \textit{Black Lamb and Grey Falcon}, p. 747.} The splendid magnitude of England’s history, with its ‘immense Valhalla of kings and heroes … its Elizabethan and Victorian ages, its thousands of incidents which come up in the mind, simple as icons and yet miraculous [suggested] that what [Britain had] … been, it [could] … be again … and forever’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 56.}

How apt it was that stirring renditions of the English national anthem should be heard in Birmingham during the period when a more gentle (but no less heartfelt) version for piano was played within the context of a newly established English colony on the far side of the world. At Sydney Cove, “‘God Save the King’ celebrated security in a very insecure situation, imperial values in a fledgling colony’;\footnote{See Woodfield, \textit{Music of the Raj}, p. 139.}
the intransigent majesty of empire. George Worgan’s pedagogical efforts, and his use of ‘God Save the King’ within an educational context, reflect the sentiments expressed by the late eighteenth-century Irish poet Anna Maria Edwards:

By flattery’s art, most sovereigns are ruled;
By patriot’s art, the people are cajoled.
Strip ancient heroes of their art, and you,
Will strip them of their fame and laurels too.
Since thus it sways us, let us use our art
‘To mend the morals, and improve the heart;’
We too may use it in our country’s cause;
To make her prosper, well deserves applause:
Nature has done her part, let art appear,
And you may raise a new Arcadia here.126

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ‘Foot’s (Foote’s) Minuet’127 was often used within the context of instrumental tuition. The work was commonly associated with beginners and/or with players of limited technical skill. For example, Francis Venables Vernon, in his Voyages and Travels of a Sea Officer,128 makes the following observation:

[The] region directly below the after part of the lower gun deck, is inhabited by the midshipmen and surgeons mates, who, in general, form as motley a crew, as maybe supposed to arise from difference of countries, differences of age and descent, and difference of education. Their several cabins are in the centre, amidships; and separated from each other by partitions of canvas or hammocks, thereby facilitating the communication of discordant notes, arising from the disputes that frequently happen. Or if the region is musically inclined, to the melodious tones of beginners (for they seldom attain Handel’s perfection) attempting on a flute, fife, or violin, the tunes of Nancy Dawson or Foot’s minuet.129

The Gentleman’s Magazine attests to the early nineteenth-century popularity of ‘Foot’s Minuet’. A letter written to the magazine dated Sunday, 23 October 1808, contains the following complaint:

Much as I am a lover of musick, still i think every kind relating to the church ought, if not sacred, at least to be conducted with some propriety.

127 ‘Foot’s Minuet’ may have been named after the playwright and actor Samuel Foote (1720–77).
129 Ibid., p. 7.
It is very singular that the chimes in many country churches play what is called ‘Foot’s Minuet’ … to hear church chimes play a dance, fit only for the amusement of children, is truly ridiculous.\textsuperscript{130}

‘Foot’s Minuet’ (Plate 70) appears in many eighteenth and early nineteenth-century instrument tutorials and music compilations\textsuperscript{131} (occasionally with subtle ornamental alterations to the melodic line).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Plate_70_Foot's_Minuet.png}
\caption{Plate 70 ‘Foot’s Minuet’.

Source: Transposed by the author from P. J. Perry, \textit{Bass Recorder Solos No. 7: Traditional Melodies of the British Isles, with Variations} (n.d.), p. 5.}
\end{figure}

Because of the preponderance of smaller note values in ‘Foot’s Minuet’ (crotchets/quarter notes and quavers/eighth notes, rather than minims/half notes and crotchets), the tempo of the work is moderate, moving in three beats per bar (rather than in one pulse per bar).

An outstanding example of the moderate minuet occurs in the finale of the first act of Mozart’s \textit{Don Giovanni}, for which there exists a metronomization of … [crotchet/quarter note] = 96 suggested by Wenzel Tomášek [1774–1850]. He ‘remembered’ the tempo from hearing many performances by the musicians of the Prague Opera, who were trained by Mozart himself.\textsuperscript{132}

That George Worgan selected a moderate-tempo minuet for Elizabeth Macarthur to learn makes pedagogical sense; within a performative context, the work would not have overly taxed her emerging reading skills or technique.

The historian of music education Martina Schneider observes that during the late eighteenth century, most music composed for the use of children ‘had

\textsuperscript{131} For a list of selected eighteenth and early nineteenth-century music publications within which ‘Foot’s Minuet’ may be found, see Appendix G, Volume 2 of this publication.
genre titles such as sonatina and minuet, and served pedagogical purposes’. 133 That Worgan gave Macarthur a minuet commonly associated with instrumental pedagogy—that is, ‘Foot’s Minuet’—suggests that she began her lessons with no prior piano-playing skills.

Perhaps the rudiments of piano playing and musicianship, as described by Margaret Fowke in 1803, 134 did not immediately become a part of Elizabeth’s technical skills: Elizabeth makes no mention of being able, for example, to finger scalic passagework, broken chords or arpeggios, nor does she indicate that she has any understanding of basic harmony. Perhaps she learned ‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’ through imitation (her familiarity with ‘God Save the King’ and/or perhaps an innately ‘good ear’ may have functioned as aids to learning).

That she could read ‘the notes with great facility’ does not necessarily mean that she could play accurately in response to a spontaneous reading of either a single or a multi-voiced score. Perhaps she is referring only to her ability—in the absence of a performative context—to identify note names accurately. Elizabeth Macarthur may also sometimes have played the piano by ear. Some pianists never ‘learned to read notes very successfully, despite years of lessons, just as some [students] never got very adept at reading in French or spelling in English’.135

Unfortunately, the scores that Elizabeth Macarthur used are lost, so we will never know what technical and intellectual demands were made upon her by the particular settings of ‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’ that she learned. Perhaps the versions she used comprised only a single-note melodic line, with no supporting accompaniment or harmonic texture. (As an educated woman, Elizabeth would have been aware of the rhythmic, dynamic and phrasing characteristics of a minuet, and this knowledge would have assisted her in learning the melodic line of ‘Foot’s Minuet’.) Or perhaps she was a precocious student, and played settings of ‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’ in two or more parts. The scores Elizabeth used would have been either published printed versions or handwritten copies.

Plate 71 shows the kind of four-part harmonisation of ‘God Save the King’ that a competent late eighteenth-century English amateur pianist may have been expected to play. This arrangement was made by the English composer of church music and organist Jonathan Battishill. Battishill was renowned both for his performances of Händel’s keyboard works and for his extempore playing. He had an exceptional memory, which was revealed in a concert where he

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133 M. Schneider, *Studien zu den Klavierschulen im deutschsprachigen Raum von 1885 bis 1900* [Studies on the Piano Schools in German-Speaking Countries from 1885 to 1900], Unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Vienna, 1980), p. 52.
played and sang, from memory, several airs from Samuel Arnold’s oratorio ‘The Prodigal Son’, having not heard the work for 20 years.\footnote{See P. W. Jones, ‘Battishill, Jonathan’, in S. Sadie (ed.), \textit{The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians} (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 2, p. 293.} It is unlikely that, in 1791, Elizabeth Macarthur would have been able to surmount the technical challenges posed by this setting.

\textbf{Plate 71} ‘God Save the King. Harmonized by Jon\textsuperscript{tn}n Battishill Org\textsuperscript{1} of S\textsuperscript{r} Pauls.’ Battishill may have composed this setting during the 1780s.

Source: R. Clark, \textit{An Account of the National Anthem Entitled God Save the King! With Authorities Taken from Sion College Library, the Ancient Records of the Merchant Tailors’ Company, the Old Cheque-Book of His Majesty’s Chapel, &c. &c. &c. Selected, Edited, and Arranged by Richard Clark, Gentleman of His Majesty’s Chapels Royal, Deputy Vicar Choral of St. Paul’s Cathedral, and of Westminster Abbey, and Secretary to the Glee Club} (London: W. Wright, 1822), between pp. 30 and 31. Geoffrey Lancaster Collection, Perth.
Perhaps George Worgan arranged ‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’ himself, in order to cater to Elizabeth’s specific educational needs (if so, Elizabeth’s music scores would have been written by hand). With the musical training that George’s father had undoubtedly provided for him, his familiarity with, and the commonly encountered harmonic simplicity of, ‘God Save the King’ and ‘Foot’s Minuet’ would have made the task of pedagogically oriented arrangement relatively easy.

Elizabeth Macarthur, the Piano Student

Elizabeth’s rapid progress suggests that she had an innate musical intelligence or that George Worgan was a skilled teacher—or both. Elizabeth’s smug remarks concerning the rapid development of her musical abilities are predicated on ‘I am told’. 137 Exactly who, or how many people, made encouraging remarks to Elizabeth in relation to her burgeoning musical skills is unclear. It is reasonable to assume that the prime flatterer may have been George Worgan. Certainly, in the early days of the settlement, ‘the practice of any musical talent, however limited, must have been appreciated’. 138

Even if Elizabeth Macarthur’s playing was at best deficient, Worgan—as a polite, kindly and amiable man—would doubtless have sought to affirm his student; faced with what may have been Elizabeth’s lack of musicality (we will never know), his remark could have been ironic. The humane and intrepid Worgan did, after all, have ‘a sharp eye and a sense of humour’. 139

It is not known exactly when Worgan began to teach Elizabeth the piano. She may even have begun piano lessons quite soon after her first meeting with him, close to her arrival at Sydney Cove on Monday, 28 June 1790.

If Worgan began teaching Elizabeth shortly after they first met, she would have needed access to his piano not only for lessons, but also for practice. At this time, presumably, Worgan’s piano was located at his residence.

The pressure of social norms would have made it unlikely that Elizabeth visited Worgan’s residence alone for piano lessons and practice. Such a context would have encouraged scandal-mongering and gossip. No documentary evidence suggests that Elizabeth was in any way associated with socially questionable behaviour.

If Elizabeth’s piano lessons began just after her first meeting with Worgan, and his piano was located at his residence, exactly how Elizabeth managed to practise

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137 Quoted in Egan, Buried Alive, p. 229.
139 Egan, Buried Alive, p. xiv.
when Worgan was present without offending social sensibilities remains a mystery. (She may have waited until Worgan was absent from his home, keeping the constant company of her servant.)

If, on the other hand, Elizabeth’s piano tuition began after Worgan had moved his piano into her hut—that is, between January 1791 (‘in January we were remov’d into a more convenient House’)\(^{140}\) and Monday, 7 March 1791 (the date of Elizabeth’s letter to Bridget Kingdon in which she mentions that Worgan’s piano is situated in her home)—it would have been much easier for her to live out society’s behavioural expectations without the threat of scandal. Worgan may have moved his piano into Elizabeth’s home in order to create a context within which she might practise whenever she wished.

Regardless of when and where Elizabeth learnt and practised the piano, she reveals herself to be a tenacious student. Having the time to develop as a pianist through ardent, self-disciplined application suggests that Elizabeth ‘was an example of the gradually improving social life of Sydney—a lady who had no occupation other than being a lady’\(^{141}\).

**Elizabeth Macarthur, the Socialite**

Elizabeth’s social activities included luncheons at Government House. This is implied by the comments of Mary Ann Parker, the wife of John Parker, the captain of the *Gorgon*, which dropped anchor at Sydney Cove on Wednesday, 21 September 1791. Mary recalls:

> When we went on shore we were all admiration at the natural beauties … Our amusements here, although neither numerous nor expensive, were to me perfectly novel and agreeable: the fatherly attention of the good Governor upon all occasions with the friendly politeness of the officers rendered our séjour perfectly happy and comfortable … Our parties generally consisted of … the ladies who reside at the colony … the Governor’s House … is a small convenient building placed upon a gentle ascent and surrounded by … a couple of acres of garden ground.\(^{142}\)

As one of the ‘ladies who reside at the colony’, Elizabeth Macarthur would have socialised with Governor Phillip at Government House. Her ‘good looks and ladylike manners helped make her popular’.\(^{143}\)

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143 de Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore*, p. 62. An undated watercolour portrait reputedly of Elizabeth Macarthur by an unknown artist, on ivory, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DL Pa 8; Digital order no. a2357001).
Upon those occasions when the established etiquette rendered it necessary that [Governor Phillip] ... should invite the officers of the colony and their wives to dine with him at Government House, he usually informed his guests that they must bring their own bread as he had none to spare. It is told how he jokingly wrote upon the invitations to Captain and Mrs. Macarthur, 'There will always be a roll for Mrs. Macarthur.'

It appears that Elizabeth Macarthur was ‘so popular with Governor Phillip she was the only guest who did not have to bring her own bread, despite the fear of a famine’. In fact, Governor Phillip took such an interest in Elizabeth’s wellbeing that, from early 1791, he daily sent her fruit ‘of some little thing or other’.

Rose Hill

In June 1791—five months after the Macarthurs had moved into their thatched wattle-and-daub hut—John Macarthur, accompanied by Elizabeth, was posted to Rose Hill, 24 kilometres west of Sydney. ‘Rose Hill … was rapidly displacing Sydney as the real centre of the colony.’ Governor Phillip claimed that he would have chosen the site for his infant colony if he had known about it earlier, preferring it to Sydney Cove. In 1791, two-thirds of the colony’s population was living at Rose Hill. Governor Phillip established [the] … settlement at Rose Hill in November 1788. Nearby, he laid out the township [eventually known as] … Parramatta around a main street, 205 feet [62.5 metres] wide and a mile [1.6 kilometres] long, ‘commencing near the landing place, and running in a direction west, to the foot of the rising ground named Rose Hill, where a house was built for the governor’.

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144 Lee, *The Coming of the British to Australia 1788–1829*.
146 See King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 18.
149 Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 34.
On Thursday, 2 June 1791, Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench observed that the name ‘Rose Hill’ had been ‘changed, by order of the Governor, to that of Parra-mât-ta, the native name of it’. This was a ‘reference to the Indigenous word for the eels that thrived in the shallow estuary’ at the head of the harbour. In 1790—the year before John Macarthur was posted to Parramatta—a second residence in the colony for the governor was built there.

Being on a river, Parramatta was easily accessible via a half-day boat journey from Sydney Cove. It is not known if Worgan’s piano remained in the Macarthurs’ wattle-and-daub hut at Sydney Cove or if Elizabeth took the instrument to Rose Hill.

There can be little doubt that Elizabeth Macarthur would have missed George Worgan. By the time the Macarthurs had departed from Sydney for Rose Hill, Worgan was already three months into his 13-month return voyage to England aboard the hired Dutch vessel Waaksamheyd. In a letter written to Bridget Kingdon in London, dated Monday, 7 March 1791—that is, about seven weeks before Worgan’s departure—Elizabeth wrote: ‘I assure you in losing him, a very considerable branch of our society will be lopp’d off.’

Who Tuned George Worgan’s Piano for Elizabeth Macarthur?

It is not known who tuned Worgan’s piano once it came into Elizabeth Macarthur’s possession. During the late eighteenth century, ‘most young women … were unable or unwilling to acquire this skill’. Tuning Worgan’s piano would have been necessary on a regular basis because of the instabilities of the climate.

Did George Worgan leave a pitchpipe along with the instrument, having given Elizabeth instructions on how to tune? Or did Worgan use the context of piano lessons to teach Elizabeth how to tune? In his East India Vade-Mecum, Captain Thomas Williamson informs us that learning to tune a piano ‘may be effected in the course of a month, or six weeks’. If Elizabeth began taking piano lessons either soon after she first met George Worgan or between January 1791

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153 Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 34.
154 A watercolour drawing entitled View of Governor’s House, Rosehill, by an unknown artist, dated ca 1798, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG SSV1B/3; Digital order no. a928407).
156 Woodfield, Music of the Raj, p. 79.
157 Ibid., p. 78.
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(‘in January we were remov’d into a more convenient house’)158 and the date of Elizabeth’s letter to Bridget Kingdon in which she states ‘our new house is ornamented with a pianoforte of Mr. Worgan’s’159 (7 March 1791), she would have had more than Williamson’s requisite ‘month’ or ‘six weeks’ to learn how to tune prior to Worgan’s departure from Sydney Cove on Wednesday, 27 April 1791.

About 1784, Margaret Fowke, writing in Calcutta to ‘Mrs Kitchen’, describes a situation that may well have been experienced by Elizabeth Macarthur: ‘the fear of being entirely without the use of my [piano] … induced me to attempt to learn the unpleasing but useful task of tuning it. I have made, by taking short and frequent lessons, a good progress.’160 In relation to tuning, Worgan’s piano, ‘an icon of imperial identity … [can] be seen as representing the colonial endeavour itself, problematic, but worth the effort’.161

Was there a convict who possessed the skills necessary to tune Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano? ‘The anonymous individual placed on government rations in 1800 to maintain musical instruments was probably there to service the military, but in his spare time could have worked for the general public’—including Elizabeth Macarthur.162

Perhaps one of the regimental band musicians tuned Elizabeth’s piano; in the absence of a piano tuner, this would not have been unusual. During the early 1850s in Wellington, New Zealand, for example, Charlotte Godley (1821–1907), wife of John Robert Godley (1814–61), the founder of Canterbury, took delivery of a piano. Writing to her mother, Charlotte recounts: ‘allured from my writing by the delights of music, as my pianoforte arrived, and though out of tune, I could not resist playing one thing after another all night. The band sergeant, however, can tune pretty well, and Mr Buckley has undertaken to send him to us.’163

Another example of regimental band musicians being engaged to tune pianos is provided by Anne Maria Bourke (1806–84), the daughter of newly appointed NSW Governor Sir Richard Bourke (1777–1855).164 In a diary entry dated

161 Ibid., p. 82.
Thursday, 8 December 1831. Anne writes: ‘My piano forte is very well thank you, the master of the 17th Band is now tuning it.’ It could be construed that Anne is referring to part of an ongoing tuning regime.

Given that Elizabeth Macarthur had access to regimental resources similar to those available to Charlotte Godley and Anne Bourke, it is reasonable to assume that a regimental band musician may either on occasion or recurrently have tuned Worgan’s piano.

Nineteen years passed between Worgan’s departure for England (on Wednesday, 27 April 1791) and Elizabeth’s acquisition of a ‘new’ piano (on Thursday, 4 January 1810) at Thomas Laycock’s estate auction. During these years, one presumes that Elizabeth had Worgan’s piano tuned, if not on a regular basis, at least intermittently. Alternatively, Elizabeth may have allowed the instrument to sit untuned. It appears that, even several decades later, it was not unusual to encounter an untuned piano. For example, in 1845—that is, 54 years after Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur, and four years after her death—the grazier John Everett wrote: ‘on each side of us, and far beyond us, petticoats are to be found, and pianos … considerably out of tune.’

Professional Piano Tuners in Sydney

During the eighteenth century, owners of keyboard instruments were commonly expected to tune their own instruments (or to have someone on their premises who could tune for them). During the early nineteenth century, professional piano tuners began to pay house calls. What lies behind the establishment of this specialist profession? Apart from the piano’s popularity, a great part of the answer to this question lies

with the [piano’s] development … As the tension of the strings increased, as the fundamentals of the [sound] … grew louder in relation to the upper harmonics, and as tuning pins [wrest-pins] became trickier to fix in place, it became harder both to hear whether strings were in tune and to achieve a result that would hold.

The first piano-tuning advertisement published in a Sydney newspaper appears in 1818—that is, 27 years after Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur—in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 31 January:


166 Quoted in Clarke and Spender, *Life Lines*, p. 75.


Robert McIntosh, who taught music at his house in York Street, announced that instruments including the pianoforte, would be ‘tuned and put in order when they require it’. Almost six years later—that is, 32 years after Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur—the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 23 October 1823 published an advertisement for ‘Mr. John Scarr, lately arrived in the colony … [on the] brig Francis’. Scarr declared that ‘from professional skill and experience, J. S. will undertake to tune piano-fortes, on moderate terms … Address 89, Pitt-street’.

The next piano-tuning advertisement published in the Sydney press appears a year later, in 1824, in *The Australian* of Thursday, 28 October: Robert Campbell, at ‘93 George-Street’, announced his recent arrival from London, and his intention to open a ‘spacious warehouse, on Monday the 1st of November, with the most extensive and elegant assortment of musical instruments and printed music ever imported into this colony’.

By way of conclusion, Campbell states: ‘N.B. Piano fortes tuned.’

Robert Campbell’s ‘spacious warehouse’ was Australia’s first music shop.

A portrait of the merchant, pastoralist and politician Robert Campbell (1796–1846), painted in 1834 by Charles Rodius (1802–60), depicts him seated near what may be either an upright grand piano or a cabinet piano (Rodius’ artwork is not precise enough to allow for a definite identification of instrument type). It must have been relatively easy for Campbell, as a wealthy businessman, to acquire such an expensive and uncommon instrument.

The advantage that … motivated [the design of the upright grand piano] … was that the vertical disposition of the soundboard gave a much better sound projection [than the horizontal grand piano]—in short … [the instrument] was bolder and perceptibly louder … When you sat down to play[,] the instrument … towered above you [2.1 metres was the norm] … Importantly, in the whole construction [of upright grand and cabinet pianos,] there was no gap or opening needed

170 Ibid.
172 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Upright grand pianos were approximately 10 per cent more expensive than the best horizontal grand pianos.
for the hammers to reach the strings (as in grand or square pianos) …

[Upright grand and cabinet pianos were] therefore potentially much stronger [structurally] than any previous style of piano.\textsuperscript{177}

As a result, the tuning stability was greatly improved; as early as 1811, William ‘Southwell’s patent … states that his’ upright cabinet piano was ‘constructed so as to prevent its being so frequently out of tune as pianofortes now generally are’.\textsuperscript{178}

In the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} of Thursday, 17 March 1825, James Pearson, ‘teacher of the piano forte, and professor of thorough bass’,\textsuperscript{179} lists his piano-tuning charges as:

1. 10s for a square piano
2. 12s 6d for a cabinet piano (a form of upright piano)
3. 15s for a grand piano.\textsuperscript{180}

The fact that the first advertisement for piano tuning published in a Sydney newspaper occurs 27 years after George Worgan gave his piano to Elizabeth Macarthur does not necessarily indicate that there was no-one in the colony during this period capable of tuning Elizabeth’s instrument. What does become clear from Sydney’s early nineteenth-century newspaper advertisements, however, is that during the 1820s and 1830s there were enough pianos in the colony to provide commercial work for professional piano tuners.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{177} Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, pp. 96–7.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Cole, \textit{The Pianoforte in the Classical Era}, p. 271. Patent No. 3419, registered Tuesday, 26 March 1811.
\item \textsuperscript{179} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, 17 March 1825, Vol. 23 [Trove, National Library of Australia], p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{180} See ibid.
\end{itemize}
Chapter 11

Why Did George Worgan Return to England?

Despite having formed a deep friendship with Elizabeth Macarthur, and having become a well-regarded member of colonial society, George Worgan decided to return to England after staying three years (a normal tour of duty) at Sydney Cove. He departed on Wednesday, 27 April 1791. What prompted his decision to leave? Could it have been a response to the death of his father, who died on Friday, 20 August 1790?

If a letter informing George of his father’s death had been sent to Sydney Cove immediately following Dr John Worgan’s demise, it may have taken approximately five to eight months to find its way into George’s hands; it could have arrived at Sydney Cove any time between January and April 1791. During the 1790s,

the cost of postage was determined by the distance and the letter size and was often paid by the recipient; with letters of more than one sheet being charged twice the rate, it is no wonder that for many [in the colony] …

the cost of getting extensive news from home was exorbitant.1

No ships arrived at Sydney Cove between January and April 1791. When George Worgan departed from Sydney Cove on 27 April 1791, he cannot have known that his father had died, so the death of his father was not a catalyst for his leaving the colony.

Perhaps George had tired of the desperate conditions being experienced by the colony or of the climatic extremes, both of which had been unrelenting aspects of his antipodean tour of duty. His feelings may have been similar to those of First Lieutenant Ralph Clark, who, on Sunday, 10 February 1788, after only 15 days at Sydney Cove, wrote: ‘I could not stay longer than the three years for the world.’2 Clark’s statement strongly suggests that—as with George Worgan—returning to England had always been his intention. Most of the official members of the First Fleet viewed the expedition to Botany Bay as a short-term assignment, in many cases driven by the necessity of finding employment after...

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1 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. xxix.

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the American War of Independence. The surrender of Lord Charles Cornwallis (1738–1805) to the American forces on Wednesday, 17 October 1781 ‘marked the virtual end of the war in America’.

Nine years after Worgan departed Sydney Cove, he was ‘adjudged unfit for active service’. Perhaps his return to England was a response to the reasons for this evaluation beginning to exert their influence upon him. Perhaps he was homesick. Or perhaps there was simply no incentive to stay. Unlike the marines, George Worgan, as a member of the Sirius’s company, was not offered the opportunity to stay. In other British colonies, grants of land had been provided to officers who wished to remain and settle. No arrangements of this type had been made in New South Wales, perhaps because it was assumed that officers would see their service there simply as a term to be served and would not want to settle in a convict colony so far from England.

These all may have been the realities that influenced George Worgan’s decision to leave for England. At the most mundane level, he may have had little choice in the matter, being sent back to England with ‘the officers and ship’s company of the Sirius … for the pro forma court-martial [of the captain] which always followed the loss of a British naval vessel’—in this instance, Captain Hunter, for the loss of the Sirius at Norfolk Island 13 months earlier.

George Worgan’s Return Journey to England

Worgan’s journey back to Portsmouth would have been an intensely uncomfortable one. Prior to the ship’s departure, Captain Lieutenant Watkin Tench observed that the Waaksamheyd was ‘totally destitute of every accommodation and every good quality which could promise to render so long a voyage either comfortable or expeditious’. Considerable time had elapsed within which Tench could have formed his opinion; the Waaksamheyd had been anchored at Sydney Cove for more than three months, having arrived from Batavia (Jakarta) in December 1790.

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3 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
4 Swan, To Botany Bay, p. 77.
6 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
7 Egan, Buried Alive, p. 45.
8 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 336.
Upon her departure on Wednesday, 27 April 1791, the *Waaksamheyd* was given an official send-off. Governor Phillip and ‘the marine officers were rowed alongside her as far as the Heads, and as she left Port Jackson she saluted the colony with nine guns’. That Governor Phillip was personally involved in the send-off is not surprising; he held Captain Hunter and the officers of the *Sirius*—all of whom were returning to England on the *Waaksamheyd*—in high regard. The manuscript of his journal was also on board.

John Easty, a marine from the First Fleet ship *Scarborough*, movingly recorded the departure in his journal:

> On Sunday the 27 att day light she waid anchor and ran down the harbour she was again cheard by the marines which was returnd by the ships company and thar was two partys of men saparated which had spent 4 years together in the greatest love and frindship as ever men did in such a distant part of the globe … Both by officers and men she was than accompaneyd down the harbour by the Governer and all the marine officers which when thay parted she saluted them with 9 guns which was the last honour as could be confirrd on them and on Munday att 6 in the morning she went to sea and may god send them a good voige.

Commonly, the voyage of the *Waaksamheyd* is regarded as a mere footnote to the epic story of the First Fleet; in navigational terms, however, it represented a significant achievement.

The Eastern Pacific was at that time largely unknown to the British. To the published charts of the area that contained large and ominous empty spaces, Captain Hunter added relevant information from the accounts of earlier voyages by Captains [Philip] Carteret and [Louis Antoine de] Bougainville, and more recent journeys by Lieutenants [John] Shortland (1788) and [Henry Lidgbird] Ball (1790). Using his knowledge of the prevailing winds and his assessment of the limitations of the *Waaksamheyd*, Hunter chose an unconventional route that would pass north of New Guinea, descending … through the northern parts of what is now the Indonesian archipelago [to Batavia].

George Worgan’s travelling companions were the crew of the *Sirius*, which had been wrecked on a reef about 750 metres from the shore of Sydney Bay, Norfolk Island, on Friday, 19 March 1790. The *Waaksamheyd* ‘wove a delicate path in

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13 See Groom, *First Fleet Artist*, p. 39.
clear warm seas among richly vegetated islands and coral reefs’. Between New Britain—the largest island in the Bismarck Archipelago of Papua New Guinea—and New Ireland—another large island in the archipelago—‘in May 1791, the officers and crew watched in awe as they sailed past an active volcano, probably Tavurvur [near Rabaul], which was hurling columns of black smoke high into the air’.15

Perhaps the most curious sighting of all occurred as the Waaksamheyd neared Java on [Saturday] 24 September 1791. The weather changed suddenly. From over the land, dark clouds streamed towards the Waaksamheyd on a rising wind; whirlpools formed around the ship. The whirlpools turned to mast-high waterspouts, which flitted across the ocean with foaming skirts. The ship fired two shots at the closest waterspouts—to no effect—and the storm passed over without damage …

The Waaksamheyd arrived in Batavia (Jakarta) on [Tuesday] 27 September 1791 and spent nearly a month there, and at the nearby island of Onrust, taking on supplies.16

Twenty-two … sailors had fever when they left Batavia, and three would die by Cape Town.17

On Tuesday, 22 November 1791, the Waaksamheyd reached Cape Town. She had been delayed just outside Cape Town by several days of high winds, and had had to sacrifice most of her anchors in desperate manoeuvres to avoid being driven onto the reef near Robbin’s (now Robben) Island. Because of her lack of anchors she sailed into Cape Town flying the distress signal and was met with an overwhelming response. Three ships of the Royal Navy—the Providence, Assistant and Pitt—sent all their boats, bearing anchors and cables, and boats also arrived from British and American whaling ships in the harbour.18

The Colony’s First Pipe Organ

Four months before George Worgan’s arrival at Cape Town on his return journey to England, an event of musical significance for the colony at Sydney Cove had transpired at the Cape of Good Hope. In 1790, Lieutenant Philip Gidley King had left Norfolk Island for England on the instructions of Governor

15 Ibid.
16 Groom, First Fleet Artist, p. 42.
18 Biography of George Raper 1769–1796.
Phillip King carried ‘dispatches from Phillip advising the British government of the desperate conditions of starvation, sickness, and lack of supplies being experienced in the colony’.19

King returned to Sydney Cove from England in 1791 on board the HMS Gorgon. Whilst at Cape Town, he acquired a pipe organ. King wrote from Cape Town, in a letter to James Sykes, his agent in London:

Cape July 29th 1791

Dear Sir,

I should be much obliged to you to send to the Cape of Good Hope a new chamber organ, with two barrells,20 by the first conveyance & ship it on-board any ship that is certain of touching at this port, & pay the freight of it, as it is a return for one I have got, from the person to whom it is addressed, as underneath

I am
Yours
Sincerely
P. G. King

direct it for Mr Peter De Wit at the Cape of Good Hope & be so good as to write him a line at the time—21

It is not known exactly what King’s ‘Chamber Organ, with Two Barrells’ was.

[W]as it actually a finger and barrel organ as he implies, or did he use the term ‘chamber’ to describe a barrel organ of the size and appearance of a chamber organ? King does not mention if the replacement barrels were to be pinned for secular or sacred tunes; this distinction would have been of less importance if the instrument were primarily a finger organ with barrel attachment.22

20 A barrel organ sounds ‘by means of a rotating barrel or cylinder, powered manually or by clockwork. The notes of the music are represented usually by pins or staples fixed in the barrel. These operate the [playing] mechanism by means of levers when the barrel rotates.’ Burnett, Company of Pianos, p. 200.
21 Quoted in Rushworth, Historic Organs of New South Wales, p. 18.
22 Ibid., p. 18.
During the late eighteenth century, barrel organs ‘were known as singing or playing organs, sometimes as clock organs … They were used in country churches without an organist where they did not have to compete with a large choir’.  

The *Gorgon*, along with its precious musical cargo, arrived at Sydney Cove on Wednesday, 21 September 1791. King probably took the organ to the settlement at Norfolk Island.

On Sundays at 11am, King conducted a religious service in his own house, at which those attending were directed to be ‘clean, orderly, and behave devoutly’. The organ would undoubtedly have been useful for these occasions during the five years that he and his wife remained on Norfolk Island.  

Perhaps George Worgan, on board the *Waaksamheyd* at Cape Town during his return voyage to England, heard that Lieutenant King had departed the cape only about four months earlier with the colony’s first chamber organ. If so, this knowledge may have brought his piano to mind. He may even have had second thoughts in relation to having left the instrument at Sydney Cove with Elizabeth Macarthur; Worgan may have quietly, privately grieved over the absence of his piano.

**George Worgan in England**

After an uneventful five-month passage from Cape Town through the Atlantic, the *Waaksamheyd* arrived on a cold winter’s day at Portsmouth on Sunday, 22 April 1792: ‘In April that year, the snow reached Portsmouth.’ ‘The ship’s company was not permitted to step ashore [for 12 days] until the court-martial of the *Sirius’s* crew (for the loss of the *Sirius*) was completed.’ Lieutenant William Bradley reports:

Friday. 27th [April 1792]. A Court Martial was held on board of [the] … Brunswick to try Cap’ Hunter, the officers & crew of the Sirius for the loss of the … [Sirius]; when it appear’d that every thing was done, that could be done; to save the ship; Cap’ Hunter, the officers & crew were honorably acquitted & removed from the Waakzaamheydt to the Admiral’s ship, where they were paid off the 4th. May 1792.
On Wednesday, 4 July 1792, an article in the periodical *The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer* reported the events:

A court martial assembled on board his Majesty’s ship Brunswick, in Portsmouth Harbour on the 27th April proceeded to enquire into the cause and circumstance of the loss of his majesty ship Sirius, and to try captain Hunter, her commander, her officers, and company, for their conduct on that occasion; and, having heard the evidence, and completed the enquiry, the court is of the opinion that the loss of the Sirius was not, in any respect owing to mismanagement, or a want of proper attention to her safety; but that captain Hunter, her officers, and company, did every thing possible to be done for the preservation of his majesty’s ship Sirius, and for the good of his majesty’s service; and the said captain Hunter the other officers, and company of the said ship are therefore honourably acquitted.  

Having been discharged on Friday, 4 May 1792 from any duties associated with the colony at Sydney Cove, Worgan continued on as a member of the navy’s medical profession. The employment context for some naval surgeons did not necessarily involve shipboard life.

The most prestigious posts for naval surgeons were not at sea, but in naval hospitals, such as Haslar, near Portsmouth. Here they received more generous payment than their seagoing colleagues with, of course, fewer natural hazards to contend with and free board provided. It was not simply a bed of roses, however. Hospitals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, naval ones included, were notoriously filthy and uncaring institutions, often staffed by ill-trained, callous and frequently drunken nurses.

When the Haslar naval hospital was completed in 1761, it was the largest hospital and largest brick building in England.

**George Worgan is Embroiled**

In 1793, Worgan joined the hospital ship *Le Caton* (originally of 64 guns, built in 1782) at Plymouth. Within this context of employment, he became involved in corrupt practices associated with victualling. We learn this from a
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naval inquiry whose origins can be traced to a letter dated Sunday, 1 May 1796, written to the Board of Sick and Wounded Seamen by a fictitious ‘T. Martyn’.³¹ Martyn writes:

Not only fresh meat, but those necessaries allowed purposely for the recovery of the sick, are daily purloined, to the detriment of the service, regardless to the sufferings of those who are pining under maladies which require those aids for their recovery … in a department where the exercise of humanity is particularly required … [the officers involved are] not only reprehensible, but highly criminal. The Surgeon and Lieutenant of the Caton are unworthy of their stations.³²

Both the surgeon of *Le Caton*, Thomas Mein (1750–1815),³³ and the purser, Samuel Keast, stood accused by Martyn’s letter. Subsequently, Keast was asked ‘to lay before’ the Board ‘any well-authenticated facts that came to his knowledge’.³⁴ Keast completely ignored the Board’s request.

On Saturday, 3 February 1798, the pretended Martyn, two years after writing his first letter, wrote again to the Board of Sick and Wounded Seamen, probably as a result of the fact that *Le Caton* had been ‘placed on harbour service’—that is, converted from a moored hospital ship into a moored prison ship—possibly in late January or early February 1798.³⁵

Gentlemen … you have recommended Mein, late Surgeon to the Caton Hospital Ship, to the Admiralty, for the first vacancy as surgeon to a ship of the line … Those peculations, openly and daily practiced on board the Caton to a system of theft, fully justified an enquiry, and your first application was to [Samuel] Keist, the Purser, over whose head … Surgeon [Mein] held the rod, and he was deterred from a declaration of the truth; he was privy to the depredations, but dared not discover them; however, to the benefit of the service, the floating hospital was discontinued, but instead of … [a] fine, or other public stigma imposed on the culprits, favour (to which meritorious acts only should lead) is bestowed on them, although the service has suffered much by their controul and perversion of those comforts allowed to the sick, and the consequent loss of lives by the deprivation, at which humanity

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³¹ Martyn was probably Thomas Dawkins, an assistant to Samuel Keast, the purser of *Le Caton*.
³³ In 1795, Mein was appointed inspector of hospital ships. See M. E. Fowler, ‘Mein, Susan (Sibbald)’, in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000).
shudders. Under malady and disease, hundreds have languished for the
want of a small portion of those wines and other necessaries proper to
their respective complaints.36

Again, Purser Keast disregarded requests from the Board to provide information.

On Saturday, 21 May 1803, Thomas Dawkins,37 a retired navy Purser Third Rate,
who not only had known ‘Mr. Samuel Keast … intimately for forty years’,38 but
also had been Keast’s assistant on Le Caton,39 wrote to John Jervis (1735–1823),
First Earl of St Vincent, the First Lord of the Admiralty: Purser Keast had been
contracted by the Board of Sick and Wounded Seamen ‘for victualling … the
sick; [however,] a very extravagant [officers’] table was established on board, the
expence of which … was to be [met using] … profits [from] … the contract’.40

Purser Keast was ‘much alarmed’41 that his profits were being diminished by the
purchase of the comestibles associated with the maintenance of an ‘extravagant
officers’ table’. George Bouchier Worgan made the following proposal to Keast:
that Keast’s ‘[s]ituation … might be made not only comfortable but profitable’
if Keast would relinquish the victualling contract to him. In return, Worgan
promised to pay Keast ‘[o]ne hundred guineas per annum, to be paid quarterly’.42

Keast accepted Worgan’s proposal, the agreement being formalised, by indenture,
on Saturday, 1 March 1794.

Worgan was to receive the profits of the victualling contract. Worgan then invited
Thomas Mein, the surgeon of the ship, to become a partner in his enterprise. Mein
agreed, ‘and what profit came to [Worgan, Mein] … had the half of’.43

According to the victualling contract, the amount of money provided by the
Board for the purchase of victuals was calculated using the formula:

One shilling per man [that is, per patient] per day … in May 1795, the
Board increased the [amount] … to one shilling and four pence, and on
the 25th October 1797, it was fixed at one shilling and three pence, at
which rate it continued till the termination of the contract in January
1798 …

Commissioners of Naval Enquiry, pp. 625–6.
37 Dawkins may have been the fictitious ‘T. Martyn’ who had written letters to the Board of Sick and
Wounded Seamen complaining about corrupt victualling practices on board Le Caton.
38 ‘No. 25. The Examination of Mr. Thomas Dawkins, of Modbury; Taken Upon Oath, at Plymouth Yard,
39 See ibid., p. 627.
of Naval Enquiry, p. 557.
41 Ibid., p. 557.
42 Ibid., p. 557.
43 Ibid., p. 630.
The profits … amounting to upwards of sixty-two pounds per cent. exceeded all reasonable bounds … [The funds] granted by the … Board in May 1795 … [were] not justified … [as] it appears that the cost to [Worgan] … did not amount to more than nine pence a man a day, and in the year 1794 to seven pence farthing only.

… [A] table was kept on board for the officers, furnished with wine and other articles … paid for out of the profits of the [victualling] contract.

… [I]t appears … that … provisions and Madeira wine were obtained by [Keast] … for his private use … and charged [against monies] … supplied for the use of the sick …

As it was the especial province of the Surgeon [Mein] and the Surgeon’s Mate [Worgan] to guard against the misconduct of the contractor [Keast], and to take care that the patients should enjoy every advantage that medical skill and nourishment could afford … their conduct in abandoning this serious and important trust, and placing themselves in a situation where their interest was in constant conflict with their duty, appears in the highest degree censurable.

The inticement of self-interest thus created … held out an inducement to … Surgeon [Mein] to retain patients longer on board the hospital ship than might be necessary for the cure of their diseases.44

At the naval inquiry, held in October–November 1803, George Worgan stated that he had served on board *Le Caton* at Plymouth ‘from 1793 … till some little time before she was converted into a prison ship’.45 The inquiry referred to Worgan variously as ‘Surgeon’s First Mate’ of *Le Caton*,46 ‘Surgeon’s Mate’47 and ‘Surgeon’.48

On Friday, 28 October 1803, the testimony of Thomas Dawkins implicated Worgan. Dawkins was asked: ‘Have you understood that the provisions paid for in the bills of the butcher and other tradesman, were entirely used for the sustenance of the sick, or was the expence of the table kept for the officers included in such bills?’ Dawkins replied: ‘I believe, part of the meat supplied was appropriated to the use of the officers table.’49 The officers’ mess comprised the purser (Keast), the surgeon (Mein), Worgan and ‘sometimes two or three other assistants’.50

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44 Ibid., pp. 558–60.
47 Ibid., pp. 558, 560, 626, 630.
48 Ibid., p. 630.
49 Ibid., p. 627.
50 Ibid., p. 630.
On Tuesday, 8 November 1803, 11 days after Dawkins had given his testimony, the navy began its ‘[e]xamination of Mr. George Bourchier Worgan, Surgeon in His Majesty’s Navy, and late Surgeon’s Mate of His Majesty’s Hospital Ship Le Caton; taken upon oath’.\(^{51}\) Worgan was asked:

> Do you know whether it was suggested to the late Mr. Samuel Keast, Purser of [Le Caton] ... that he was to keep a table for the officers out of the profits of the contract which he had for victualling the sick that might be sent on board her?\(^{52}\)

Worgan replied: ‘I never heard any such thing suggested to him.’\(^{53}\)

It soon became clear, however, that Worgan was knowingly complicit in Keast’s racket. The commissioners of the inquiry asked Worgan: ‘Did Mr. S. Keast ... pay all the bills for the supply of the sick of that ship?’ Worgan answered:

> He did the chief part, but some trifling articles were paid for by me; but having reason to believe that Mr. Keast made out fictitious bills, I called upon some of the tradesmen, who said that Mr. Keast had ordered white biscuit and meal to his own house, which were charged for the use of the sick, and detracted from my profits. I have likewise found Madeira wine charged in the bills, which was not had for the use of the sick or mess [the officers’ mess].\(^{54}\)

The inquiry continued: ‘Why did you permit this practice?’

> **Worgan:** Mr. Keast used often to say, that if I would not allow it, he would give up his ship to deprive me of the contract.

**Commissioners:** Do you know if it was a general practice for the contractors for victualling the sick on board hospital ships to find a table for the officers?

> **Worgan:** I do not know that it was a general practice, but it was done by Mr. James, the Purser and contractor on board the Tiger Hospital Ship, in the American War, of which ship I was Surgeon’s Mate [between 1775 and 1780].\(^{55}\)

It appears that both George Worgan and surgeon Mein were aware that the luxury of Keast’s table—and doubtless also that of the mess—was sustained by monies that had been allocated for provisioning the sick. If observations conveyed in

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\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 630.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 630.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 630.
\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 630.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., pp. 630–1.
the letters of the fictitious ‘T. Martyn’—that is, Thomas Dawkins—are accurate, Worgan and Mein’s ‘turning a blind eye’ came at a terrible human cost, resulting not only in the ‘loss of lives by … deprivation’, but also in ‘malady and disease’, through which ‘hundreds … languished’.56

Worgan’s remark that he had experienced a similar context in relation to the mess maintained ‘on board the Tiger Hospital Ship’57 ‘by Mr. James, the Purser and contractor’58 suggests that his seemingly opportunistic and compassionless behaviour was not altogether unique in the Royal Navy. It appears that (at least whilst serving on Le Caton) Worgan was more concerned about profits than meeting the needs of patients who had been placed under his care. This, at the very least, reveals that he was a man of his time and context—an excuse that in no way justifies his actions.

For a time, Worgan’s partner in the victualling enterprise, Mein, lived with his family at Fowey,59 in Cornwall.60 Even though Worgan ‘had corresponded regularly’ with Mein,61 he ‘seems to have had no other apparent connection with Cornwall’.62 Following Worgan’s arrival in England in April 1792, he probably spent some of his time in Liskeard, Cornwall, for, only a year after his return from Sydney Cove, Worgan married Mary Lawry (1764–1846)63 of Liskeard at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard, on Thursday, 23 May 1793.64

Worgan’s period of service on board Le Caton commenced in the same year that he was married. A desire to provide for his wife may explain why, only about eight months after his marriage, Worgan entered into the victualling agreement with Keast (on Saturday, 8 February 1794). It may also explain why Worgan continued to knowingly take advantage of the navy65 until the victualling contract was terminated in January 1798. Sadly, for much of the period of his service on Le Caton, Worgan appears to have put profit before ethics.

56 Ibid., pp. 625, 626.
57 Ibid., p. 631.
58 Ibid., p. 631.
59 Fowey (pronounced ‘Foy’) is a small town and cargo port on the west bank of the mouth of the River Fowey, on the south coast of Cornwall (England’s most coastal county), between Looe and Mevagissey. In Worgan’s day, Fowey was a trading and naval town.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 See ‘George Worgan Marries’, below.
64 ‘Marriage Certificate of George Bouchier Worgan and Mary Lawry’, Record #604016, Cornwall Online Parish Clerks Database.
There can be little doubt that Worgan would have been aware of the instabilities that made the 1790s a decade of tension for Britain. Not only was ‘the war against Revolutionary France going badly’, but there was also ‘disaffection in Ireland and an upsurge of radicalism in England’. Characteristically, however, English optimism did not die. For example, on Monday, 26 November 1798, The Times published the following announcement:

The French Government has ordered 16 sail of the line, 18 frigates, and 12 ships of war of a smaller size to be built. Good news this for Old England! It saves us the trouble and expense of building them ourselves, as they are sure to find their way into our ports.

In England, during 1795–96, food (especially wheat) was scarce. The Times of Thursday, 23 July 1795 published the following set of rules that it suggested, if followed, would point the way to peace and plenty.

Rules for the rich.
1. Abolish gravy soups, and second courses.
2. Buy no starch when wheat is dear.
3. Destroy all useless dogs.
4. Give no dog, or other animal, the smallest bit of bread or meat.
5. Save all your skim-milk carefully, and give it all to the poor, or sell it at a cheap rate.
6. Make broth, rice pudding, &c., for the poor, and teach them to make such things.
7. Go to church yourselves, and take care your servants go constantly.
8. Look into the management of your own families, and visit your poor neighbours.
9. Prefer those poor who keep steadily to their work, and go constantly to church, and give nothing to those who are idle, and riotous, or keep useless dogs.
10. Buy no weighing meat, or gravy beef: if the rich would buy only the prime pieces, the poor could get the others cheap.

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67 The Times, 26 November 1798. Quoted in Ashton, Old Times, pp. 91–2.
Rules for the poor.

1. Keep steadily to your work, and never change masters, if you can help it.
2. Go to no gin-shop, or alehouse: but lay out all your earnings in food, and cloaths, for yourself, and your family: and try to lay up a little for rent, and rainy days.
3. Avoid bad company.
4. Keep no dogs: for they rob your children, and your neighbours.
5. Go constantly to church, and carry your wives, and children, with you, and God will bless you.
6. Be civil to your superiors, and they will be kind to you.
7. Learn to make broth, milk pottage, rice-pudding, &c. One pound of meat, in broth, will go further than two pounds boiled, or roasted.
8. Be quiet, and contented, and never steal, or swear, or you will never thrive.68

Regardless of the conditions that may have beset George Worgan following his return to England in 1792, during the late 1790s, Worgan ‘was adjudged unfit for active service and retired’ on half-pay (a navy pension) ‘to Cornwall where he took up two farms near Liskeard’.69 As a result, ‘one self was shunted off into the wings while a … second self, still blinking in the bright light, came out of hiding to take its first awkward steps around the stage’. As time and fate would show, the second self ‘was still very unsure of its lines’.70

George Worgan, the Farmer

In 1798, the Land Tax Register71 reveals that George Worgan was the leaseholder of two farms:

1. one at Bray,72 approximately 5 kilometres south-east of the hamlet of Bodmin, Cornwall, and approximately 13 kilometres north-west of the town of Liskeard

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71 Land Tax Register 1798, Inv. no. AD 103/228 (Truro: Cornwall Record Office).
2. one at Hendra, in the parish of Morval, approximately 10 kilometres south-west of Bodmin, and approximately 25 kilometres south-west of the town of Liskeard.

In England, many ship’s surgeons retired to the countryside. This was made possible by a decision of the House of Lords in 1704 as a result of which anyone licensed by the Society of Apothecaries could prescribe for a patient as well as dispense medicine. Many naval surgeons, upon their retirement from service, obtained an apothecary’s license in order to set up their own general practice.

‘Unlike physicians, surgeons were permitted to be licensed as both surgeon and apothecary.’ There is no record of Worgan having applied for an apothecary’s licence. Rather than taking up the dual role of surgeon and apothecary in his retirement, he took up farming instead. In fact, there is no evidence that Worgan ever again worked as a surgeon, even though ‘the Royal Cornwall Infirmary was erected in 1799 when it offered 52 beds’ in Truro, approximately 40 kilometres from Liskeard.

In late 1804, six years after Worgan leased his two farms at Bray and Hendra, he took up the lease of yet another farm, at Glynn, in the parish of Cardinham. Glynn is approximately 5 kilometres south-east of Bodmin, and approximately 14 kilometres west of Liskeard. The farm was owned by Edmund John Glynn (1764–1840).

Worgan’s three leased farms were not only situated apart from one another, but also each farm was located some distance from the nearest population centre.

1. From Bodmin
   - Bray: approximately 5 kilometres south-east
   - Hendra: approximately 10 kilometres south-west
   - Glynn: approximately 5 kilometres south-east.

2. From Liskeard
   - Bray: approximately 13 kilometres north-west
   - Hendra: approximately 25 kilometres south-west
   - Glynn: approximately 14 kilometres west.

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75 ‘Student Paper on 19th-Century Medicine’. See Sanborn, ‘Doctors and Medical Care in the Regency Era’.
What was the reason George Bouchier took up the lease of the farm at Glynn? Was it sheer optimism? Or did he need to convince himself that his ethics were intact, having—late in the year before he leased the farm at Glynn—been reminded of his shortcomings by the naval inquiry investigating his involvement with corruption and profiteering on Le Caton? We may never know what toll (if any) the naval inquiry took on Worgan’s psychological and emotional wellbeing.

In 1806, two years after moving his family to the farm at Glynn, Worgan, unable to make the farm profitable, broke the lease, owing two years’ rent, amounting to a not inconsiderable £360.77 Worgan and his family vacated the farm at Glynn. In order to pay a portion of what he owed, Worgan left ‘stock that included 250 sheep, two pairs of working oxen, ten horses and “several of Mr Worgan’s implements, entirely of new construction and superior to any yet made”’.78 In a letter to Arthur Young, the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, Worgan explained how the compassionate Edmund Glynn ‘liberally gave us our own furniture’.79 Worgan ‘had in fact gone bankrupt’,80 and was forced to ‘quit’ his farms ‘with considerable loss’.81

### Liskeard

Liskeard nestles on rocky hills above the deep Looe River Valley, 23 kilometres west of the Tamar River and 362 kilometres from London. It is surrounded by countryside of gently rolling emerald-green hills, steeple-peeping horizons and hillside fields separated by snaking hedgerows (Plate 72).

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77 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
79 British Library, Add MSS 35129. I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information.
In 1801, Liskeard was a town of 1860 people.\textsuperscript{82} By 1811, the population had increased to 1975. In 1821, the decennial census reveals that the population had yet again increased, to 2423.\textsuperscript{83} By 1830, the population had risen to 3519.\textsuperscript{84} During the 1840s, there was no large increase in Liskeard’s population, due to a ‘tide of emigration’\textsuperscript{85} to Australia.

That George Worgan decided to farm near Liskeard is not surprising. In 1799 the \textit{Universal British Directory} described Liskeard as being ‘one of the largest and best-built towns in Cornwall, with the greatest market’. Liskeard was representative of a ‘later 18th century expansion [which] was a feature of most market towns in Britain’.\textsuperscript{86}

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{Plate 72 Liskeard: View of the town centre from the top of the tower of the Church of St Martin.}
\end{flushright}

Source: Photo by the author.

\textsuperscript{82} Data acquired from an exhibition label in the Liskeard Museum, Forester’s Hall, Pike Street, Liskeard, on Wednesday, 13 April 2011.
\textsuperscript{86} Quoted in B. Deacon, \textit{Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century} (Redruth, Cornwall: Bernard Deacon, 1989), p. 2. In his footnote 2, Deacon identifies the source of the quotation as: P. Barfoot and J. Wilkes, \textit{Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce, and Manufacture, Comprehending Lists of the Inhabitants of
Liskeard was the main market town for eastern Cornwall. In Liskeard, market day was every Saturday, and there were ‘six fairs held annually, viz. February 18th, March 25th, Holy Thursday, August 15th, October 2nd, and December 9th’.  

During the last decade of George Worgan’s life, Liskeard was prosperous enough to boast

- eight attorneys
- two auctioneers
- six bakers
- two banks
- five blacksmiths
- one bookseller/printer
- eight shoemakers
- two plumbers
- seven builders/stonemasons
- three butchers
- three china/glass dealers
- seven clergymen
- two confectioners
- five curriers/leather sellers
- four druggists
- three gardeners
- 15 grocers
- seven hat makers
- four inns
- three ironmongers
- eight joiners/carpenters
- six linen/woollen drapers
- two brewers
- four milliners/dressmakers
- two millwrights
- four painters/glazers

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87 Pigot, ‘Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 149.
• three heel makers
• two rope makers
• two saddlers
• nine shopkeepers
• six surgeons
• three surveyors.88

Until the end of the 1830s Liskeard had enjoyed a period of measured steady growth gradually evolving into a settlement with a clearly defined central core and an increasing number of services and public buildings. There were a growing number of professional people living in the town, specifically lawyers and bankers who managed the affairs of the newly prosperous farmers.89

Agriculture has always been the mainstay of Cornwall’s economy. Worgan would have relied on his own energy, the labour of his own family and, at certain times, hired labour to run his two small-acreage farms. During the times of year when hired labour was needed, ‘Liskeard would have presented a strange pedestrianised and reversed “rush hour”. Unlike now, when people travel into [Liskeard] … for work, the pattern in [Worgan’s day] … was the opposite, with a lot of people walking out of the town to their place of work in the countryside.’90

We know that Worgan grew Swedish turnips on his farms. Worgan states:

[F]requently the fly destroys the plants, even in highly manured seed-beds. This was precisely my own case, and with a view of remedying the evil, I spread, though late in June, a quantity of straw … all over the bed, and burnt it thereon; as soon … as it was a little cooled, I sowed and raked in the seed; the plants came up strong and quickly, and such was the growth of them, that by the end of July they were fit to be transplanted, and I secured a very tolerable crop.91

He grew potatoes as well:

I have raised many varieties from seed, some of which I continued to plant for several years, but after a fair trial have reduced my sorts to three. The golden dun, London kidney, or coppernose … is on the whole

88 Ibid., pp. 149–50.
91 ‘Crops Commonly Cultivated, Swedish Turnip’, in G. B. Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall Drawn Up and Published by Order of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement (London: B. McMillan, 1811), Internet Archive, Chapter 7, Section 4.
more esteemed for the table than any other … Farmer’s delight … they are not a bad potatoe for the table … and … Apple potatoes [which] have the advantage … of goodness for the table.92

Worgan also raised cattle, and fattened ‘several hogs every year’. He boasted: ‘At the market, my pork has been often admired for its quality; and for bacon, hams, cheeks, &c. &c, it has answered fully as well as the best … pork.’93

There may have been a garden located adjacent to Worgan’s house. Worgan states: ‘the gardens annexed to the residences of gentlemen, are specimens of taste and embellishment, and supply almost every kind of delicious fruit.’94

In Liskeard George Worgan was known as ‘Dally’ Worgan.95 The cries of seagulls,96 as they wheeled and spiralled over the town market, would often have greeted Worgan’s ears as he walked the steep, narrow unpaved streets of the closely packed town centre.97

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Liskeard, to the modern eye, ‘would have looked a shambles—heaps of animal and human waste [these dung heaps were known as “pounds”], open cess pits, no piped water supply, pigsties and slaughterhouses right in the middle of the town … essentially the same as [it] … had been in medieval times’.98 Like so many of his contemporaries, Worgan would have taken a complacent view of these conditions, regarding them as normal. In 1800, ‘the first granite curb-stones in the town were laid … and [some] … footways were … paved with large pebbles’.99

‘Liskeard was certainly no worse than any other Cornish town and considerably better off, at least in terms of water supply, than some.’100

According to a writer in 1824, Liskeard’s chief spring, commonly known as the ‘Pipe Well’ because of the four pipes through which the water flows, ‘was said to have lucky effects in matrimonial connexions, produced by drinking the water and standing on a certain stone in the well’.101

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92 ‘Crops Commonly Cultivated, Potatoes’, in ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 ‘Gardens and Orchards’, Chapter 9, Section 1, ‘Gardens’, in ibid.
95 Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan, p. xii.
96 This soundscape is still a prominent feature of the town.
97 A drawing of Liskeard by Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), dated early 1800s, is housed at the Liskeard Museum. It is feasible to conclude that this drawing depicts a view of the road on Tavern Hill (this road is now Pike Street) in the centre of town. At the lower right-hand corner of the image, an army officer and drummer can be seen seeking recruits in order to swell the ranks of the British forces fighting in the Napoleonic wars.
The Liskeard court roll of Friday, 20 October 1820 shows why the streets of the town were polluted with human waste (it seems that the force of law did not successfully act as a deterrent): Richard Austin, a watch and clockmaker, and other inhabitants presented for a nuisance—throwing filth outside [the] house at the head of Tavern Hill. Seven months later, on 1 May 1821, the hapless Austin was again presented to the Liskeard court to answer ‘for keeping the clock too backwards’.

At the Inn

Whilst in town, Worgan (although not always being able to trust the town clock’s accuracy) may have spent time at the Old King’s Arms, at the top of Tavern Hill. He may even have had to negotiate the ‘filth outside [the] house at the head of Tavern Hill’ deposited there with civic pride by ‘Richard Austin and other inhabitants’. The inn had been there since 1731, and ‘included a shop, workshop, stable and garden’.

Worgan may also have spent time at The Bell, in Church Street. It is likely that during the leisure hours spent at these inns, Worgan watched Liskeard’s most popular entertainments: badger-baiting (until about 1800, when badgers became scarce), cockfighting, kayle (skittle) alleys and organised wrestling matches. (With badger-baiting, ‘it was the custom to drive a large nail through the tail of the badger, in order to hold him more firmly with a rope. When bitten and worried almost to death by great dogs, the unfortunate animal was supplied with water, and reserved till the next evening.’)

In 1762, the English diarist and author James Boswell (1740–95) wrote:

> The enemies of the people of England who would have them considered in the worst light represent them as … cruel. In this view I resolved today to be a true-born Old Englishman … I went at five o’clock to the Royal Cockpit in St James’s Park and saw cock-fighting for about five hours to fulfil the charge of cruelty.

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103 ‘Extracts from Liskeard Borough Court Rolls’, Liskeard Museum (n.d.).
104 Ibid.
105 A drawing entitled *The Old King’s Arms, at the Top of Tavern Hill*, by an unknown artist, dated 1833, is housed at the Liskeard Museum.
106 ‘Extracts from Liskeard Borough Court Rolls’.
107 Ibid.
108 *The Old King’s Arms at the Top of Tavern Hill (Behind Red Cart), Now the Museum Anonymous Watercolour 1833*, caption for image on display at the Liskeard Museum (viewed 13 April 2011).
Speaking of the English in 1770, the German writer Eobald Toze (1715–89) observed that a ‘kind of savageness frequently prevails in their manners, manifesting itself in the bloody fights and diversions usual among them’.\(^{111}\)

Even though an impressive alliance of English ‘evangelicals, magistrates, police [and] … employers … ranged against’\(^{112}\) such leisure activities, a

mixed alliance [arose] in defence of the rights of the poor to enjoy themselves as they would … Its finest spokesman … was William Windham [1750–1810], Secretary for War 1794–1801. ‘The common people’, he said, ‘may ask with justice, why abolish bull-baiting, and protect hunting and shooting? What appearance must we make, if we, who have every source of amusement open to us, and yet follow these cruel sports, become rigid censors of the sports of the poor, and abolish them on account of their cruelty, when they are not more cruel than our own?’\(^{113}\)

In 1809, the *Edinburgh Review* published an article that was directed against the Society for the Suppression of Vice:

A man of ten thousand a year may worry a fox as much as he pleases,—may encourage the breed of a mischievous animal on purpose to worry it; and a poor labourer is carried before a magistrate for paying sixpence to see an exhibition of courage between a dog and a bear! Any cruelty may be practised to gorge the stomachs of the rich,—none to enliven the holidays of the poor.\(^ {114}\)

In Liskeard—as throughout England—badger-baiting, cockfighting and wrestling matches were usually connected with gambling, and publicans played the key role in organising them. Such leisure-time entertainments were ‘practiced at the inns and public houses, most of the principal persons of the town and neighbourhood giving it the sanction of their presence’.\(^ {115}\) ‘Such spectacles [would have] … reeked of stale sweat, tobacco, bad breath, ale and old clothes.’\(^ {116}\)

As a patron of the Old King’s Arms and/or The Bell, George Worgan may have been pleased that the proposed legislation announced in *The Times* of Monday, 13 February 1797 did not become law; had the proposed bill been successful, and had Worgan been caught gambling on a Sunday, the irony of the prescribed punishment would not have escaped his attention (given his past adventures):

\(^{111}\) Quoted in ibid., p. 59.
\(^{113}\) Ibid., p. 46.
\(^{114}\) Ibid., p. 46.
\(^{116}\) Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 148.
It is said, and we hope with truth, that the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the head, and with the concurrence of the Episcopal Lords, means to introduce a Bill into Parliament to prevent gambling on a Sunday. An act at present does exist against this pernicious practice; but the penalty amounts to a fine, that the Groom-porters at Hazard, or the Dealers at Faro, can with ease pay by the profits of an hour. The punishment for the offence of playing any game of chance on a Sunday is, by this new intended Bill, to be transportation for seven years to Botany Bay. The owner of the house, by a particular clause, is more severely dealt with. He, or she, permitting such gambling, shall be transported for life.

Then, as now, pubs were not merely contexts within which drinking took place, but were also ‘centres of game and sports’. During the early nineteenth century, drinking at the inn played a central role in people’s lives … Given the dubious nature of much of the water supply, it was often safer to drink beer than to drink water from the public springs … Alcohol was … used to seal bargains between businessmen and traders; and it provided an all too temporary relief from the harsh living conditions of the majority of the people. Drink was resorted to by both rich and poor at many points in their lives.

In 1803, the botanist George Caley sanguinely wrote from Sydney Cove to Joseph Banks in London: ‘is not the drudgery or laborious work of the great towns in England done by the use of spirits or other fermented liquor?’

In Liskeard, Webb’s Hotel, ‘a handsome, sizeable Neo-classical building’ built in 1833, was ‘one of the finest … in the whole of Cornwall’. By 1847, ‘there were at least 16 inns, pubs and beer houses’ in Liskeard—’one for every 250 inhabitants’.

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117 ‘Hazard was a game of pure chance, in which the players threw dice against a particular number between five and nine, which was chosen by the “caster”. It could be played by any number of people, who took it in turns to “call the main”. Since the odds were well known, it was a game of pure chance, similar to the modern American game of craps.’ Murray, An Elegant Madness, p. 163.

118 ‘Faro was a variation on the theme of roulette, but eventually fell into disrepute because it was so easy for the bank to cheat, and was succeeded by a craze for macao, another game involving several players.’ Ibid., p. 163. ‘Faro could be played by any number of people … Players placed bets with a banker on the likelihood of their cards being the same as cards that were put in a special box by the dealer. It was a risky game partly because the players could bet on a number of outcomes, partly because they could choose how much to bet and partly because the banker enjoyed a built-in advantage. So, unless everyone took a turn at being the banker, players were statistically bound to lose.’ Tillyard, Aristocrats, p. 106.


120 Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 80.

121 Ibid., p. 87.

122 Quoted in Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 70.

123 Gillard, Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey, p. 20.

124 Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 4.

125 That is, nine years after George Worgan’s death.

Of these, only six remain: the Fountain (Plate 73); Webb’s Hotel (Plate 74); the Barley Sheaf, built in 1825 (Plate 75); the White Horse, ‘which probably dates from the seventeenth century’¹²⁷ (Plate 76); the Red Lion (Plate 77); and the Albion, ‘an 18th century public house with a Delabole slate roof and an almost symmetrical three bay façade’¹²⁸ (Plate 78).¹²⁹ ‘Being so close to the town centre … [these] inns were built to accommodate those visiting the town for the markets and fairs.’¹³⁰

Plate 73 The Fountain Inn, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 74 Webb’s Hotel, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 48.
¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 32.
¹²⁹ Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 87.
Plate 75 The Barley Sheaf Inn, Liskeard (as it appears today): the moulded cornice and wooden doorcase with pilasters and enriched entablature are original.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 76 The White Horse Inn, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 77 The Red Lion Inn, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 78 The Albion Inn, Liskeard (as it appears today): as one of the oldest surviving buildings in the Dean Street/West area, it gives an impression of the scale of buildings that originally occupied this part of Liskeard.

Source: Photo by the author.
Apart from drinking and gambling at the inns of Liskeard, other public entertainments would have been available to George Worgan. During the late 1760s, Philip Astley (1742–1814) founded a circus in London. The circus had an equestrian emphasis, but also included rope-dancers, gymnasts and a clown. Astley’s circus had a profound impact on the entertainment world, invading the boards of Covent Garden for the first time in 1811, and frequently thereafter, and made well known in the provinces by Astley’s winter tours.

Soon there were rivals. By about 1830 … [Cornwall was] travelled by … Saunder’s, Cooke’s, Samwell’s and Clarke’s … The visit of the circus was a memorable event in the life of any community; when the American lion tamer Van Amburgh visited Redruth in Cornwall in July 1842 he headed a procession of 40 horses and carriages, drove 8 horses in hand himself, and attracted a crowd of over 7,000.131

It is possible that George Worgan may have attended a performance given in Liskeard by one of the circuses that visited Cornwall during the 1830s.

Although public concerts would (on occasion) have taken place in Liskeard, these did not become popular and common leisure-time pursuits until the 1840s, after Worgan’s lifetime.

In 1805, the English physician and social critic Charles Hall (1740–1825) wrote: ‘Leisure in a poor man is thought quite a different thing from what it is to a rich man, and goes by a different name. In the poor it is called idleness, the cause of all mischief.’132 That George Worgan would have had free, non-obligated time for use in the pursuit of leisure activities at the inn (or within other public contexts) placed him in what was increasingly described during the early nineteenth century as the ‘leisured or leisure classes’.133

George Worgan Marries

A year after Worgan arrived back in England from Sydney Cove, and having been paid off by the navy, he married Mary Lawry134 of Liskeard, at St Martin’s Church,135 on Thursday, 23 May 1793 (Plate 79).136 George was 36 years old;

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133 See ibid.
134 Mary Lawry was the daughter of John and Anne Lawry. Mary was baptised at St Gluvias’s Church, Penryn, Cornwall, on 4 November 1764. See ‘Parish Records Collection 1538–2005 Baptism’.
135 ‘St. Martin’s is one of the three largest churches in Cornwall … It is the most dominant feature of the area and all the surrounding roads lead to it.’ Gillard, Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey, pp. 67–8.
136 ‘Marriage Certificate of George Bouchier Worgan and Mary Lawry’.
Mary was 29. Some in Liskeard may have regarded the seven-year disparity in the couple’s age as verging on the inappropriate. ‘Such a discrepancy’—and markedly wider—’was common-place in aristocratic marriages … but less common in middle-class couples’.137 George and Mary were married by the vicar of St Martin’s, the Reverend William Hony.138

Plate 79 The Church of St Martin, Liskeard.

Source: Photo by the author.

In the ‘Introduction’ to his published report entitled General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall Drawn Up and Published by Order of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement,139 George Worgan provides us with a glimpse of his attitude to the women of Cornwall: ‘[Cornish] women are amiable, for the most part accomplished, and make excellent wives.’ Cornwall’s

137 Howard, Gluck, p. 29.
139 Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall. Worgan’s report ‘occupies 182 octavo pages, with a map of the soils of Cornwall, some drained grounds, fences, implements, cottages, farm offices, and front elevations. The portraits of swine and a Devon bull are complete caricatures.’ ‘CCCL.—Worgan, 1811’, in J. Donaldson, Agricultural Biography: Containing a Notice of the Life and Writings of the British Authors on Agriculture, from the Earliest Date in 1480 to the Present Time (London: Printed for the Author, 1854), p. 101.
women are ‘diamonds … of the most beautiful lustre’. Mary Lawry was doubtless one such woman. Mary’s father, John, as well as her friend(?) Mary Watson, signed the marriage certificate as witnesses.

At the time of George’s wedding, it is possible that the alterations that were made to the interior of St Martin’s in the same year had just been completed: amongst other things, the church’s beautiful carved oak rood screen was destroyed ‘and carved medieval pews’ were replaced with high pitch-pine pews, which formed ‘horse-boxes and pens in which the congregation lay hidden’. The internal reordering meant that the church resembled ‘a chapel, where preaching was considered of paramount importance’.

The installation of high pews suggests that Liskeardian society (revealing a conformance with English society in general) was a class-ridden minefield.

A serious example of discrimination was the custom of private pews, bought by the rich and reserved exclusively for their use, which often resulted in there being no room for the poor in the church at all. The idea of buying a place in church was taken for granted by most of the population [in England] at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In *Brief Remarks on English Manners*, an anonymous author describes high pews, stressing the iniquity of segregation in church based on socioeconomic class. Because of

> the pernicious practice of dividing our churches into pews … the poorer classes are not only separated from their superiors, but in many instances they are shut out of the church for want of means to purchase a seat within its walls … In ancient times probably the great man of each parish had his family pew, but by degrees, as the influence of money prevailed, his rich neighbours continued to vie with him and with each other, till at last all our churches have become disfigured to the eye by their tasteless divisions, resembling pens for cattle, and many of them dishonoured by being made receptacles for the rich to the exclusion of the poor.

Sadly, it appears that snobbery—upheld by the existence of high pews—was rife at St Martin’s.

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141 ‘Marriage Certificate of George Bouchier Worgan and Mary Lawry’.
143 Ibid., p. 20.
Four bells in the thirteenth-century tower of St Martin’s (the treble and the next lowest-sounding bells having been cast in 1755, the third bell in 1735, and the tenor or fourth bell in 1753) would have rung out George and Mary’s joy.

**George and Mary Worgan’s Children**

For George Worgan, country life, with ‘its slower rhythms and the importance of children in its scheme of things’, appears to have been an attractive alternative to the unpredictabilities and intensities of his naval career.

Five years after her marriage to George, Mary Worgan (aged 34) gave birth to her first child, a daughter, named Mary. Baby Mary was baptised at St Wenna’s Church, in the parish of Morval, on Sunday, 6 May 1798. It seems odd that the Worgans selected St Wenna’s as the church within which to have their child baptised; when compared with St Martin’s, St Wenna’s is much further away from the Worgans’ farms. Parish boundaries may have influenced their decision. Baby Mary died 16 months later, on Thursday, 19 September 1799. Infant mortality was common at this time, and few families were strangers to childhood deaths.

George and Mary (at the age of 36) had a second child, George William, who was baptised (probably at St Wenna’s, Morval) on Thursday, 9 January 1800. With their recent history, there must have been considerable anxiety in George and Mary’s minds as to whether little George William would survive. (When Mary conceived, both she and her husband would have been ‘launched on a roaring wave of fate. No one could predict how easily she would bear pregnancy, how safely she would deliver, how robust would be her infant, or how long and healthy the life of her child.’) Happily, George William thrived.

The next year, the couple had their second daughter, Mary, who was baptised (probably at St Wenna’s) on Thursday, 17 September 1801.

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147 Allen, *The History of the Borough of Liskeard*, p. 73. The treble and next lowest-sounding bell, as well as the tenor (or fourth bell), ‘were cast by Pennington, Bell-founder of Stoke Climsland, near Callington’. Ibid., p. 73.
150 ‘Burial Data of Mary Worgan’, Record #1612412, *Cornwall Online Parish Clerks Database*.
On Wednesday, 23 November 1803, George and Mary’s fourth child and their second son, John, was baptised (probably at St Wenna’s), 154 but he died in infancy.

The couple’s fifth child and their second surviving son, John Parsons, was baptised at St Martin’s, Liskeard, on Tuesday, 12 March 1805. 155 The selection of John’s middle name, Parsons, may have been influenced by the fact that 17 years earlier, in 1778, George Bouchier Worgan’s younger sister, Charlotte, had married Sir William Parsons. 156

George and Mary’s surviving family therefore consisted of George William (their eldest son), Mary and John Parsons (their youngest son). Both George William and John Parsons eventually migrated to Australia. George and Mary’s daughter, Mary, lived out her life and died in Liskeard.

George Worgan, the Published Author

In 1793 the Cornwall Agricultural Society was formed. Meetings were held in various parts of Cornwall, with competitions for ploughing, for stock, and for machinery. Substantial prizes were offered—3 and 5 guineas—and some awards were made for growing crops, requiring the judges to travel from farm to farm.

The Society attracted the attention of the newly established Board of Agriculture, whose president in 1793 approached the Cornish Society with a request for ‘a complete account of the state of agriculture in so interesting a district’ as part of its aim to undertake a comprehensive survey of the agriculture of every county. Robert Fraser’s [fl. 1793–1822] ‘General Review’ was accordingly published in 1794, 157 but it was considered less than adequate and it was hoped that a revision could soon be compiled by someone more qualified to do so. 158

In 1808, George Worgan—‘despite his somewhat doubtful credentials’ 159—wrote his General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall at the behest

154 ‘Baptism Record’.
155 ‘Birth Certificate of John Parsons Worgan’, Record #1910227, Cornwall Online Parish Clerks Database (n.d.).
157 R. Fraser, General View of the County of Cornwall. With Observations on the Means of its Improvement. By Robert Fraser, A.M. Drawn up for the Consideration of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement (London: C. Macrae, 1794).
of the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, Arthur Young (who paid him £100 for the privilege).\textsuperscript{160} The tome’s preface, entitled ‘Preliminary Observation’,\textsuperscript{161} is dated ‘Bodmin, Nov. 30 1808’.\textsuperscript{162}

Unfortunately, the Board of Agriculture found Worgan’s efforts to be less than satisfactory, subsequently engaging three Cornish gentlemen—‘all \textit{amateur} and public spirited farmers’\textsuperscript{163}—to revise Worgan’s research

1. the Reverend Robert Walker, vicar of St Winnoe
2. the Reverend Jeremiah Trist, vicar of Veryan from 1782 to 1829
3. Vice-Admiral Charles Vinnicombe Penrose (1759–1830), of Ethy in the parish of St Winnoe, who was later knighted.

These gentlemen were Worgan’s friends, and had assisted him with the initial draft of his survey. In order to justify their involvement with the rewriting, the three gentlemen wrote: ‘When therefore it was proposed to us to revise [Worgan’s] … Papers, we thought we possessed a particular advantage, from the mere circumstance of having some knowledge of his plan and execution.’\textsuperscript{164}

The three editors, however, appear to have taken only a brief moment to protect George from any ridicule; they admitted that they had (magnanimously) preserved ‘a large part of the original’.\textsuperscript{165} In almost the same breath, however, they also claimed to have taken ‘great liberties with his manuscript, and generally suppressed what was deemed redundant’.\textsuperscript{166} The editors confessed to having made ‘considerable erasements, alterations and additions’,\textsuperscript{167} and indicated (honourably) that they had taken ‘care that wherever we have made observations or stated facts, for which we alone are answerable, the initials of our respective names are subjoined’.\textsuperscript{168} Using these initials, it can be seen that the Reverend Robert Walker rewrote sections dealing with

1. leases (Chapter 4, Section 5)
2. crops commonly cultivated (Chapter 7, Section 4)
3. crops not commonly cultivated (Chapter 7, Section 5).

\textsuperscript{160} I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for \textit{Working the Forge}.
\textsuperscript{161} Worgan, \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall}, p. v.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., p. vi.
\textsuperscript{163} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard and its Vicinity}, p. 365.
\textsuperscript{164} Worgan, \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall}, p. vii.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., p. viii.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., p. ix.
The Reverend Jeremiah Trist rewrote sections dealing with
1. woods and plantations: coppicing, timber and willow plantations (Chapter 10)
2. improvements (Chapter 12): drainage (Section 1), eight sorts of manuring (Section 3)
3. irrigation (Chapter 12, Section 4)
4. population (Chapter 15, Section 8).

Vice-Admiral Charles Penrose rewrote sections dealing with
1. implements (Chapter 5)
2. gates (Chapter 6)
3. labourers’ houses (Chapter 3, Section 3).

This left the bulk of the survey as Worgan had originally written it, his work comprising chapters and/or sections concerning
1. the geographical state and circumstances of the county (Chapter 1): situation (Section 1), climate (Section 3), surface and scenery (Section 4), minerals (Section 5) and water (Section 6)
2. the state of property (Chapter 2): estates and their management (Section 1)
3. buildings (Chapter 3): houses of proprietors (Section 1), farmhouses and offices (Section 2) and cottages (Section 3)
4. modes of occupation (Chapter 4): sizes of farms (Section 1), rent (Section 2), tithes (Section 3) and poor rates (Section 4)
5. enclosing (Chapter 6): fences (Section 1)
6. arable land (Chapter 7): tillage (Section 1) and fallowing (Section 2)
7. grassland (Chapter 8): natural meadows (Section 1), pastures (Section 2) and hay harvests (Section 3)
8. gardens and orchards (Chapter 9)
9. waste (Chapter 11)
10. improvements (Chapter 12): paring and burning (Section 2) and weeding (Section 5)
11. livestock (Chapter 13): cattle (Section 1), sheep (Section 2), horses (Section 3), pigs (Section 4), rabbits (Section 5), poultry and pigeons (Section 6) and bees (Section 8)
12. the rural economy (Chapter 14)
13. the political economy (Chapter 15): roads (Section 1), canals (Section 2), fairs and weekly markets (Sections 3 and 4), commerce (Section 5) and the poor (Section 7)

14. obstacles to improvements (Chapter 16)

15. agricultural societies (Chapter 17, Section 1)

16. weights and measures (Section 2).169

In his introduction, Worgan went to great pains to disprove the ‘very erroneous idea and illiberal aspersion’ that people in Cornwall ‘are nearly in a state of barbarism’.

Instances of their civility and benevolence the Surveyor [that is, Worgan] has to report from his own knowledge. Three several nights, in his tour through Cornwall, he missed his road, and was benighted, and each time, in the remotest part of the country, on gently tapping at the door of the cottager, the good man rose from his bed, left his home, and walked with him some miles, nor would leave him until he had conducted him to his place of destination. One of these good Christians, on taking leave of him, said, with a countenance that spoke his heart, ‘Health and a long and happy life to you Sir, and Heaven after death.’ Can a peasantry who will thus rise cheerfully from their beds at midnight, take the bewildered stranger by the hand, and conduct him safely through dangers, deserve the harsh appellation of barbarians?170

Following revision, Worgan’s survey was first published in London in 1811. In the first edition, the three gentleman editors state:

[W]e believe Mr. Worgan to have been very diligent in collecting materials for his Work. It happened however unfortunately, that he was obliged to perform the greater part of his Survey during winter, by which he not only endured much hardship, but was also forced to take many things upon trust, of which at a more favourable season, he might have been an eye witness.171

That the credibility of Worgan’s research was so publicly called into question must have been a bitter pill for George to swallow, especially when the criticism derived from his friends and colleagues. Sadly, things did not improve when his

170 ‘Introduction’, in Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall, p. xii.
171 Ibid., immediately following Worgan’s ‘Preliminary Observation’, p. viii.
research was ‘described in the *West of England Magazine* in 1813 as “in many places extremely quaint and affected”; and in the chapter on livestock, “there is not much that is intended to any great utility in any respect whatever”’.\(^{172}\)

Fortunately, the effect of these negative critiques on sales of the book was minimal; George Worgan’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (1811) was reprinted in 1815.

George’s trudging around rural Cornwall in the depths of the winter of 1808 as a researcher would have cost him a considerable amount of money—money that he never recouped. It appears that in 1810 Worgan found himself in a precarious financial situation, for ‘he wrote to Henry Hawkins Tremayne of Heligan, thanking him for his kindness to ‘my poor afflicted family”\(^{173}\).

Things did not improve. Two years later, in a letter dated Monday, 13 July 1812, Richard Rosedew, a local landowner, wrote to Philip Wynell-Mayow (1771–1845), Worgan’s former landlord of the farm at Bray:

> About 10 days since I was accosted at my front door by a person somewhat in appearance of a broken gentleman and given an open note which I enclose. As I was reading it he took out of a case a long statement on parchment with a great number of names as subscribers, some as high as £10.\(^{174}\)

During his discussion with Rosedew, Worgan indiscreetly and unwisely criticised his former landlord Wynell-Mayow, criticisms that Rosedew refused to accept. As a consequence, Rosedew chose not to give.

**George Worgan, the Inventor**

During the early nineteenth century, changes occurring within the contexts of industrial design and manufacturing stimulated experimentation in the design and manufacture of farming machinery. In Cornwall, the resultant spirit of innovation that attended farming practices was reflected in the competitions held by the Cornwall Agricultural Society. These competitions ‘included potato and turnip cultivation, the development of water meadows, cider orchards and cider making, essays on agricultural improvement, and “the person having

\(^{174}\) Bray Papers, BRA1737/45 (Truro: Cornwall Record Office). I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for *Working the Forge*.
the greatest number of children under 21, brought up without parochial assistance’’.\textsuperscript{175} Most importantly perhaps, the Society created an award for ‘new or improved husbandry implements’.\textsuperscript{176}

It appears that George Worgan was something of an inventor. In 1806, the Cornwall Agricultural Society awarded the substantial sum of £3 to ‘‘Mr Worgan of Glynn’ [who] … designed and exhibited a great cultivator, a lesser cultivator, a shifting double plough and a combined roller and harrow’.\textsuperscript{177} (After having been awarded such a prize, it is no wonder that Worgan praised the virtues of the Cornwall Agricultural Society:

The Cornwall Agricultural Society has been … attended with very beneficial effects in the encouragement of agriculture throughout the county; and it has never been in a more flourishing state than at present.)\textsuperscript{178}

A report concerning Worgan’s inventions was published in the \textit{Royal Cornwall Gazette}:

The husbandry implements produced by Mr Worgan attracted the attention of a great many agriculturalists, and from their ingenious construction and easy draught with which they may be worked, appear to be deserving of further attention. However, the inspector, not having seen any of these implements in use, cannot speak as to the utility of them.\textsuperscript{179}

**George Worgan, the Schoolmaster**

George Worgan was not a successful farmer. Unfortunately, ‘his introduction of new [farming] methods failed to pay off’.\textsuperscript{180} ‘Being very theoretical in the management [of his farms], and having some difficulty in the holding, which he attributed to entails,’\textsuperscript{181} he quitted [his farms] … with considerable loss.’\textsuperscript{182}

The anonymous editor of the \textit{Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan, Surgeon of the Sirius} states that Worgan, in order to augment his failing income, ‘was at various times schoolmaster and church organist’.\textsuperscript{183} Contemporaneous

\textsuperscript{175} Edwards, ‘George Bouchier Worgan’, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{176} See ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{178} ‘Agricultural Societies’, in Worgan, \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall}, Chapter 17, Section 1, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Royal Cornwall Gazette}, 31 May 1806. Quoted in ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{180} Menneer, ‘George Worgan’, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{181} An ‘entail’ is a legal restriction to the ownership and inheritance of property.
\textsuperscript{182} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard and its Vicinity}, p. 526.
\textsuperscript{183} Worgan, \textit{Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan}, p. xii.
documentary evidence reinforces the fact that Worgan worked as a schoolteacher: Worgan’s will describes him as ‘schoolmaster, of Liskeard’.\textsuperscript{184} It was following the completion of his \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall} in 1808 that Worgan ‘turned school-master’.\textsuperscript{185}

We do not know if, as the years passed, George Worgan, as ‘a man of extensive reading’,\textsuperscript{186} found himself employed respectively by several schools in Liskeard or whether he was engaged by only one. If he taught at several schools, he may, for a period, have found himself at the Liskeard Grammar School, a ‘symbol of civic pride … conducted on Church of England principles’.\textsuperscript{187} Financially, this school was ‘supported mainly by members of the borough’.\textsuperscript{188}

The Liskeard Grammar School comprised ‘one long room, gabled at both ends, and open to the rafters of the roof, with a smaller room at one side, where there was a fire place and where the boys said their lessons’.\textsuperscript{189} The boys ‘said their lessons’ out loud as part of rote learning. The school, open only to boys, was located on Castle Street, relatively near St Martin’s Church, on the site that is now Castle Park. ‘This led to the area becoming associated with education.’\textsuperscript{190}

On a map of Liskeard dating from 1840, the site occupied by the building shown in Plate 80 is labelled ‘School’. It is probable that the building shown in Plate 80 was the grammar school.\textsuperscript{191} In the mid nineteenth century, the building ‘went through a … transformation from school to police station’.\textsuperscript{192}

‘Like most small town grammar schools, Liskeard’s provided a classical education, largely based on Latin … taught to the sons of … squires and prosperous traders.’\textsuperscript{193} The ‘low, mean edifice’\textsuperscript{194} within which the students of Liskeard’s Grammar School were educated was ‘bad without and worse within’.\textsuperscript{195} On Tuesday, 1 March 1836 (two years and three days before George Worgan died), the town council decided to remove ‘the “town dung” … to “the garden near the school” where it was to be sold monthly. This was presumably not good news for the children attending the school!’\textsuperscript{196}

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\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{184} Cornwall Council, ‘Archdeaconry of Cornwall, Probate Court’, Reference no. AP/W/4081 (Truro: Cornwall Council, n.d.).
\item \textsuperscript{185} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard}, p. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{186} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard and its Vicinity}, p. 526.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Deacon, \textit{Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century}, p. 151.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Pigot, ‘Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 149.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard}, p. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Gillard, \textit{Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey}, p. 60.
\item \textsuperscript{191} I am indebted to Daphne James and Jay Johnson of Liskeard for providing access to the 1840 map.
\item \textsuperscript{192} Gillard, \textit{Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey}, p. 61.
\item \textsuperscript{193} Deacon, \textit{Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century}, p. 151.
\item \textsuperscript{194} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard}, p. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{195} Ibid., p. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{196} Deacon, \textit{Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century}, pp. 14–15.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
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That Worgan may have been employed at the Liskeard Grammar School is pure conjecture; unfortunately, ‘where school records did exist, they have over the years completely disappeared’.197 If not at the Liskeard Grammar School, Worgan may have taught, on occasion, at one of the new private schools that had emerged in the town during the late eighteenth century. These schools taught middle-class boys and girls, providing a wide-ranging curriculum that included subjects such as ‘navigation, accounting, advanced arithmetic and good handwriting … the types of skills that the children of the rising commercial classes would find it useful to acquire’.198

One such Liskeard school with a fine reputation was the Windsor Academy, located in Golden Bank House on the southward Plymouth Road. In 1820, the school was advertised as being ‘at such a convenient distance from Liskeard, as to preclude the contaminations of a town’.199

Plate 80 The site, if not the building, of the Liskeard Grammar School (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

199 Royal Cornwall Gazette, 8 July 1820. Quoted in Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 152.
was a boarding and day school … The curriculum was wide, including the expected scripture, history, geography, arithmetic, grammar, penmanship, drawing, music and languages (Latin and French). But it also contained a strong scientific, and technical component, offering applied science, technical drawing, building and machine construction, and even ‘natural philosophy’ (described as astronomy, electricity, acoustics, geology, physiology, botany and physiography).200

The school ‘appears to have closed during the 1830s’.201

We know that Worgan was employed at one of the five schools that were established in Liskeard during the early nineteenth century specifically to cater for the children of poor, working-class parents. A report written in 1818 on education states: ‘many families [in Liskeard] are too poor to educate their children, without the aid of these schools.’202 ‘Liskeard’s poor were no more numerous than any other Cornish town … [but] were perhaps more fortunate than some in having a local professional and business class who professed a social conscience.’203

In 1812 the Central School was opened in Truro, partly to educate children, partly to train teachers for other schools to be set up in other parts of Cornwall.

By 1814 schools had been set up in various parts of Cornwall and over 500 children were being educated. By 1823 the school had trained 11 mistresses and 30 masters, including George Worgan.204

Worgan was recommended for training as a teacher by Reverend Athanasius Laffer, who was for a period headmaster of the Liskeard Grammar School. Worgan was ‘to be instructed as a schoolmaster for the Liskeard school’.205

In 1813, a boys’ school was set up (using money raised by subscription) under the auspices of the Anglican Church’s ‘National Society for the education of the children of the poor in accordance with the teaching of the Established Church’.206 The school was located in a house ‘accordingly built for the purpose’,207 owned by the National Society. The house was ‘situated on the “Castle Garden”, at

200 Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 152.
201 Ibid., p. 152.
205 Cornwall Record Office, ‘D/CS 1: Minute Book, Truro Central Schools, 1811 Onwards’ (Truro: Cornwall Record Office). Quoted in ibid., p. 9.
the corner of the Castle Hill and Castle Street and immediately opposite the castle grounds’. 208 The National Society’s Boys’ School nestled amongst the small houses and cottages near, and downhill from, Liskeard’s grammar school. A map dating from 1840 suggests that the school was located on the site that is now occupied by an apartment building (Plate 81). 209

Plate 81 The site of the National Society Boys’ School, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

In 1813, George Worgan (at 56 years of age) was employed as headmaster of the newly established boys’ school. The school was run,

as all National Society schools were, using ‘Dr [Andrew] Bell’s [1753–1832] system’. It was a very economical method of teaching as only one master was needed. He taught the older children, who were known as ‘monitors’, and they in turn repeated the lesson to groups of younger children, all in the same room. 210

209 I am indebted to Daphne James and Jay Johnson of Liskeard for access to the 1840 map.
Chapter 11

The Bell system ‘had been used in England since 1811 and was developed as an alternative to that originated by the Quaker, Joseph Lancaster [1778–1838] in 1798 … Lancaster’s schools, run by the nonconformist British and Foreign Bible Society, offered non-denominational religious instruction’. In contrast, religious instruction within the context of the Bell system used ‘the Church of England catechism … The fact that … religious instruction [could be] non-denominational … [was] seen as a threat to the Church of England … the British authorities [decided] to replace the Lancastrian system with that of Bell … a clear indication that it was determined to guarantee the ascendancy of the Anglican Church’.211

The curriculum George Worgan taught would have included mathematics; perhaps he made use of William Cockin’s (1736–1801) textbook *A Rational and Practical Treatise of Arithmetic*,212 ‘published in [1766] … whose exercises caught the imagination and taught practical accounts in a memorable way’:213

Suppose a dog, a wolf, and a lion were to devour a sheep, and that the dog could eat up the sheep in an hour, the wolf in 1/4 of an hour and the lion in 1/2 an hour; now if the lion begins to eat 1/8 of an hour before the other two, and afterwards all three eat together, the question is in what time will the sheep be devoured?

A lad having got 4,000 nuts, in his return was met by Mad-Tom who took from him 5/8 of 2/3 of his whole stock: Raving-Ned light upon him afterwards and forced 2/5 of 5/8 of the remainder from him: Unluckily Positive-Jack found him, and required 7/10 of 17/20 of what he had left: Smiling-Dolly was by promise to have 3/4 of a quarter of what nuts he brought home: How many had the boy left?214

Initially—that is, from 1813—the school flourished; however, it foundered a few years after it opened because of ‘the falling off of subscribers as well as scholars’.215 Perhaps Liskeard’s philanthropists could be forgiven for suffering from … donor fatigue … the satirical author of ‘Advice from a Father to a Son’ in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1760) suggests

… ‘as the mad extravagance of the age is *charity*, and you must meet with frequent temptations, and earnest solicitations, to squander your money

211 Fletcher, ‘Religion and Education’, p. 87.
212 W. Cockin, *A Rational and Practical Treatise of Arithmetic* (in Two Parts). Containing All that is Necessary to be Known in this Art, to which is Added, in the Manner of Notes, the Reason and Demonstration of Every Rule and Operation, as they Occur, on Principles Purely Arithmetical, or Such as Will Easily be Comprehended by a Beginner (London: W. Nicoll, 1766).
213 Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 137.
214 Quoted in ibid., p. 137.
in that way, I shall, in the first place, give you some instructions in the art of parrying a charitable subscription. The want of this necessary art has been a great misfortune to many people I could name you. For besides parting with their money against their will, they got the character of being charitable, which drew upon them fresh applications from other quarters, multiplying by success, and creating endless vexation.’

His answer? First rule, ‘to like the charity, but dislike the mode of it’. If that fails, the second rule, ‘to like some other charity better’ and lastly, ‘to insinuate (but without saying it in plain terms) that you either will contribute, or have already contributed handsomely, tho’ you do not subscribe.’²¹⁶

During the period between the school’s closure and 1833, there was no school in Liskeard ‘for boys “of the labouring classes”, apart from “a small school for teaching lads to read and write for two or three hours in the winter evenings”’.²¹⁷ ‘In 1835 … the building was subsequently leased as a private school.’²¹⁸

Poor George. By 1820, not only had he failed as a farmer (necessitating that he train and seek employment as a schoolteacher), but also his research (published as General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall)²¹⁹ had been publicly derided—and he had been a crucial part of an unsuccessful educational enterprise (even though the failure was through no fault of his own).

George Worgan, the Church Organist

The notion that Worgan was employed at various times as a church organist²²⁰ in order to supplement his income may be a fantasy. It is unlikely that Worgan was church organist in any parish church in or near Liskeard. This is because the largest and nearest churches—St Martin’s, Liskeard and St Petroc’s, Bodmin—did not at any time during Worgan’s life have organs. In the smaller churches in the Liskeard area (including those nearest to Worgan’s farms at Glynn near Bodmin), God may have been praised with unaccompanied congregational singing. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, ‘singing by the congregation was little practised in the Anglican Church, making a band and choir highly desirable’.²²¹

²¹⁶ Riding, Mid-Georgian Britain 1740–69, p. 71.
²¹⁹ Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall.
²²⁰ Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan, p. xii.
During the period of Worgan’s retirement, St Martin’s, Liskeard—one of the largest churches in Cornwall—had a gallery at the western end of the nave containing ‘the choir, with violins, ‘cellos, flutes, clarinets, bassoons and scorpions [that is, serpents] to make sweet music for the good people of Liskeard’. In 1844, six years after Worgan’s death and his subsequent burial at St Martin’s, an organ made by the highly respected organ builder James Chapman Bishop (1782–1854) ‘placed at the back of the choir gallery did away with the’ instrumental ensemble.\(^{222}\)

That St Martin’s had an orchestra to accompany the singing was not unusual for many churches of the time, especially if they were large enough. During the late 1830s, for example, music for the services held in the Wesleyan Methodist Association chapel at Greenbank in Liskeard\(^ {223}\) was supplied by a fine choir accompanied by ‘two cornets, three flutes, two violins and a double bass’.\(^ {224}\) The Wesleyan Methodist Association chapel was opened in June 1838, at which time ‘the town was visited by a greater number of persons from Plymouth, Devonport, Callington, Camelford, Lostwithiel, and other places, than had ever been known on any similar occasion’.\(^ {225}\)

‘Methodism was seen as something of a threat to a quiet and somewhat lazy established [Anglican] church.’\(^ {226}\)

‘As early as 1833, the vicar of a Cornish parish had lamented that “in a few words, we have lost the people. The religion of the mass[es] is become Wesleyan Methodism.”’\(^ {227}\)

The success of Methodism owed a lot to its blatant poaching of music from secular traditions.

The rowdy singing of psalms and music around the bed of the dying was inherited, less the drink, from popular culture … in the preaching-house … they let themselves go; they shouted they wept, they groaned, they not seldom laughed aloud, with a laugh of intense excitement, a wonderful laugh …

Because it was attuned to popular culture … Methodism was more successful than the heavy hand of upper- and middle-class [Anglican] Evangelicalism.\(^ {228}\)

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\(^{222}\) Paynter, *The Parish Church of St. Martin Liskeard*, p. 20. This organ is currently housed in the church of St Ive (pronounced ‘ee-v’), a short distance from Liskeard.

\(^{223}\) Allen, *The History of the Borough of Liskeard*, p. 64.

\(^{224}\) *West Briton*, 8 June 1838. Quoted in Deacon, *Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century*, p. 60.

\(^{225}\) Goold, *Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano*, p. 214.


The Anglican congregation of St Martin’s Church had not only an orchestra to accompany their singing, but also a choir. The choir was taken very seriously: in 1800, for example, the churchwardens of St Martin’s paid £47 10s (more than nine months’ wages) for the singing; in the following year the amount increased to £48 3s 2d. In ensuing years, the amount spent to maintain St Martin’s choir was similarly large. There is no evidence that George Worgan was involved with the training of the choir.

Despite Worgan’s (presumed) keyboard skills and understanding of music, it seems unlikely that he was ever a church organist in Liskeard, or in any of the churches in Liskeard’s outlying villages.

A fleeting literary reference, however, implies that a Mr Worgan may have been heard at some stage playing upon an organ. In 1893, John Brown MD wrote a small pamphlet in which the childhood of a certain Marjorie Fleming was described. Marjorie’s birth date is given as ‘15 January 1803; her death 19 December 1811’. In 1809 (at the age of six) Marjorie sang the following words:

[S]he and I in bed lies nice
And undisturbed by rats or mice;
She is disgusted by Mr. Worgan,
Though he plays upon the organ.

Given the year in which Marjorie purportedly sang these lines, the ‘Mr Worgan’ to whom she refers could be either (and most probably is) George Worgan’s famous father, Dr John Worgan (who had died 19 years before, in 1790), or George Bouchier Worgan. Brown gives no explanation as to why ‘she’ should be disgusted by ‘Mr Worgan’ (despite the verse’s ensuing line, which may be construed to imply that organists are axiomatically virtuous). If the verse refers to George Worgan’s father, Dr John Worgan, Marjorie may not have been impressed by the fact that Dr Worgan had divorced his wife Sarah (for infidelity) in 1768 (divorce was uncommon and always scandalous), remarried a few years later, and, following the death of his second wife in 1777, remarried again in 1779 (Dr Worgan’s ‘morals were blameless’).

It is not known if George Bouchier Worgan (having left his piano with Elizabeth Macarthur in 1791) purchased another square piano upon his return to England for use in his retirement. We can only wonder if he managed to maintain his

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229 See Allen, *The History of the Borough of Liskeard*, p. 84.
230 Ibid., p. 84.
232 Ibid., p. 20.
technical proficiency—such as it may have been—as a pianist. No evidence has come to light suggesting that Worgan ever played the piano for anyone during the period of his retirement.

After he returned to England, George Worgan ceased contact with Elizabeth Macarthur. He made no inquiries concerning her pianistic progress or the fate of his Beck square piano, and Elizabeth Macarthur does not appear to have attempted to contact Worgan in order to provide him with such information. Worgan’s marriage to Mary Lawry, and the commitments associated with raising two sons and a daughter, probably diverted Worgan’s attention away from the need to maintain contact with Macarthur. His farming and teaching activities would also have taken up much of his time and energy.

Financial Hardship

In 1828, ‘having fallen on hard times, Worgan petitioned the Secretary of State for Colonies to give his [youngest] son John Parsons Worgan, aged about 22 years, employment in New South Wales’.  

Worgan’s financial difficulties arose from his having quitted his farms ‘with considerable loss’. The payment of rent, taxes and the leases of his farms had certainly been a burdensome part of Worgan’s rural life. In chapters two, four and 16 of his General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall, Worgan’s comments expose not only his own plight, but also that of many farmers:

Entailed Estates.—I was in hopes that I had been a singular sufferer in Cornwall, from this kind of deceptive tenure; it would then not have been worthy of notice; but in my excursions through the county, I have met with fellow-sufferers, and with others who are likely to become so. As such cases have occurred, and may occur again, it behoves every man, who is about to occupy a farm for a terra by lease, to make enquiry whether it be an entailed estate or not; because the possessor [the landlord] having the power of letting [a farm to a renter] for his own life only [that is, only for the period of the landlord’s life]; in case of his [the landlord’s] death, the occupier [the renter] is left entirely at the mercy of his [the landlord’s] successor ...

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234 Based on John’s date of baptism (12 March 1805), he would have been 23 years old. See ‘Birth Certificate of John Parsons Worgan’.


Taxes were formerly generally paid by the landlord, but of late years, the tenant is usually bound to pay all taxes and assessments, the land tax often excepted. The tithes are almost everywhere considered as a tenant’s tax …

Of late, some proprietors, or rather, perhaps, their stewards, in order to obtain a certain clear rent, have thrown the whole burden, both of taxes and repairs, upon the tenant.

Furthermore, the ‘assessment of the annual value of lands … subjects the industrious farmer to a varied and increasing taxation upon his improvements. And however politic it may be, as a measure of finance, it operates specially on the efforts of the … renter’.

It seems that the ways of a compassionless world rife with opportunist raged against George Worgan the humble farmer.

In Europe during the eighteenth century, levels of taxation steadily increased ‘as armies and fleets grew bigger and as governments increased their commitment to education’. Although British governments did not spend on education, Britain shared in the general trend … whereas national income doubled between 1700 and 1790, [taxation] revenue per capita increased more than two and a half times. In 1700, the government was taking some 9.1% of the national income, but by 1790 it had risen to 15.0%.

Even though taxes were minimal compared with modern rates of taxation, it was considered iniquitous to have to pay any at all. Britain was actually the first country in Europe to enact income tax: in 1799 the government, desperate for money to pay the armed forces, imposed a personal levy of two shillings in the pound on all incomes in excess of £200 a year. A descending scale of rates was applied to lower incomes, with exemption below £60 p.a.

George Worgan was well acquainted with financial precariousness, and his anxieties would have been compounded by the burden of taxation.

Indirect taxation most affected the working and middle classes. Even the necessities of life were taxed … indirect taxation … cost the average

238 Ibid., ‘Mode of Occupation, Section 2: Rent’, Chapter 4, p. 32.
239 Ibid., Section 5, Chapter 4, p. 36.
240 Ibid., Chapter 16, p. 178.
241 Cannon, Aristocratic Century, p. 142.
242 Ibid., p. 142.
243 Murray, An Elegant Madness, p. 86.
labourer half his yearly income … based on a yearly income of £22 10s … [there were] taxes on malt (by far the highest, at £4 11s 3d), sugar, tea and coffee (regarded as luxuries, and taxed accordingly at £1 4s), soap, housing, clothes and even food (£3).

The window tax was another great cause of complaint, particularly, of course, amongst the landlords who owned whole villages as well as their various mansions … In 1784 the tax on a house with ten windows was more than doubled, from 11s 4d to £1 4s 4d and by 1808 it had risen to £2 16s: a house with thirty windows paid £19 12s 6d annually, with corresponding rises according to the number of windows … It was thus an obvious economy to block up some of the windows, so people began to live and sleep in rooms which had neither natural light nor air, with inevitable results for the health of the community. This was not, however, a consideration which was obvious at the time since most people, including doctors, regarded fresh air as lethal.244

Because disease was rife in the cities, one could say that, to a certain extent, fresh air was indeed lethal.

In England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the profusion of taxes made life a misery. The English clergyman, critic and philosopher Sydney Smith (1771–1845) summed up the experience:

[E]very article which enters into the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot—taxes upon everything which is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell or taste—taxes upon warmth, light and locomotion—taxes upon everything on earth, and the waters under the earth—or everything that comes from abroad, or is grown at home—taxes on the raw material—taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man—taxes on the sauce which pampers man’s appetite, and the drug that restores him to health—on the ermine which decorates the judge and the rope that hangs the criminal—on the poor man’s salt and the rich man’s spice—on the brass nails of the coffin, and the ribands of the bride—at bed or board, couchant or levant, we must pay:—The schoolboy whips his taxed top—the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle on a taxed road:—and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine which has paid 7 per cent., into a spoon that has paid 15 per cent.—flings himself back on his chintz-bed which has paid 22 per cent.—makes his will on an eight pound stamp, and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a license of an hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then

244 Ibid., p. 87.
immediately taxed from 2 to 10 per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel; his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble; and he is then gathered to his fathers,—to be taxed no more.\textsuperscript{245}

Ironically, despite the fact that during the first decade of the nineteenth century England was taxed to the hilt to pay for war with France, the English middle class slavishly followed Parisian fashion. As early as 1766, the English author Tobias Smollett (1721–71), in his \textit{Travels through France and Italy}, observed:

\begin{quote}
The French, however, with all their absurdities, preserve a certain ascendancy over us, which is very disgraceful to our nation; and this appears in nothing more than in the article of dress. We are contented to be thought their apes in fashion; but, in fact, we are slaves to their tailors, mantua-makers [dressmakers], barbers, and other tradesmen.\textsuperscript{246}
\end{quote}

Many English aristocratic women were also devoted to French fashion. For example, on Friday, 2 January 1750, Lady Jane Coke (1706–61) wrote: ‘As for fashions, according to English custom we follow the French Ambassadress.’\textsuperscript{247} The French ambassadress Madame de Mirepoix ‘was a leader of fashion, and one of the principal ladies of society during her husband’s term of appointment’ in London.\textsuperscript{248} In England, ‘fashion had remained static for decades or more’. During the mid-eighteenth century, however, ‘it grew possible to identify specific styles for every passing year … in 1753 purple was in vogue for women, in 1754, it was the turn of white linen with a pink pattern and in 1755 of dove grey’.\textsuperscript{249}

An observation made by the English physician John Bulwer (1606–56) in 1653 was still pertinent 100 years on in relation to the English aristocracy and middle class:

\begin{quote}
Our English ladies, who seeme to have borrowed some of their cosmeticall conceits from barbarous nations, are seldom known to be content with
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{246} Riding, \textit{Mid-Georgian Britain 1740–69}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid., p. 34. Whilst in Paris, the English politician, art historian and man of letters Horace Walpole wrote of Madame Mirepoix: ‘Madame de Mirepoix … has read, but seldom shows it, and has perfect taste. Her manner is cold, but very civil; … Nobody in France knows the world better, and nobody is personally so well with the King. She is false, artful, and insinuating beyond measure when it is her interest, but indolent and a coward. She never had any passion but gaming, and always loses. For ever paying court, the sole produce of a life of art is to get money from the King to carry on a course of paying debts or contracting new ones, which she discharges as fast as she is able.’ C. D. Yonge (ed.), \textit{Letters of Horace Walpole Volume II} (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1890), Letter 91.
\end{flushleft}
a face of gods making: for they are either adding, detracting, or altering continually, having many focusses in readiness for the same purpose. Sometimes they think they have too much colour, then they use art to make them look pale and faire. Now they have too little colour, then Spanish paper, red leather, or other cosmeticall rubriques must be had. Yet for all this, it may be, the skins of their faces do not please them.

For George Worgan, the payment of farm leases would have represented yet another drain on his finances. Worgan informs us that farm leases ‘are mostly held for terms of fourteen years, a few for twenty-one years, and still fewer for seven’. A new single lease usually cost 14–18 years’ rent. The renewal of an existing lease usually cost three years’ rent (depending on the estate policy). Worgan took up his first leases ca 1800. It is probable that the cost of renewing the leases, combined with land taxes, acted as a catalyst for Worgan’s financial hardship.

Worgan’s landlord at the farm in Bray was Philip Wynell-Mayow (1771–1844), a man who, according to his obituary,

was very charitable and benevolent, and on several occasions … [was] known, when a needy offender against the revenue laws had been committed to gaol in default of payment of penalties imposed, out of his own resources to become a private donor to the family thus deprived of their ordinary means of support.

It appears, however, that Wynell-Mayow’s benevolence did not extend to George Worgan.

It is reasonable to assume that Worgan experienced financial difficulties from at least the time of the first publication of his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* in 1811 (if not from the time that he finished writing the report in 1808), after which he ‘turned school-master’.

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251 ‘Mode of Occupation, Section 5: Leases’ in Worgan, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall Drawn Up and Published by Order of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement*, Chapter 4.


255 See ‘George Worgan, the Published Author’, above.

In June 1822, Worgan’s address in Liskeard is given as Dean Street (Plate 82). Eight years later, in 1830, Pigot & Co.’s National Commercial Directory identifies George Worgan as one of Liskeard’s ‘gentry’, and lists his address in Liskeard as West Street, a road on the northern fringes of Liskeard, leading out of the town in a north-westerly direction (Plate 83). If Worgan was employed as a schoolteacher during the 1820s, it is likely that he would have been provided with accommodation as part of his employment. That there are no records regarding his payment of rent is the expected consequence.

That in 1828 Worgan petitioned the Secretary of State for Colonies to employ his youngest son in New South Wales suggests a failing financial context. It also reveals a loving, fatherly concern for the personal fulfilment and welfare of one of his children. Worgan’s actions expose the fortitude that was a necessity for those who had ‘embarked on the parental course’. For, as a parent, Worgan watched ‘the unfathomable waters of providence lapping ominously and relentlessly at [his] … undefended feet’.

Plate 82 Dean Street, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

258 Pigot, ‘Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 149.
259 Worgan lived in one of the houses that spread along West Street as far as the present Westbourne car park.
Plate 83 West Street, Liskeard (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

Wadeland House

In 1836 Worgan built ‘Wadeland House’ on New Road,262 a recently constructed road leading out of Liskeard, to Bodmin, in a westerly direction.263 Worgan’s Wadeland House was situated 20 metres from the northern side of New Road, approximately 0.5 kilometres from the town centre. Four years before, ‘the Liskeard-Looe Canal Company had cut the New Road [and footpath] from Moorswater into the town, saving the steep and hazardous descent’264 through Lady Park Wood265 to Moorswater (approximately 2 kilometres away) ‘by the

263 On 15 November 1993, Wadeland House was listed as a Grade II English Heritage Building (ID 382226).
265 ‘Ladye Park, Cornwall, was in Medieval times a great place of Christian Pilgrimage. The shrine and chapel of Our Ladye of the Park was dissolved at the reformation.’ ‘Ladye Park or Our Lady in the Park Liskeard—Cornwall’. (2001, last updated 2 May 2009).
Old Road’. In 1825, ‘the building of the Looe to Liskeard Canal … eased the transportation of coal from South Wales for use in the town, and the lime and seasand required by the surrounding farmers to fertilize the land’.

A tithe map of 1840 reveals that two vacant blocks separated Wadeland House from the nearest houses; these houses, on Dean Street, defined the western outskirts of the town. For the Worgans at their idyllic Wadeland House, ‘the countryside was never too far away’, this is especially so because Wadeland House was part of a farm, comprising several acres of farmland behind and to the side of the building.

That Worgan had Wadeland House built in 1836 is both surprising and remarkable. Not only was Worgan 79 years old at the time, but also the enterprise would have cost him a considerable amount of money. Approximately ‘£300 was considered the cost of building such a house’, this was the equivalent of a prosperous tradesman’s yearly income. It is not clear where Worgan obtained the money to build Wadeland House. (Could it perhaps have been money inherited following the death of his wife’s parents?) In 1828, eight years prior to the construction of Wadeland House, Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons, had immigrated to New South Wales. Five years later, in 1833, his eldest son, George William, may also have left Liskeard, in a somewhat fraught state of mind, for London. Ensuing contexts may have allowed Worgan to enjoy some relief from financial pressure; such contexts, combined with what appears to have been Worgan’s frugality during the period(s) of his employment as a schoolteacher, suggest that he exercised the financial prudence necessary for saving enough money to pay for the building project.

Worgan’s use of his resources to build Wadeland House strongly suggests that by 1836, not only was he committed to being a permanent part of Liskeard’s citizenry, but also (apart from seeking to provide generously for his wife) he was looking forward to spending his final years in security and comfort. Certainly, Worgan’s involvement in the building of Wadeland House would have kept him active in his advanced old age.

Wadeland House still exists, and in many respects remains unaltered since Worgan built it. The current owners are aware of the historical significance of their family home, and have made of it a haven of love and hospitality. Wadeland House comprises a two-storey building (Plate 84), with an attached service cottage (Plate 85), and a separate privy at the rear (Plate 86); the privy’s nine-pane casement is original.

266 Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 4; and Allen, The History of the Borough of Liskeard and its Vicinity, p. 382.
267 Gillard, Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey, p. 20.
268 See Deacon, Liskeard & Its People in the 19th Century, p. 3.
269 Ibid., p. 4.
271 See ‘Whispers and Rumours: Who Was Charles Parsons Worgan?’, in Chapter 12, this volume.
272 The following description of the house and service cottage is based on (and includes quotations taken from) ‘Listing Text’, in British Listed Buildings, History in Structure: Daniel’s Cottage, Attached Walls and Earth Closet, Liskeard (n.d.).
Plate 84 Wadeland House (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 85 The service cottage attached to Wadeland House: in the foreground, a single-room pantry wing extends at the back of the house.

Source: Photo by the author.
At the back of the house, a north-facing single-room pantry wing extends behind the kitchen (Plate 87). The pantry wing has a dry-slate roof. The pantry’s orientation, and the fact that the room is in part below ground level, helps to keep it cool, thereby enhancing its function as a storage facility geared to the preservation of food.

The front and sides of the house are made of incised stucco on rubble. In typical Cornish fashion, the hipped tile roof (Plate 88), with projecting eves at the front (Plate 89), sweeps lower at the rear (Plate 90) than at the front. The original roof was replaced in 1968.

Some of the cast-iron gutters have an ogee decorative profile. Originally, there were two brick chimney stacks; there are now three (Plate 90).
Plate 87 Wandeland House: at the back of the house, a single-room pantry wing extends behind the kitchen.
Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 88 Wandeland House: the hipped concrete-tile roof.
Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 89 Wandeland House: projecting eves at the front.
Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 90 Wadeland House: in typical Cornish fashion, the roof sweeps lower at the rear than at the front.

Source: Photo by the author.

The windows of the symmetrical three-window front (Plate 91) still have their original small-horned sashes and glazing bars (Plate 92).

The central doorway has its original four-panel door. At some stage after it was originally installed, the door’s two top panels were glazed; recently, stained-glass panels have replaced the glazing (Plate 93). The vertical section of the wall lying between the doorframe and the outer wall is panelled, as is the soffit (Plate 94).

Entrance to the central doorway is via a distyle Roman Doric porch (Plate 95). The porch suggests the facade of a nobleman’s country seat.273 Each of the porch’s plain columns has a moulded base and a Doric frieze to the entablature (Plate 96). The two front pillars were recently replaced. Those nearest the doorway are original.

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Plate 91 Wandeland House: symmetrical three-window front.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 92 Wandeland House: original small-horned sashes and glazing bars.

Source: Photo by the author.
Left: Plate 93 Wadeland House: original four-panel central doorway.
Right: Plate 94 Wadeland House: original panelling of the left-hand vertical section of the wall lying between the doorframe and the outer wall.

Source: Photos by the author.
The front rooms and entrance hallway are imposing and elegantly proportioned. The dimensions of the rooms at the back of the house are much more modest. It is reasonable to assume that limitations on Worgan’s finances precluded him from making every room in the house an imposing one.

The interior of the house has many of its original features, including

1. the bell-pull and bell for the central doorway (Plate 97)
2. bell-pull (lever) mechanism for the ground floor right-hand front (drawing) room (Plates 98–100)
3. moulded plaster ceiling cornices (Plates 99–101)
4. internal window shutters (Plates 102 and 103)
5. rear niches and cupboards in the right-hand front (drawing) room
6. the open-well stair (Plate 104) with an exquisitely comfortable mahogany handrail scrolled over the newel post (Plates 105 and 106)
7. the laterally sliding pantry window (Plate 107).

Left: Plate 97 Wadeland House: the original exterior bell-pull—located adjacent and to the left of the central doorway.
Right: Plate 98 Wadeland House: the original bell-pull (lever)—located at the right-hand edge of the left-hand rear niche in the ground-floor right-hand front (drawing) room (detail).

Source: Photos by the author.
Plate 99 Wadeland House: original moulded plaster ceiling cornices in the ground-floor right-hand front (drawing) room—the bell-pull mechanism follows the right-hand exterior edge of the left-hand rear niche, and the lower edge of the cornice above the left-hand rear niche (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 100 Wadeland House: original moulded plaster ceiling cornices comprising the right-hand rear corner of the ground-floor central entrance hallway (detail)—the original servant’s bell is operated via a bell-pull (lever) located in the ground-floor right-hand front (drawing) room.

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 101 Wadeland House: top-floor original moulded plaster cornice (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 102 Wadeland House: original internal window shutters (right-hand, half-closed) in the left-hand ground-floor front room (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 103 Wandeland House: original internal window shutters (closed) in the left-hand ground-floor front room (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 104 Wandeland House: the original open-well stair.

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 105 Wandeland House: the original mahogany handrail, scrolled over the newel post (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 106 Wandeland House: the original mahogany handrail, scrolled over the newel post (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 107 Wadeland House: the original laterally sliding pantry window (detail)—a freshly cooked pie, for example, could be placed on a shelf underneath the window, with the sliding window open to aid cooling. Vertical metal bars on the inside of the window prevent the pie from being stolen when the sliding window is open.

Source: Photo by the author.

The Service Cottage

The attached single-room two-storey rubble service cottage has a dry-slate roof, with a rubble and brick lateral chimney stack (Plate 108).

The ground floor of the cottage contains one original window, incorporating a twentieth-century sash. Plate 109 shows the original slate sill at the bottom of this window.

The slate ground floor is original (Plate 110). In Worgan’s day, the ground floor was used for many purposes, and may sometimes even have housed animals.

The first floor originally comprised two chambers (it is now a single room), and functioned as servants’ accommodation. Access to the servants’ quarters was
via an external doorway approached by a flight of stone steps (Plate 111). The stairway still has its original iron balustrade (Plates 111 and 112). The four-pane horned sash window at the left of the doorway is also original (Plate 111).

A privy was located a short distance from the service cottage (Plate 86).

The front gate piers and screen walls of the street entrance to Wadeland House are probably original. They comprise ‘coursed slatestone rubble with slate copings. The square-on plan gate piers [and end piers] flank cyma-on-plan screen walls’ (Plates 113 and 114).274

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Plate 108 Wadeland House: attached service cottage—the cottage has a dry-slate roof with a rubble and brick lateral chimney stack.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 109 Wadeland House: attached service cottage—the original ground-floor window’s slate windowsill.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 110 Wadeland House: attached service cottage—original slate ground floor (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 111 Wadeland House: attached service cottage—access to the first-floor servants’ quarters is via an external doorway approached by a flight of stone steps. The iron balustrade is original.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 112 Wadeland House: attached service cottage—the external stairway’s original iron balustrade (detail).

Photo by the author.
Plate 113 Wadeland House: original front gate piers and screen walls.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 114 Wadeland House: original right-hand front gate pier and screen wall (detail).

Source: Photo by the author.
A well is located at the back of the house. A feed pipe connects the well to a pump, which would have been operated by a servant. The pump feeds water through a channel located in the back wall up to a tank in the ceiling. Using gravity to create pressure, stored water from the tank was available inside the house. Such a luxury feature was rare in 1836, and is suggestive not only of George Worgan’s fascination for design innovation and invention, but also his liking for creature comforts.

275 See ‘George Worgan, the Inventor’, above.
Chapter 12

George Worgan’s Youngest Son, John Parsons, Immigrates to Sydney

During his final years in Wadeland House, George Worgan may, on occasion, have reflected upon his life’s journey, filled as it had been with excitement, adventure and more than a fair share of tribulation. As fate would have it, the life paths of his two sons were also destined to lead in unexpected, testing directions.

In 1828, Worgan petitioned the Secretary of State for the Colonies to provide his youngest son, John Parsons, with employment in New South Wales.¹ He explained ‘that he “had fallen on hard times” ([Worgan] … was by then 71 and must surely have given up teaching)’.² Fortunately, his heartfelt request met with a sympathetic response from the authorities.

On Monday, 23 February 1830, the brig Elizabeth arrived at Hobart Town, having departed from Plymouth on Tuesday, 8 September 1829. The Elizabeth carried ‘cargo principally for New South Wales’,³ as well as passengers travelling to Sydney. The Hobart Town Courier lists one of these passengers as ‘Worgan’.⁴ Was this George Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons? (While this is likely, it is by no means certain.)

John Parsons (?) Worgan’s arrival at Hobart Town may have been attended by an event similar to that experienced eight years earlier (on Saturday, 12 January 1822) by a servant, John Brown (fl. 1821–32), of the Scott family. Having sailed from England to Hobart Town on HMS Britomart, Brown wrote:

[A]t 6 Oclock in the evening we came to anchor at Hobart Town which is the principle settlement of Van Deimans Land, we were soon surrounded with canoes full of natives both men and women with fish and oysters which they sold for biscuit, they are of a dark chocolate colour well made with woolley heads the only clothing they wear is a belt round their middle made of hair, which serves them for a kind of pocket for if anything is given them they put it inside the belt.⁵

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¹ See Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan, p. xii.
² Edwards, ‘George Bouchier Worgan’, p. 10. That Worgan was experiencing financial difficulties in 1828 makes his ability to fund the building of Wadeland House only eight years later all the more inexplicable.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ J. Brown (attrib.), Anonymous Diary by a Servant of the Scott Family, 8 Aug. 1821–Mar. 1824 (written after 1825), with Notes, 1832 (Sydney: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Manuscripts, Oral History and Pictures, ca 1825), Image 17 (No. a2852017).
The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 30 April 1830 identifies the brig Elizabeth—upon which ‘Worgan’ had travelled from Plymouth to Hobart Town—as being one of the ships expected in Sydney.⁶ The Elizabeth arrived that same day, carrying 11 male convicts⁷ and 28 other passengers. (The Sydney Shipping Arrivals Register dated 30 April 1830⁸ records that the Elizabeth had departed from ‘London and Hobart Town [on, respectively] 8th September [1829 and] 8th April [1830]’.)⁹ The Sydney Shipping Arrivals Register dated Tuesday, 30 April 1830 lists one of the passengers on board the Elizabeth as ‘Mr. Wm Worgan’, whose ‘Profession, trade, or calling’ is described as ‘settler’.¹⁰

Was this George Bouchier Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons, and if so, why is he listed as ‘William’? Perhaps a clerical error was made (three other passengers on board the Elizabeth were also called William). Shipping arrivals information published in the Sydney press eight years later suggests that this ‘Mr. Wm Worgan’ was not George Bouchier Worgan’s eldest son, George William (who arrived in Sydney eight years after ‘Mr. Wm Worgan’, on Friday, 3 August 1838).¹¹ No other person with the surname Worgan is listed as having arrived in Sydney either during the 1820s or in the year of ‘Mr. Wm’ Worgan’s (John Parsons?) arrival (in 1830).

As John Parsons Worgan sailed through the Heads into Sydney Harbour, his first impressions may have been similar to those expressed by the artist Conrad Martens (1801–78), who, in his journal entry dated Thursday, 9 April 1835, wrote:

> The appearance when off the heads of Port Jackson is that of a wild and ironbound coast and the entrance that of a gigantic gateway.¹² But the scene changes immediately upon entering to the calm and beautiful, islands bays and headlands … covered with wood … and after passing a

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⁸ The register of shipping arrivals was instituted by Governor Phillip in 1799.
¹⁰ Ibid. Of the 28 passengers listed, Worgan appears as the twentieth.
¹² A watercolour drawing entitled Sydney Heads by Augustus Earle (1793–1838), dated ca 1826, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXC 284; Album ID 824681; Digital order no. a709031).
point about 2 miles within the entrance, the town of Sydney is seen tho’ at a distance of 5 or 6 miles and still further the faint outline of the blue mountains in the interior.\textsuperscript{13}

About four months after John Parsons arrived in Sydney, he began steady employment; between Monday, 13 September 1830 and Saturday, 13 August 1836—that is between his 25th and 31st years—John Parsons was clerk to the Bench of Magistrates at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney.\textsuperscript{14}

**John Parsons, His Father’s Journal and Dr John Lhotsky**

The naturalist Dr John Lhotsky (1795?–1866?), in his book *A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps*,\textsuperscript{15} testifies to the presence of John Parsons in Sydney:

> Amongst a collection relating to the history of New South Wales—a collection which I am daily increasing, I possess a very valuable manuscript in 2 vols. under the following title; ‘An account of the first Colonization of New South Wales—also, of that part of the Country colonised, its inhabitants, &c. &c., in a series of letters to a friend, by G. B. Worgan, Esq., surgeon in His Majesty’s Ship Sirius.’ This manuscript communicated to me by the son of the author, (Mr. John P. Worgan,) will, when published, afford much information, and complete the—as it were, primordial narratives of Captains Phillips, Hunter, Collins, &c.\textsuperscript{16}

Dr Lhotsky arrived in Sydney from Brazil in 1832. He subsequently left Sydney for Hobart Town in October 1836, departing from there in April 1838 for London on board the *Emu*.\textsuperscript{17} It is reasonable to assume that Lhotsky met

\textsuperscript{13} C. Martens, *Journal of a Voyage on Board H.M.S. Hyacinth Commenced May. 19. 1833* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, Manuscripts, Oral History and Pictures, 1833–35), Images 123 [No. a1090124] and 124 [a1090125]. A watercolour drawing entitled *A View of Sydney N. S. Wales on Entering the Heads the Distance of Seven Miles*, attributed to George William Evans (1780–1852), dated 1809?, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXC 388; Album ID 823548; Digital order no. a1313026).

\textsuperscript{14} See Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan*, p. xii. Details concerning the period and place of John Parsons Worgan’s employment are found in the ‘Introduction’. The anonymous author of the introduction provides no sources for the information. A hand-coloured lithograph depicting Hyde Park Barracks by John Gardner Austin (?–1842), dated 1836, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXC 581; Album ID 861838; Digital order no. a2398013).


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 12–13, fn. †.

John Parsons Worgan in Sydney between 1832 (the year of Lhotsky’s arrival in Sydney) and 1835 (the year of publication of Lhotsky’s *A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps*, in which he mentions ‘John P. Worgan’).

It is logical to speculate that in 1830, John Parsons brought a version of his father’s journal with him to Sydney. In the extant version of George Bouchier Worgan’s journal (which takes the form of a long letter to his younger brother Richard), Worgan refers to two other versions of his journal: 1) his ‘rough journal’,18 and 2) a ‘fuller and more accurate’19 version.

The whereabouts of these two versions is unknown. Could it be that either the ‘rough’ or the ‘fuller & more accurate’ version of George Bouchier Worgan’s journal has been lost because it was brought to Sydney by John Parsons?

It is reasonable to suppose that it was the fuller and more accurate version that John Parsons brought to Sydney. George Worgan’s journal was housed in Dr Lhotsky’s ‘collection relating to the history of New South Wales’.20 Lhotsky writes that Worgan’s journal was ‘communicated to me by the son of the author, (Mr. John P. Worgan)’.21 From a twenty-first-century perspective, it is not clear exactly what Lhotsky means when he uses the word ‘communicated’. During the early nineteenth century, an archaic meaning associated with the word was ‘to give’. Although this meaning was virtually obsolete by the time Lhotsky used the word ‘communicated’ in his book *A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps*, it is likely that he intended the reader to understand the following: ‘a very valuable Manuscript [that is, George Worgan’s journal was] … communicated [that is, given] to me by the son of the author, (Mr. John P. Worgan).’22

Did Lhotsky regard Worgan’s journal as being ‘very valuable’ because the document was the original manuscript? This is probable. In the extant version of George Bouchier Worgan’s journal, the second-last paragraph includes the following words: ‘I am keeping by me an account of the voyage &c. &c. in a series of letters … They are something fuller & more accurate than this.’23 The title of Worgan’s journal in Lhotsky’s possession included the following words: ‘An account … in a series of letters.’24 Both the ‘account’ that George Bouchier Worgan admitted to ‘keeping by’ him (which he took home to England from Sydney Cove in 1791) and the manuscript in Lhotsky’s possession were each described as being in the form of a ‘series of letters’. There can be little doubt that these two descriptions apply to one and the same document.

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19 Ibid., p. 58.
20 Lhotsky, *A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps*, p. 12, fn. ✝.
21 Ibid., p. 13, fn.
22 Ibid., pp. 12–13, fn. ✝.
George Bouchier’s admission that the version of his journal appearing as ‘a series of letters’ is fuller and more accurate than any other version enables us to posit that it was this version of his father’s journal that John Parsons Worgan brought to Sydney, where, some time between 1832 and 1835, he gave it to Dr Lhotsky. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, one assumes that John Parsons brought the journal to Sydney with his father’s blessing.

Dr Lhotsky writes that George Bouchier Worgan’s journal ‘will, when published, afford much information’.25 Perhaps Lhotsky intended to publish the manuscript. It seems, however, that much of Lhotsky’s time was spent not only giving public lectures, but also writing newspaper articles (which ‘are too numerous to list’),26 tracts, pamphlets and contributions to scientific, literary and political journals.27 These activities, as well as financial considerations, may have diverted Lhotsky away from the task of publishing Worgan’s journal (the version of George Bouchier’s journal in Lhotsky’s possession was never published).

Prior to Lhotsky’s departure from Hobart Town for London in 1838, he found himself burdened by increasing levels of debt. On Tuesday, 3 April 1838, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser reported: ‘Our old acquaintance Dr. Lhotsky has not left Van Dieman’s Land yet. The Dr. carries on in Hobart Town the same game he practised in Sydney during his four years residence here, getting into debt to every one that will allow him, and libelling such as refuse.’28

In order to quit his debts before he departed from Hobart Town, Lhotsky’s ‘collection of natural history … was put up for … sale’.29 On Monday, 5 February 1858, The Sydney Herald reported that the ‘Mechanic’s Institution’ had purchased Lhotsky’s collection for £20, payable ten days after the sailing of the vessel which is to convey the Doctor from [Tasmanian] … shores. This is one way of getting rid of a trouble-some customer.’30

It is not known if George Bouchier’s journal was included in the sale. If it was, perhaps the ‘fuller & more accurate’ version of Worgan’s journal sits somewhere in Tasmania, awaiting discovery. The journal currently rests in the wallet in which time puts alms for oblivion.31

25 Ibid., p. 13, fn.
26 Whitley, ‘Lhotsky, John (1795–1866)’.
27 See ibid.
29 Whitley, ‘Lhotsky, John (1795–1866)’.
In Hobart Town, Dr Lhotsky’s farewell lecture, entitled ‘Science, Education, and Civilisation’, produced a passionate response from those citizens of the Apple Isle\(^{32}\) who were fortunate enough to attend. On Wednesday, 21 March 1838, *The Colonist* described the event:

> [M]any of the auditory, inspired no doubt by the subject, began to show the effects of the lecture on Civilization and Education, by projecting with considerable force several globular pieces of the *pyrus malus* from different parts of the theatre towards the centre of the stage; or, in vul[lar] language, they began to throw apples at the lecturer; whereat, the learned gentleman, (like a second Newton,) as the apples fell about him, paused—doubtless to reflect upon the cause of their gravitation towards the centre: nor was his philosophical mind long in discovering the true cause, of which, as soon as he had apparently satisfied himself, he thanked the audience for the honour which they had done him, in listening so attentively to his remarks, and some what abruptly made his bow and his exit. During the performance … two trap-doors upon the stage were opened, and two demons, with forks and flaming torches, ascended—rushed about for a short period—and then descended. This exhibition, for which we were unprepared, we have since been informed, was to be understood allegorically, as representing … evil genius … under the semblance of demons of discord, driving away the little good which might be otherwise effected by civilization and education.\(^{33}\)

The audience’s response may have had as much to do with the fact that attendance at the theatre was often a test of endurance, as it did with Dr Lhotsky’s unsplendid farewell lecture. A patron at the Royal Victoria Theatre in Hobart (which was officially opened on Wednesday, 8 March 1837, one year before Dr Lhotsky presented the fruits of his creative talent) wrote: ‘We were squeezed into impatience by the crowd, and half poisoned by the smell of stale tobacco smoke, foul breath, and unwashed, frowsy bodies, proceeding from a dense mass of vulgar spirit and beer-drinking, oily haired knaves, who pushed upon one another without mercy.’\(^{34}\)

Upon his return to London, Dr Lhotsky ‘sank into dire poverty’.\(^{35}\) Lhotsky had ‘acquired letters’ by the botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer (1760–1826) written during the voyage commanded by Matthew Flinders on HMS *Investigator*.\(^{36}\)

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\(^{32}\) During the mid-twentieth century, Tasmania became known as the ‘Apple Isle’ because, for many years, it was one of the world’s major apple producers. The etymology of the title is also based on the supposed resemblance of the map of Tasmania to the shape of an apple.


\(^{35}\) Whitley, ‘Lhotsky, John (1795–1866)’.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
order (presumably) to improve his situation, Lhotsky presented these letters to
the Linnean Society. If, at the time, Lhotsky still possessed George Bouchier
Worgan’s two-volume journal, he may (for similar reasons) have offered the
manuscript to interested parties. Unfortunately, the fate of the manuscript that
John Parsons ‘communicated’ to Dr Lhotsky remains a mystery.

Perhaps John Parsons had musical skills. On Monday, 21 April 1845—that is,
nine years after John Parsons had ceased employment as clerk to the Bench
of Magistrates at Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney—the Sydney Morning Herald
published the following intriguing corrigendum:

To the Editors of the Sydney Morning Herald.

Gentlemen,—In the Herald of to-day, I am represented as having assisted
the Town Band, on the night of the Jewish Festival. I did no such thing;
but was a guest on that occasion, if you please.

—For the sake of my friends, (I care not), will you kindly give this a
corner in your valuable paper?

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

John Worgan.

April 19 [1845].

In a letter dated Wednesday, 6 July 2007, Alec and Olive Worgan, descendants of
one of George Bouchier Worgan’s brothers, writing to Brian Barrow, an antiques
restorer, fortepiano aficionado and owner of the Longman & Broderip square
piano dated 1785/86? discussed in Appendix B of Volume 2 of this publication,
state: ‘We believe he [John Parsons Worgan] died in 1848 but do not know
where he died or any other details.’ Evidence concerning John Parsons appears
in the form of an entry in the Darlinghurst Gaol Description and Entrance Books
dated Thursday, 9 November 1843.

The Description Book … [reveals] that [the then 38 year old] John …
was 5 feet 5 1/2 inches tall, with a fresh complexion, dark hair and hazel
eyes. According to the Sydney Morning Herald (10 Nov 1843), he was
charged with stealing a £ note. [John Parsons was discharged from the
gaol approximately five weeks later, on Tuesday, 12 December 1843.]

37 Ibid.
39 This information is derived from a conversation held on Saturday, 28 July 2012 between the author and
Brian Barrow. See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
40 I am indebted to Brian Barrow for access to this letter.
Again in 1849, John Worgan is entered at Darlinghurst gaol. The information entered is similar to that above, including the occupation of Clerk, with the addition that he is stout. He was admitted [on Monday,] 26 February 1849 … and discharged [approximately two weeks later, on Wednesday,] 14 March 1849.  

Until further information comes to light, the details of John Parsons Worgan’s final years and the circumstances surrounding his death remain unknown.

Despite the fact that the colony at Sydney Cove was ‘murky with injustice, bigotry, exploitation, long memories and short fuses’, it appears that John Parsons Worgan is one of the many ‘modestly born, determined individuals’ who managed to carve out an honourable and productive life in New South Wales; the new colony provided John Parsons with a context that (especially in future years) enabled ‘men of no description [to] … achieve a label, a post, a self-definition’.

**George Worgan’s Eldest Son, George William, Immigrates to Sydney**

The life in Sydney of George Worgan’s eldest son, George William, appears to have been much more colourful than that of John Parsons Worgan. It is likely that George William was the ‘Mr Worgan, music-master’ who arrived in Sydney from Plymouth on the barque *Forentia* on Friday, 3 August 1838—five months after his father, George Bouchier Worgan, had died (George William departed from England in April 1837, one month after his father had died). At the time of his arrival in Sydney, George William was 38 years old.

Because of the vagaries of the British economy caused by the ‘technological innovation that changed the balance between rural England and … industry, the British government had been encouraging people—principally from rural regions—to seek their fortunes elsewhere’. On Saturday, 21 December 1844, only six years after George William Worgan had arrived in Sydney, the *Illustrated London News* reported:

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Emigration has been progressively going on, not only to the South Seas, but also to the Canadas, and vast numbers of persons have availed themselves of the Government grant to quit their native shores for the purpose of seeking a better subsistence in the land of the stranger; and when we look at the existing condition of a considerable portion of our agricultural and manufacturing population, it excites but little wonder that a feverish restlessness should arise for change.\textsuperscript{46}

There is no evidence that John Parsons Worgan and George William Worgan ever made contact with each other in Sydney (one would like to think they did). There is also no evidence suggesting that either of the two brothers enquired of Elizabeth Macarthur regarding the fate of their father’s piano—an instrument that, as time passed, would have been regarded as being more and more old-fashioned.

Only five days after his arrival, George William placed the following advertisement in \textit{The Sydney Herald} of Wednesday, 8 August 1838:

\begin{quote}
Mr. G. W. Worgan,

\textit{Member of the Royal Society of Musicians, London, singing master, and teacher of the pianoforte}, begs respectfully to acquaint the ladies, the gentlemen and inhabitants of Sydney and its neighbourhood, that he has just arrived from London, and intends giving instruction in the above branches of his profession for terms, \&c, apply at Mr. Francis, Prince-street, opposite the Military Hospital. Schools attended. The pianoforte tuned by Mr. G. W. W on an improved principle.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

The Royal Society of Musicians was a charitable organisation—founded in 1738 as the ‘Fund for Decay’d Musicians’—which provided professional musicians and their families with a degree of financial support in times of need. ‘The originator of this fund was’ the violinist Michael Festing (1705–52),\textsuperscript{48} who, ‘with a feeble hand, little genius for composition, and but a shallow knowledge in counterpoint, by good sense, probity, prudent conduct, and a gentleman-like behaviour, acquired a weight and influence in his profession, at which hardly any musician of his class ever arrived’.\textsuperscript{49}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[46] \textshiplist.com/ILN.htm, quoted in ibid., p. 26.
\item[47] \textit{The Sydney Herald}, 8 August 1838, Vol. 8, p. 3. This was the first of 22 such advertisements that George William placed in Sydney newspapers between Wednesday, 8 August and Monday, 17 December 1838.
\item[48] Young, \textit{The Concert Tradition}, p. 87.
\end{footnotes}
Worgan’s mention of his membership of the Royal Society was doubtless a marketing ploy intended to enhance his credibility. George William had been inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians (as a pianist) on Sunday, 4 January 1835, three years prior to his arrival in Sydney.50

One month after George William’s arrival in Sydney, The Australian of Tuesday, 9 October 1838 published the following information:

Mechanics’ School of Arts.—

Amongst the other sources of mutual instruction at this increasing and useful Institution, there will in future be a Weekly Musical Class, on the same principle as the Wednesday Evening Debating Class. The days of meeting are not yet decided on, but we understand, that Mr Worgan has offered his services as leader of the class—and, as that gentleman has acquired a high character for his musical attainments, the class is likely to be of a superior description.51

George William Performs

Two days later, on Thursday, 11 October 1838, The Australian advertised the participation of ‘a celebrated vocal amateur, Mr. Worgan’ at a ‘Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’ to be given on Wednesday, 17 October in the ‘Saloon of the Royal Hotel.’52 Worgan’s performance received the following critique:

A gentleman named Worgan, who has recently arrived, sang a simple little ballad, accompanying himself on the piano-forte [we do not know who made or owned the instrument]; Mr. W displayed much taste, but his voice is so low and weak that, at the lower end of the room, he was nearly inaudible; but from the way in which he acquitted himself, there can be no doubt of his being an excellent musician.53

Worgan’s career was a busy one. The next month, he participated in yet another ‘Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’ given in the saloon of the Royal Hotel,54 on Wednesday, 21 November.

52 The Australian, 11 October 1838, (NS), Vol. 5, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia. A hand-coloured lithograph entitled George Street & The Royal Hotel & Commercial Exchange in 1836 by George Roberts (ca 1800–65), dated 1850, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney [Call no. PXA 581; Album ID 861838; Digital order no. a2398013].
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Two months later, on Wednesday, 23 January, Worgan sang in a concert given in the saloon of the Royal Hotel.\footnote{55 See advertisement published in \textit{The Australian}, 19 January 1839, (NS), Vol. 6, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia.} One month later, \textit{The Sydney Herald} of Wednesday, 20 February 1839 advertised Worgan’s involvement (as singer) in a concert to be held seven days later in the saloon of the Royal Hotel.\footnote{56 \textit{The Sydney Herald}, 20 February 1839, Vol. 9, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia.} At this concert, ‘the bass voice of the 	extit{amateur} was too powerful for Mr. Worgan, who … was also a little 	extit{out} in the harmony … Mr. Worgan cannot sing a ballad—his voice is any thing but melodious, and his cadences any thing but tasteful’.\footnote{57 \textit{The Colonist; Or, Journal of Politics, Commerce, Agriculture, Literature, Science, and Religion, for the Colony of New South Wales}, 2 March 1839, Vol. 5, No. 279, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia.} Because critics ‘who have no respect for the object of their comments feel no compunction about showing off their incendiary wit at the expense of their hapless and more-or-less defenseless victims’,\footnote{58 P. Schickele, ‘Foreword: If You Can’t Think of Something Nice to Say, Come Sit Next to Me’, in N. Slonimsky, \textit{Lexicon of Musical Invective: Critical Assaults on Composers since Beethoven’s Time} (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), p. x.} and because ‘it is a widely known fact—or, at least, a widely held belief—that negative criticism is more entertaining to read than enthusiastic endorsement’,\footnote{59 Ibid., p. ix.} the anonymous critic’s evaluation of George William’s vocal and interpretative skills was ignored by the musical community.

Eight months later, George William Worgan participated—as ‘principal vocal performer’ along with ‘the entire musical talent of Sydney’\footnote{60 \textit{The Sydney Herald}, 20 September 1839, Vol. 9, p. 2, Trove, National Library of Australia.}—in a ‘Grand Miscellaneous Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’\footnote{61 \textit{Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser}, 27 September 1839, Vol. 14, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia.} given at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Pitt Street, on Wednesday, 2 October 1839 (at this time, the Royal Victoria Theatre had been open for only one year).\footnote{62 An engraving entitled \textit{Interior of the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney} by Joseph Fowles (1810–78), dated 1849, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an8329195).} This concert was indeed a grand affair, ‘comprising upwards of seventy performers’.\footnote{63 \textit{Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser}, 27 September 1839, p. 3.} Six weeks later, on Wednesday, 13 November, George William sang two trios—with ‘Mr. and Mrs. Bushell’\footnote{64 \textit{Australasian Chronicle}, 8 November 1839, Vol. 1, No. 29, p. 4, Trove, National Library of Australia.}—at a ‘Grand Concert’\footnote{65 \textit{Ibid.}} held in the saloon of the Royal Hotel. At this concert, ‘the performances were … very creditable, at least to the vocal performers. The instruments being entirely left to themselves, went every one his own way in glorious confusion.’\footnote{66 \textit{Australasian Chronicle}, 15 November 1839, Vol. 1, No. 31, p. 1, Trove, National Library of Australia.}
A little more than two weeks later—on Sunday, 1 December 1839—Worgan went on a piano-tuning tour with the musical instrument retailer, publisher and piano tuner Francis Ellard (1798–1854) to Maitland, New South Wales.

**Francis Ellard’s Piano-Tuning Tours**

Five years earlier, Ellard had made a piano-tuning tour to the Hunter River area and Maitland. In this instance, his advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 13 November 1834 reveals his intention:

To the inhabitants residing on the Hunter’s River.

F. Ellard, musical instrument manufacturer and pianoforte tuner, begs to inform the inhabitants of the above district, that he will be in Maitland on Monday, the 24th Instant.

Any commands left at Mr. Cox’s Hotel, shall be punctually attended to.

In April the next year, Ellard made a piano-tuning tour of the Goulburn district. In the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 28 March 1835, he advertised:

To the *Inhabitants of Bong Bong, Inverary, and Goulburn, &c.*

F. Ellard, musical instrument maker, and pianoforte tuner, will be in the above neighbourhood (on or about the 2d of April) any commands left for him at the Post Offices of the above places, shall be punctually attended to.

*Music Warehouse, Hunter-street.*

It was about this time—that is, 1835—that John Benham (1784?–1845), ‘pianoforte maker’, who arrived in Australia in 1831, designed and produced the first Australian-made piano in his workshop at 5 Liverpool Street East.

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68 In relation to the sale of pianos, Ellard sold both new and second-hand instruments.
72 The only extant piano by John Benham (and probably the earliest surviving Australian-made piano) is in upright form—a ‘cottage’ piano. This instrument is part of the Powerhouse Museum Collection: Registration no. H8405. For details, see ‘Upright Pianoforte by John Benham, 1830–1840’, in *Powerhouse Museum Collection Search 2.53* (Sydney: Powerhouse Museum, n.d.).
Sydney. About 1835–38, a square piano was made by the London firm of Collard & Collard expressly for Francis Ellard (Ellard’s piano is currently housed in the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney).74

It appears that Francis Ellard did not visit the ‘isolated property named Gilmour, near Lake Bathurst, between Goulburn and Braidwood’,75 where the pioneer Ann Gore found it impossible to keep her piano in tune. On Friday, 29 September 1837, Ann, writing to her cousin Ellen Collinson in London, remarked: ‘When we first came up we found great amusement in music but unfortunately our piano is now out of tune so much that we are unable to play and there is no possibility of getting it repaired.’76

W. J. Johnson’s Piano-Tuning Tours

In January 1836, the arrival in Sydney of ‘Mr. W. J. Johnson, Professor of Music, and Tuner of Organs and Piano-Fortes’,77 created Ellard’s only commercial piano-tuning competition. Johnson announced that he had ‘great experience in tuning’.78 He claimed that his experience had produced ‘the flattering encomiums he [had] … received from the leading men in the musical profession’.79 Johnson located his business establishment in ‘George-street, next door to the Commercial Bank’.80 In October 1838, he relocated to ‘Castlereagh-street, between Bathurst and Liverpool-streets’.81

Competition between Johnson and Ellard was fierce. A year after arriving in Sydney, Johnson advertised—in January 1837—that he would ‘make arrangements, for visiting periodically all the principal towns in the colony, for the purpose of tuning, &c’.82 Both Johnson and Ellard regularly made piano-tuning tours of districts beyond Sydney, sometimes offering their services only weeks apart from one another in the same town.


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78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
Ellard’s inclusion of George William Worgan on his piano-tuning tour of December 1839 may have been an attempt to win over clientele from Johnson. Ellard announced his intention to include George William in an advertisement published in _The Sydney Herald_ on Friday, 29 November 1839:

To the Inhabitants of the Hunter and Paterson Rivers.—F. Ellard begs to acquaint the inhabitants of the above districts that he and Mr. George William Worgan, will be in Maitland on or about the 1st of December for the purpose of tuning and repairing piano-fortes. All commands by letter, left at the Post Office, will be punctually attended to.

_Music Saloon, George street_

_Sydney, November 25, 1839_ 83

Following the conclusion of this piano-tuning tour, a little more than four months later, on Saturday, 4 April 1840, ‘William Worgan, musician’ was charged with being drunk. The charge, however, was ‘not … fully proved’. 84 George William was not a regular miscreant. ‘The magistrates periodically attempted to control liquor and put down “disorderly houses”, obviously with little success.’ 85 Until 1850, Sydney constituted a rough, often pretentious, superficially puritanical and often nauseatingly hypocritical society. It is often difficult to determine whether the puritanism was deeper and more real than the hypocrisy …

The isolation, the nostalgia and the sheer boredom of the … [colony] for many … caused them to seek a refuge and relief in intoxication … drink … never ceased … to have a prominent and perhaps dominating place in the society, for the most part behind a façade of prim rectitude and sanctimoniously applauded hard work, abstemiousness and purity. 86

The next month, on Tuesday, 26 May 1840, George William Worgan again sang in public, at a concert held at the Theatre Royal. 87 That the Theatre Royal existed at all at this time was somewhat of a miracle. The Theatre Royal was located directly behind the Royal Hotel—the saloon of which had been the scene of so many performances in which George William Worgan had participated. Patrons ‘could pass through the hotel going to and from the theatre, spending

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86 Cumes, _Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid_, pp. 201–3.
their money on refreshments on the way’. Theatregoers were reminded that ‘a cold collation and other refreshments were constantly on the table for their accommodation’. On the night of Tuesday, 17 March 1840,

a ‘drunken carter’ lit both his pipe and some straw in a stable adjoining the [Royal] hotel. Rushing from a St Patrick’s Day Ball at Government House, Lieutenant [Edward] Lugard [b. 1810] ‘levelled several tenements’ but saved the Royal Victoria Theatre, and Colonel [George] Barney [1792–1862] laid a trail of gunpowder to blow up some houses, if need be, to stop the fire spreading. Only ‘the providential lulling of the wind’ removed the danger of a Great Fire of Sydney and the total damage to the Royal Hotel and other buildings was estimated at £20 000.

The saloon of the Royal Hotel, the scene of so many concerts, was a smouldering ruin.

Two more advertisements published in 1841 mention George William as a ‘vocal performer’ in an oratorio performance held at St Mary’s Cathedral.

George William, Organist of St Mary’s Cathedral

The Sydney Herald of Saturday, 9 July 1842 describes George William Worgan as ‘the organist of St. Mary’s’ Cathedral, Sydney. In 1838, Worgan had participated in the dedication ceremony. Worgan was employed as the regular organist at St Mary’s Cathedral between 1842 and 1843.

88 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 176.
89 Ibid., p. 231. Cumes takes the quotations from: J. Fowles, Sydney in 1848: Illustrated by Copper-Plate Engravings of its Principal Streets, Public Buildings, Churches, Chapels, etc., from Drawings by Joseph Fowles (Sydney: J. Fowles, 1848), Chapter 12, pp. 50–1, Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook, eBook No. 0600151h.html. On Monday, 10 April 1837—three years before the fire—in correspondence between two convicts—one of whom was Lieutenant Lugard’s butler—Lieutenant Lugard was referred to as ‘the lobster’. See Free Settler or Felon? (2015), Entry #130040.
92 Skinner, Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition, p. 147, fn. 484.
93 A watercolour drawing entitled Roman Catholic Cathedral, St. Mary’s by Edmund Thomas Blacket (1817–83), dated 1842, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. Pxe 925 Box 1; Album ID 824206; Digital order no. a881008). See also the watercolour drawing entitled Hyde Park, St. Mary’s Cathedral and Belfry by John Rae (1813–1900), dated 1842, housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG SV*/Sp Coll/Rae/17; Digital order no. a928374). See also the tinted lithograph entitled The Cathedral Church of St. Mary’s, Sydney, NSW by John Skinner Prout (1805–76), dated 1841–44, housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. V*/Sp Coll/Prout/3; Digital order no. a1528653).
A report published in the *Australasian Chronicle* of Tuesday, 13 December 1842, concerning a Requiem Mass given the previous day at St Mary’s Cathedral for the Duke of Orleans, states that ‘a select choir [was] … accompanied on the organ by Mr. Worgan’.  

George William was also ‘involved in the presentation of a *Te Deum* on 19 March 1843 to mark Dr. [John Bede] Polding’s [1794–1877] elevation to Archbishop … Worgan was praised for his organ playing’.  

No evidence suggests that George William Worgan was Roman Catholic.

The organ that George William played at St Mary’s Cathedral was made by Henry Bevington & Sons, one of the leading organ builders in London, whose workshop was located in Greek Street, Soho. The organ was the colony’s largest, ‘and boasted an independent pedal department instead of an octave or so of pedals permanently coupled to the great’.

According to a description published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Friday, 5 February 1841, the instrument was

> of very excellent quality, [possessing] … considerable power, especially on the pedals …

The organ at St Mary’s is one of the finest in the world, having one fifth greater compass than that of St Paul’s Cathedral, which goes from CCC (16 feet pipe) to F in alto; one note greater than that of Westminster Abbey, which goes from GGG (24 feet pipe) to D in alto; and within a fifth of the great organs of York Minster and Birmingham (each 32 feet pipe).

Unfortunately, Henry Bevington used ‘unsuitable or unseasoned wood … and the instrument fell into disrepair in a few years. Repairs were effected under the direction of Bishop Charles Henry Davis [1815–54] soon after his arrival in 1848.’ (Bishop Davis ‘excelled as a musician. An accomplished organist, he composed and arranged and sang—and improved the voices of his choir with a generous egg-flip of his own invention.’) ‘This splendid and fascinating instrument was destroyed with the Cathedral in the fire of 29 June 1865.’

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98 Quoted in ibid., p. 35.
101 Rushworth, *Historic Organs of New South Wales*, p. 36.
In the moments of its destruction, the cathedral took on

a terrible grandeur: ‘The cold frosty air, blowing on the rafters caused them to glitter with resplendent brilliancy. The flames, like innumerable serpents of fire, hissed and crackled along every part of the building; and as they swept from one interior fitting to another, assumed most singular shapes’. Nothing was insured; the material loss was about £50 000.102

That an organ maker of Bevington’s experience and fine reputation used ‘unsuitable or unseasoned wood’ for the organ of St Mary’s Cathedral is inexplicable, and forces one to entertain the notion that he may have held the insufferably ignorant and imbecilic attitude that is still encountered within certain irritating British circles: nothing good can come from the colonies, so why bother?

A proposal was put forward to replace the lost organ with a harmonium, but the public outcry was so vociferous that a smaller replacement organ, made by the Sydney organ builder Thomas V. Bridson, was purchased in 1865. The new instrument was first used on 19 November 1865.103 Unfortunately, this short-lived organ was also destroyed by fire, in 1869.

On Wednesday, 31 August 1842, George William Worgan sang in a performance given at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Pitt Street, of Händel’s oratorio ‘Messiah’.104 Two months later, Worgan is again described as the organist of St Mary’s in an advertisement that reveals that he was also at that time employed as a singing teacher at Miss Rennie’s ‘College High School’.105

Miss Rennie, her father, the Scottish naturalist James Rennie (1787–1867), and her brother, Edward Alexander, had arrived in Sydney in 1840. ‘The men opened a College High School at 6 Elizabeth Street while [Miss] Rennie opened a day school for young ladies at the same address.’106 On Thursday, 9 December 1841, she advertised in the Colonial Observer that ‘the greatest attention will be paid to music, drawing, ornamental work, languages, and other Fashionable accomplishments’, and claimed to have ‘received a most expensive education in France, Prussia and England’. A later advertisement promised that ‘on fixed days, the young ladies will be taken out to gardens to learn Botany, and to the fields to draw from nature’.107

107 Ibid.
George William began his employment as singing teacher at Miss Rennie’s day school between ca 1841 and August 1842.

On Thursday, 8 December 1842, the *Sydney Morning Herald* announced ‘the appearance of a cantata composed by George Worgan *How Sweet those tuneful bells*, published [in Sydney] by Francis Ellard’. 108 The work was ‘[r]espectfully dedicated to the Very Reverend F[rancis] Murphy’ 109 (1795–1858), Catholic vicar-general (with jurisdiction over the whole of Australia) and the first bishop to be consecrated in Australasia (in St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney, on Sunday, 8 September 1844). 110 The cantata is the only surviving work composed by George William Worgan, and was written in aid of the bell appeal at St Mary’s Cathedral. In 1843, ‘archbishop Polding duly returned from Europe with a peal of bells’. 111

**George William is Declared Insolvent**

For many during the early 1840s, Sydney was a far from happy place. The landowner Terence Aubrey Murray (1810–73), writing on Thursday, 16 September 1841, described the situation: ‘times are dreadfully bad here, and everyone is afraid of being ruined. Money is so scarce that people do not know what to do. We shall be poor together and that will be some comfort.’ 112 The economic slump that adversely affected Sydney’s economy during the early 1840s caused the bankruptcy of many people, including George William. On Monday, 26 June 1843, ‘George William Worgan, of Pitt Street, Professor of Music’, 113 was declared bankrupt. George William subsequently appeared before Justice Sir James Dowling (1787–1844) on Friday, 14 July 1843, ‘at the Supreme Court House, Sydney … at 10.30, a.m.’, 114 at which time a claim made against George William by ‘J. Clancey, for £12 11s was proved’. 115

A few weeks before his court appearance, Worgan had been consigned to prison for debt. 116 This explains why the period of his tenure as organist of St Mary’s...
Cathedral—between 1842 and 1843—was so short. ‘No regular organist replaced him.’\(^{117}\) Because of the contemporaneous stigma surrounding insolvency, it is probable that in late June 1843, George William’s employment as singing teacher at Miss Rennie’s day school was terminated.

It is not known when Worgan was released from gaol. On Friday, 20 June 1845, however, George William played the piano at the ‘Mayor’s Grand Tea Party’\(^{118}\)—a teetotal extravaganza—presumably as a free man. On Wednesday, 17 December 1845, at the Royal Hotel, Worgan sang at a concert.\(^{119}\)

**George William Marries**

Six days later, on Tuesday, 23 December 1845, he sang as one of ‘the whole professional talent of the colony … assisted by a large number of vocal and instrumental amateurs’ at the Royal Victoria Theatre, in a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s arrangement of Händel’s\(^{120}\) oratorio ‘Messiah’.\(^{121}\) The concert was advertised as being of ‘unrivalled grandeur and magnificence’.\(^{122}\) In this performance, Worgan sang in the company of another principal vocalist, Mary Tuohy. A little more than a year later, on Monday, 4 January 1847, George William Worgan married Mary Tuohy.\(^{123}\) The marriage, officiated by Chaplain Thomas Wall Bodenham (1818–51), took place at the parish Church of St James, Sydney.\(^{124}\)

**Further Performances**

On Wednesday, 17 June 1846, George William sang at a ‘grand evening concert … given in the saloon of the Royal Hotel … by all the available musical talent of Sydney’.\(^{125}\)

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117 Ibid., p. 370.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
123 See ‘IGI Individual Record: Southwest Pacific: George William Worgan’, in *Family Search International Genealogical Index v.5.0* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2008). Mary Tuohy may have made her solo debut at a concert organised by her teacher, Maria T. Hinckesmann (Hincksman) (b. 1803), on Friday, 30 May 1845. (See advertisement in *The Australian*, Thursday, 29 May 1845.) At this event, Mary sang Michael William Balfe’s (1808–70) ballad *The light of other days*. Two months later (in July) she gave her own concert, though no program or later notices appeared. See G. Skinner, ‘Tuohy, Miss’ in ‘A biographical register of Australian colonial musical personnel—T’ in *Austral Harmony* (University of Sydney, 2015) (retrieved 29 May 2015).
124 See *New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages*, No. 64, Vol. 32C.
During the next year, on Wednesday, 11 August 1847, Worgan gave an impromptu performance at the ‘Australian Grand Lodge Hall of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows … on a new instrument called the harmonian, which is far more powerful than the seraphine,’ and its tones considerably sweeter.\textsuperscript{126}

In 1850, George William Worgan sang at a ‘Grand Concert’ held on Friday, 7 June, in the saloon of the Royal Hotel.\textsuperscript{128}

### Scandal and Public Ridicule

Three years after George William’s marriage to Mary Tuohy, the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} of Thursday, 3 January 1850 announced: ‘Birth at Woolloomooloo, on Sunday, December 30 [1849], Mrs. George William Worgan, of a daughter.’\textsuperscript{129}

Only a handful of months after the birth of their daughter, the quality of George’s and Mary’s relationship may have deteriorated.

On Thursday, 13 February 1851, disaster struck. \textit{The Empire} reports:

\begin{quote}
Family Differences.—Mr. George William Worgan appeared on summons, for neglecting to comply with an order of the Bench, dated 26th August, 1850, at which hearing he was ordered to pay a weekly sum of 15s. for the support of his deserted wife. Mr. Little, who appeared for the defendant, satisfied their worships by the most palpable testimony, that since the making of the order, the parties had been living together as man and wife, therefore, he contended, the complaint was completely absurd. The Bench, after alluding to the unsettled state of the law upon this particular, refused to make an order. Mr. O’Reilly, who had been retained for the prosecution, upon hearing this decision, \textit{shook his mane}, and winked at Paddy Driscoll.\textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

On Wednesday, 19 February 1851, the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} published the following information concerning ‘Deserted Wives and Children’: ‘George William Worgan, of William-street, Woolloomooloo, was … charged by Mary, his wife, with having deserted her, and refusing to contribute to her maintenance. This defendant was ordered to pay the sum of 15s weekly, for the period of six months.’\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{126} A seraphine is a hybrid keyed wind instrument similar to the harmonium, in which the principles of the reed organ are combined with some of those of an accordion. Its sound is produced by air being blown across metal reeds.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{The Australian}, 14 August 1847, (NS), Vol. 4, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 7 June 1850, Vol. 27, p. 1, Trove, National Library of Australia.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 3 January 1850, Vol. 27, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia. George William and Mary named their daughter Mary.

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{The Empire}, 13 February 1851, Vol. 1, No. 26, p. 91, Trove, National Library of Australia.

The State Records of New South Wales reveal that at this time Worgan employed Bridget McWheeney, ‘an orphan ex Lady Peel’. Did Worgan’s affections turn away from his wife and towards McWheeney, or were the unfortunate ‘growlings of connubial thunderstorms’ a recurrent element of Worgan’s married life? Was George William a rogue? *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer* was relentless in its mockery:

The Discord-ion.—This new musical instrument, which is found in a vast number of Sydney families, is the invention, we believe, of that celebrated musician, Mr. George William Worgan, who keeps one continually in his own house. Mrs. W. and himself are much used to play duetts upon it; and, at times, he does the fortissimo to such an extent that she is compelled to rush into the cottage of her next door neighbour, Mr. William Richard Smith, to get the din out of her ears. About six months ago she invited the George-street authorities to join in the family concert; they politely accepted her offer, and ordered Mr. Worgan to give her three-fourths of a note, weekly, to enable her to leave his organ-loft and play her own tune in another locality.

That George William so abused his wife (and that he may have become romantically involved with Bridget McWheeney) suggests that his moral character was flawed and weak. If this was indeed his nature, the fact strengthens the speculation that prior to immigrating to Sydney, George William had left Liskeard for London under suspicious circumstances.

‘Grocott’s Dissolving Views’

In April 1851, two months after undergoing this public ridicule, George William provided the background music (most probably on a piano) for ‘Grocott’s Dissolving Views’, a cinematic experience similar to a slide show. (By the 1820s,
a ‘magic-lantern’ show was called a ‘phantasmagoria’. On Monday, 21 April, the following advertisement for Grocott’s technological extravaganza appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

These beautiful views were purchased in London, from Carpenter and Westley, by the late Captain Stanley, of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, regardless of expense, and are admitted to be fully equal to the views shown daily in London, at the Polytechnic.

Showing a radius of 15 feet. The Saloon has been fitted up to accommodate 150 persons, and in addition to the above the rooms are full of beautiful pictures. The whole of the views occupy in showing one hour and a half, during which appropriate music is played by Mr. G. W. Worgan.

The following is a list of the principal views:

Holyrood Chapel, showing a radius of 16 feet, dissolving into Netley Abbey.

St. Petersburg, dissolved into a Castle on the Rhine

Lord Nelson, dissolved into the ship Victory

Arch of Peace at Milan, dissolved into the Giant’s Causeway

York Minster on Fire, dissolved into Kilsby Railway Tunnel

Together with a splendid collection of Chromatropes, or illuminated fireworks

The Comic Scenes are also very amusing:

The only true portraits of the ‘Bunyip,’ in three positions

1. As he appeared

2. Looking for prey.

3. With his eye out.

… New Specimens in the Vegetable Kingdom

… Harlequin, who, like the little dog that fell into the sausage-machine, will appear in several pieces

The Chromatropes, it is to be hoped, will go off well.137

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Grocott’s ‘Dissolving Views’ were based on what was then known as a ‘panorama’. In 1787, as the First Fleet headed towards the Cape of Good Hope, Robert Barker, an Irishman working in Edinburgh, patented a new kind of theatre. He called it ‘panorama’, from the Greek pan (all) and horama (view). He took his invention to London and by 1793 [only seven months after George Worgan had stepped ashore from the Waaksamheyd at Portsmouth] had opened the Panorama theatre at Leicester Square. On the cylindrical walls of a rotunda, he painted huge 360-degree scenes of exotic places … The panorama was the Imax of the Enlightenment.138

George William Leaves Sydney

George William’s involvement with Grocott’s ‘Dissolving Views’ in late April 1851 was his swan song, after which (it seems) he left Sydney. Perhaps he absconded in order to avoid paying maintenance (‘the sum of 15s weekly, for the period of six months’);139 the court’s ruling was made in February, only two months before Worgan vanished from Sydney. George William is not mentioned in Sydney newspapers for 10 years. What became of him is a mystery; perhaps he went ‘on the road’ as a piano tuner.140

Not unreasonably, ‘Errol Lea-Scarlett assumed that [George William] … must be the same … Worgan … who arrived in New Zealand in 1851 and died there in 1888’.141 On Friday, 21 March 1851, The Southern Cross and New Zealand Guardian announced the arrival in Auckland of the ‘Cresswell, 574 tons’.142 Amongst the passengers listed is ‘Worgan’.143 (Worgan’s first impressions of New Zealand may have been similar to those experienced nine years before by Mary Ann Martin, a young migrant from England: ‘The tall leaves of the flax glittered in the sunlight. To a Londoner born and bred this home seemed like a fairyland. The clear air seemed to quiver and sparkle with light.’)144 It is unlikely that the New Zealand Worgan is Sydney’s George William, because passenger Worgan’s arrival in Auckland occurred one month before the Sydney press advertised George William’s participation in Grocott’s ‘Dissolving Views’.145

139 Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 1851, p. 2.
140 I am indebted to the eminent historian and emeritus curator of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Elizabeth Ellis OAM, for this suggestion.
143 Ibid., p. 2.
144 Data acquired from an exhibition label, ‘Stories from Young Refugees in New Zealand’, in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, on Friday, 25 November 2011.
The New Zealand Worgan is in fact George Worgan (1802–88), the grandson of Dr John Worgan; his parents were Joseph and Jemima Worgan. ‘He was taught the piano by J. B. Cramer and ... gave piano lessons to members of fashionable society, including the daughters of Clementi ... after his attempt at sheep farming [in New Zealand] failed, he continued to teach music.’

Sydney’s Prodigal Son Returns

The whereabouts and activities of George William after late April 1851 are not known.

On Saturday, 2 November 1861, *The Sydney Herald* published the following advertisement: ‘Mr. Worgan, professed tuner of the pianoforte, having returned to Sydney, respectfully requests all orders for him to be left with Mr. William King, Pianoforte Warehouse, Market-street.’

It is reasonable to assume that this ‘Mr. Worgan’ was George William. The advertisement reveals that ‘Mr. Worgan’ had the skills necessary to tune pianos, and George William had, after all, been on a piano-tuning tour to Maitland with the publisher Francis Ellard 22 years before, in November 1839.

If George William departed from Australian shores in 1851, his return to Sydney 10 years later may have been motivated by the prospect of lucrative opportunities associated with gold-rush wealth. (In 1861, a passenger bound for Australia on board the *SS Great Britain*, ‘then the world’s greatest ocean liner’, wrote: ‘Australia! At the present time, what interest—what excitement—in the very word! In every circle, it is the all-absorbing topic.’) In 1861, however, no mention is made in Sydney newspapers of anyone with the name of Worgan having arrived by ship. When George William left Sydney in 1851, he probably did not leave Australia.

During the 10 years following George William’s departure from Sydney, there are only two instances in which a person who may be construed as being George William is mentioned in the Australian press. Both instances are associated with Adelaide newspapers. As a Cornishman, George William may have been...

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146 In 1780, Dr John Worgan enrolled his son Joseph at Eton College. See ‘Worgan 1780–87’, in *The Eton College Register, 1753–1790*. It is from this entry in register that we learn of the Worgan family’s 1780 address: ‘Milman Street, London.’


150 Quoted in ibid., p. 160.
drawn to Adelaide: ‘South Australia’s Yorke Peninsula [was] … known as “Little Cornwall”. It has been estimated [that] between 1837 and 1840, 15 per cent of all assisted migrants to South Australia were Cornish.’

1. ‘Wm. Worgan’ is listed in the Supplement to the South Australian Register of Wednesday, 21 September 1853 (‘Unclaimed Letters—August 31 1853’).

2. The South Australian Advertiser of Tuesday, 8 February 1859: the ‘Shipping News’ reveals that part of the cargo brought to Adelaide on board ‘the Ballarat, from London’ comprised ‘52 cases, W. Worgan’.

If George William left Sydney for Adelaide in 1851, he may not only have changed his profession (‘52 cases’ of what?), but may also have gone under his second name, William, in order to ensure that his reputation, which had been so publicly tarnished in Sydney, would not precede him.

On Tuesday, 9 February 1869, eight years after ‘Mr. Worgan, professed tuner of the pianoforte … returned to Sydney’, a record of court proceedings at Strathalbyn, 57 kilometres south of Adelaide, describes a defendant, ‘Worgan’, as a publican. It seems unlikely that publican Worgan was George William. It is, however, reasonable to assume that publican Worgan was the ‘W. Worgan’ who, in 1859, imported ‘52 cases’ (of liquor?) to Adelaide on board ‘the Ballarat, from London’. The mystery surrounding George William’s ‘lost’ years remains; he disappeared and reappeared, like a fleeting shadow in the ‘opal-blue bush of the Australian interior’.

George William Worgan died in Sydney on Wednesday, 11 June 1862, only seven months after returning from his mysterious absence. He was 62 years old when he died. His death certificate gives his occupation as ‘organist’; his

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154 The Sydney Herald, 2 November 1861, p. 9.
156 ‘Shipping News’, The South Australian Advertiser, 8 February 1859, p. 2.
159 George William Worgan’s death certificate erroneously gives his age at the time of his death as 65.
place of death is given as ‘Infirmary’—perhaps implying that, at the time, he was a pauper.\footnote{160} George William Worgan was buried at Camperdown Cemetery, Sydney, on Monday, 16 June 1862.\footnote{161}

\section*{George Bouchier Worgan Dies in Liskeard}

On Sunday, 4 March 1838, two years after he had built Wandeland House on New Road,\footnote{162} Liskeard, George Bouchier Worgan died, aged 81 years (his death certificate gives his age as 80 years).\footnote{163} He did not make a will; letters of administration dated Thursday, 6 June 1844, granted to his wife, Mary, indicate that his effects were valued at just ‘under £300’\footnote{164}—scarcely riches, and yet, representing the equivalent of a prosperous tradesman's annual income, and enough money, if needed, to purchase a comfortable house.

Worgan’s death certificate, dated Tuesday, 6 March 1838, describes his occupation as ‘gentleman’.\footnote{165} The certificate indicates that he died from ‘apoplexy’ (most likely a stroke); his death may have been presaged by symptoms ranging from prolonged unconsciousness, through partial to complete paralysis. There can be little doubt that, lovingly, Mary’s hands would have caressed George’s cheek ‘as if they were washing it with kindness’.\footnote{166}

Worgan’s ‘brief obituary merely says “sudden death”’.\footnote{167} Other sources record that he hanged himself.\footnote{168} If this is so, perhaps 30 grinding years of financial hardship (beginning ca 1808 after the completion of his \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall}) and/or depression (arising from his lack of success as farmer, researcher/author, headmaster and provider for his\footnote{160} I am indebted to the eminent historian and emeritus curator of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Elizabeth Ellis OAM, for alerting me to this possibility.\footnote{161} I am indebted to Brian Barrow for access to documentation relating to George William Worgan’s burial. Camperdown Cemetery was established in 1849. The interment of George William Worgan was one of ‘15,733 burials in Camperdown Cemetery between 1849 and 1867 when the creation of new grave plots was prohibited and burials were only permitted by license from the Chief Secretary’. M. Martin, ‘Camperdown Cemetery’, in Society of Australian Genealogists’ \textit{Primary Records Collection Guide} (June 2008).\footnote{162} Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard and its Vicinity}, p. 452.\footnote{163} See General Register Office, ‘Ref. March 1838 Quarter, Liskeard District’, Vol. 9, p. 117.\footnote{164} Cornwall Record Office, ‘Administration Bond, Estate of G. B. Worgan, 6 June 1844’ (Truro: Cornwall Record Office, 1844).\footnote{165} Certified Copy of George Bouchier Worgan’s Death Certificate: ‘Given at the General Register Office, Under the Seal of the Said Office, the 30th day of December 2011’, Application no. 3723266-1, Certificate no. DYD174213.\footnote{166} West, \textit{Black Lamb and Grey Falcon}, p. 17.\footnote{167} Edwards, ‘George Bouchier Worgan’, p. 10.\footnote{168} See ‘Worgan, George Boucher’ in G. C. Boase and W. P. Courtney, \textit{Bibliotheca Cornubiensis: A Catalogue of the Writings, both Manuscript and Printed, of Cornishmen, and of Works Relating to the County of Cornwall with Biographical Memoranda and Copious Literary References. Volume 2: P–Z} (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1878), pp. 507, 524; Allen, \textit{The History of the Borough of Liskeard}, p. 99; and Menneer, ‘George Worgan’, p. 12.
family) drove him to commit such an extreme act. If George Worgan committed suicide, permission would not have been granted for his body to be interred in consecrated ground. The venerable jurist and judge Sir William Blackstone (1723–80) described the grim legal consequences of suicide in his *Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England*:

> [T]he law has … ranked [suicide] … amongst the highest crimes.

> … [W]hat punishment can human laws inflict on one who has withdrawn himself from their reach? They can only act upon what he has left behind him, his reputation and fortune: on the former, by an ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through his body; on the latter, by a forfeiture of all his goods and chattels to the king: hoping that his care for either his own reputation, or the welfare of his family, would be some motive to restrain him from so desperate and wicked an act.\(^{169}\)

That Worgan’s grave is located in the cemetery attached to St Martin’s Church, Liskeard (Plate 115), indicates that he did not commit suicide. He was buried in hallowed ground on Thursday, 8 March 1838.

When George Worgan’s body was interred, the St Martin’s Church burial ground comprised 0.4 hectares of land.\(^{170}\) George Worgan’s funeral service was taken by the Vicar of St Martin’s, the Reverend John Strode Foot.\(^{171}\) It is not known which men walked behind Worgan’s coffin in the cortège (at the time, women did not usually attend funerals).\(^{172}\)

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170 Allen, *The History of the Borough of Liskeard*, p. 74. Half an acre (0.2 hectares) was added in 1849. In 1959, the area of the cemetery was further increased. See Paynter, *The Parish Church of St. Martin Liskeard*, p. 28.


Plate 115 George Worgan’s grave, Church of St Martin, Liskeard: the grave is marked by the headstone third from the left.

Source: Photo by the author.

Worgan’s headstone reads (Plate 116): ‘Sacred / to the memory / of / George Boucher Worgan / late surgeon in the navel / Who died the 4 March / 1838 / aged 80 years.’ (Worgan was, in fact, 81 years old when he died).

Plate 116 The inscription on George Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.
On Friday, 1 September 1995, a brass plaque was attached to the top centre front of Worgan’s headstone. This was done ‘with the consent of the descendants and the burial place administrators’, and included ‘an unveiling dedication ceremony’ held within ‘the context of a descendants’ family reunion’.  

The plaque—whose proportions have little aesthetic correspondence with those of the headstone—covers some of the exquisite etched scrollwork that both surrounds and embellishes the word ‘Sacred’ (Plate 117). The brass plaque reads (Plate 118): ‘George Bouchier / Worgan / Sailed First Fleet / 13-5-1787 / Died 8-3-1838 / Fellowship of First Fleeters / 1994’.

Plate 117 The brass plaque affixed to George Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.

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173 ‘First Fleeter Gravesite Plaque Ceremonies—1976–2010’, in Fellow of the First Fleeters (n.d.). The plaque on George Worgan’s headstone is the 98th of the 119 plaques that had been attached to the gravestones of First Fleeters until 31 December 2010.
Several inconsistencies leave the visiting pilgrim in a state of quiet confusion and incredulity

1. the date of death given on the plaque (8 March 1838) does not correspond with that given either on Worgan’s headstone or on his death certificate (4 March 1838)

2. the brass plaque’s ‘Bouchier’ (although correct) does not conform with the headstone’s ‘Boucher’

3. the plaque’s inscription includes, as an unexplained final statement: ‘Fellowship of First Fleeters 1994’

4. there is no mention on the plaque of Australia (thereby rendering the plaque ineffective as a medium for increasing the understanding of those who have no knowledge of the First Fleet)

5. the plaque’s broken English is inelegant (it should be remembered that George Worgan was an articulate ‘man of extensive reading’).\footnote{Allen, The History of the Borough of Liskeard and its Vicinity, p. 526.}

Furthermore, the plaque’s date, ‘1994’, does not conform with the online listing provided by the Fellowship of First Fleeters (where ‘1995’ is given as the ‘Date of Plaque’).\footnote{See ‘First Fleeter Gravesite Plaque Ceremonies’.
For some, the plaque may encourage reflection on the fact that to ‘drag knowledge of reality over the threshold of [ignorance] … is an exhausting task, whether it is performed by art or by experience’.176

Adjacent to George Worgan’s grave, on the right, Ann Lawry (1774–1845) is buried. Ann was the sister of George’s wife, Mary. Ann was born 10 years before Mary. Ann, who never married, died in 1845 at the age of 71, 18 months before Mary died.

Behind George Worgan’s headstone, and (as one faces the back of George Bouchier’s headstone) adjacent to the left, lies his wife, Mary, and Charles Parsons Worgan. Mary and Charles’s single headstone, which rises slightly higher than George’s, reads (Plates 119 and 120): ‘In Memory of / Mary / The wife of / George Boucher Worgan / late surgeon / in the royal navy, / Who died / December the 14, / 1846. / Aged 82 years. / Also of / Charles Parsons Worgan / who died July the 7, / 1848. / Aged 15 years.’

Burgeoning vines, ‘polished silver in a sudden outpouring of sunshine’,177 cover part of the word ‘Charles’ with a shadowy chiaroscuro.

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Plate 119 Mary Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.

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177 Ibid., p. 437.
Plate 120 Charles Parsons Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.

Whispers and Rumours: Who was Charles Parsons Worgan?

i) Charles Parsons’ Mother

Charles Parsons Worgan was baptised in Liskeard in 1833,\textsuperscript{178} five years before George Bouchier Worgan died. Charles Parsons’ baptismal record lists his mother as ‘Charlotte’, his father simply as ‘Worgan’.\textsuperscript{179}

Charlotte Sophia Worgan was George Worgan’s sister. Charlotte Sophia was christened at St Andrew’s Church, Holborn, London, on Wednesday, 2 September 1761.\textsuperscript{180} Charlotte Sophia was four years younger than her brother George.

\textsuperscript{178} ‘Baptism Record’.
\textsuperscript{179} ‘Research Area’, in Parish Births, Marriages, Death Records.
\textsuperscript{180} ‘Guildhall, St Andrew Holborn: Register of Baptisms 1761–1770’, P69/AND2/A/01/Ms 6667/11, in Ancestry.com.au (n.d.).
On Saturday, 21 November 1778, at the age of 17, Charlotte Sophia married the then 42-year-old William Parsons,\(^1\) composer, and, from 1786, ‘Master of the King’s Musick’ to King George III. Because Charlotte Sophia was a minor, the marriage record shows that Charlotte married Parsons ‘by Licence & with consent of John Worgan Father’\(^2\) (during the early nineteenth century, ‘the marriage of a minor without parental consent was illegal in England’).\(^3\) The marriage ceremony took place at St Marylebone’s Church, Westminster, London.

Sir William Parsons was the first English musician ever to be knighted, and was the best singing-master of his day … He was a well-educated, well-informed man, and a perfect gentleman in his conduct and manners … Sir William Parsons had the honour to pass a great deal of time with the royal family, by whom he was much respected for his acquirements, his excellent temper and high character. An illustrious personage once said of him, that he always showed a readiness to further the interest of his professional brethren, but that he never knew him utter a syllable injurious to any one of them.\(^4\)

Sir William Parsons died at his home in 22 Somerset Street, Portman Square\(^5\) (Plate 121), London, on Saturday, 19 July 1817, at the age of 71.\(^6\) According to the records of St Marylebone’s Church, Westminster, Charlotte Sophia died 36 years later, between July and September 1853, at the age of 92.\(^7\)

By 1833—the year of Charles Parsons’ birth—Charlotte Sophia would have been 72 years old, well beyond childbearing age. It is unlikely that George Worgan’s sister Charlotte Sophia is Charles Parsons’ mother.

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1. Ibid.
2. ‘Marriage Record No. 515’, St Marylebone Church, Westminster.
The census of 1841—taken on the evening of Sunday, 6 June, three years after George Worgan’s death—lists a 25-year-old ‘Charlotte Worgan’ living with George’s widow, Mary, in Wadeland House, Liskeard.¹⁸⁸ If the census information is correct, Charlotte was born in 1816. Oddly, there is no contemporaneous record plus or minus five years of a Charlotte Worgan being born or baptised in any parish in England.

Perhaps Charlotte was a servant. According to George Worgan’s pronouncements in his General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall, ‘farm servants have 8–12 guineas a year and their board’.¹⁸⁹ Given that Wadeland House was part of a farm, Charlotte, as a servant, most probably received board as part of her remuneration; she would have slept in the servants’ quarters on the first floor of the attached service cottage (Plates 108 and 111).

Then again, perhaps Charlotte was George Bouchier and Mary’s adopted daughter. In 1816, if Charlotte were not adopted, she would have been born to

¹⁸⁸ The census erroneously gives Mary Worgan’s age as 65 years. Given that Mary was born in 1764, she would have been 77 at the time the census was conducted.
a 52-year-old mother (Mary) and a 59-year-old father (George Bouchier). This of course is not impossible, but age-related issues (and significantly, the absence of a baptismal record) render it unlikely. The 25-year-old ‘Charlotte Worgan’ mentioned in the 1841 census cannot have been George Bouchier’s younger sister Charlotte Sophia (who, at the time of the census, was 80 years old).

The 1841 census also tells us that a six-year-old ‘Charles Worgan’ lived at Wandelan House. As ‘Charles Parsons Worgan’ was baptised in 1833, a two-year discrepancy exists between the date of his birth as implied by his baptismal record (1833), and that implied by his age given as census information (1835); perhaps the information provided by Charlotte for the census was intended to deflect any potential for embarrassment arising from her son’s illegitimacy.

Like George Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons, the selection of Charles’s middle name, Parsons, may have been inspired by the fact that George’s sister Charlotte Sophia had married Sir William Parsons.

That the Charlotte of Wandelan House was only 17 when she gave birth to Charles Parsons in 1833 would not have been out of keeping with conventions of the time. That she was unmarried when she gave birth, however, was not in keeping with contemporaneous conventions.

In an age when female chastity was of fundamental importance both within a very competitive marriage market and in regard to inheritance, sexual activity outside of marriage was deemed a crime against society itself. What greater and more emphatic evidence of such activity was there than the existence of a child? Abandonment and infanticide were commonplace in such circumstances.

The Worgans, ignoring the opprobrium associated with illegitimacy, neither abandoned nor murdered baby Charles Parsons; they also did not leave him in an orphanage.

ii) Charles Parsons’ Father

The identity of Charles Parsons’ father remains a mystery. Charles Parsons was baptised at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard, on Wednesday, 20 November 1833.

190 Cornwall Family History Society, Parish Births, Marriages, Deaths Records, Baptism Records (Truro, Cornwall: Cornwall Family History Society, n.d.).
191 See ‘ii) Charles Parsons’ Father’, below.
193 Cornwall Family History Society, Parish Births, Marriages, Deaths Records, Baptism Records.
Charles Parsons’ baptismal record describes his father simply as ‘Worgan’. Mysteriously, the column entitled ‘Father Forename’ has been left blank. This lack of detail raises some unfortunate suspicions.

Every one of the baptismal records of George and Mary Worgan’s five children (including Mary and John, who died in infancy) identify ‘George Boucher’ Worgan as being their father. George and Mary Worgan’s children were baptised at St Wenna’s Church in the Parish of Morval, with the exception of their youngest surviving son, John Parsons, who was baptised at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard. Contemporaneous baptismal records created at both St Wenna’s and St Martin’s consistently and unerringly reveal a detailed approach to the provision of information concerning the father’s forename(s). (‘A clerk in holy orders i.e. a clergymen of the Church of England, was [also] a civil servant (because the C of E is the state religion) and [was] … thus [legally] responsible for the [creation and] safe keeping of official records.’) Disinterest or laziness on the part of the clergymen-clerk at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard, cannot reasonably be used to explain the lack of detail on Charles Parsons’ baptismal record. Perhaps discretion inspired the omission of the forename(s) of Charles’s father.

Given that Charles’s father’s surname is given as ‘Worgan’, one hesitates to posit that the then 76-year-old George Bouchier Worgan fathered Charles Parsons with his 17-year-old servant or adopted daughter; it is reasonable to maintain that this would be contrary to George Bouchier’s character.

According to J. Pigot & Co.’s National Commercial Directory, no banker, manufacturer, merchant, professional gentleman or trader with the surname ‘Worgan’ lived in Liskeard apart from ‘Geo. Boucher’—that is, George Bouchier. Similarly, no Worgan of similar social rank lived in the nearby village of Bodmin or, in fact, in the whole of Cornwall. The only Worgan in Liskeard apart from George Bouchier who could have been responsible for 17-year-old Charlotte’s pregnancy in 1833 was George Bouchier’s eldest son, George William (George Bouchier’s youngest son, John Parsons, had immigrated to Sydney four years before, in 1829).

If Charlotte were a servant, the intimacy that she would have had with her master’s family would have offered opportunities for both legitimate and

194 See ibid.
195 See ibid.
197 See Pigot, ‘Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 149.
199 In 1838, when Charles Parsons was five years old, George William immigrated to Sydney. See ‘Shipping Intelligence Arrivals’, The Sydney Herald, p. 2.
illicit alliances\textsuperscript{200} (her pregnancy allows us to see some of the temptations and vulnerabilities of servants at the time). If Charlotte was George and Mary’s adopted daughter then George William’s actions were more than untoward. If Charlotte was George and Mary’s biological daughter then the family had become the victim of incest.

George William may have left (fled?) Liskeard for London either shortly after it was discovered that Charlotte was pregnant or just after Charlotte gave birth to Charles Parsons in 1833.

On Sunday, 4 January 1835, George William was inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians in London (Plate 122).

\textbf{Plate 122} The Royal Society of Musicians, London (as it appears today).

Source: Photo by the author.

The Royal Society described George William as having had success as a ‘piano forte master in schools and private families’. It is reasonable to assume that prior to his admission to the Royal Society in 1835, he must have been professionally active in London for long enough to build a credible reputation as a piano teacher; if he arrived in London in 1833, the ensuing two years would have provided him with more than enough time to establish a reputation for being trustworthy.

Royal Society documentation describes George William as ‘a married man’. No contemporaneous documentation anywhere in England records his marriage. A married man would certainly have been regarded as a ‘safer’ kind of person to give piano lessons to a young lady in her home. Perhaps George William lied about his marital status in order to gain employment (perhaps George William’s ethics were indeed, ‘flexible’).

A conjectural scenario emerges that paints George William in a rather bad light: one is reluctant to hypothesise that, at the age of 33, George William fathered Charles Parsons with the 17-year-old Charlotte.

If George William did compromise Charlotte’s virtue, and if his younger brother, John Parsons, knew about this particular skeleton in the family closet, the circumstance could explain the seeming lack of affection between the two brothers after they had both independently immigrated to Sydney. Men who debauched and abandoned pregnant, unmarried young ladies were below contempt not only because they ‘removed a chaste female from the marriage market (of whatever segment of society)’, but also because they often set ‘in train a tragic descent into vice and prostitution’. In Sydney, John Parsons’ and George William’s apparent disinterest in each other’s lives may also be explained by their age difference (five years); perhaps this gave rise to an icy relationship maintained by the ongoing effects of sibling rivalry. The evident instabilities of George William’s married life in Sydney suggest that the shortcomings of his character may have made him capable of seducing Charlotte.

That George Bouchier Worgan built Wadeland House a good distance from the outskirts of Liskeard may be explained by a desire to escape the prying eyes of the townspeople in relation to the existence of Charles Parsons. Then again, the land upon which he built may have been all that was available within his price range. Given that the land comprised a farm, he may not only have yearned for

204 See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1851, p. 2. See also *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 15 February 1851, p. 2.
205 See ‘Scandal and Public Ridicule’, above.
the farming life (success at which had eluded him so many years before), but may also have quested after the delights of rural solitude. George Worgan’s decision to locate Wadeland House on a farm, as well as his statement that ‘[m]y very earliest inclinations and propensities led me to the study and pursuit of agriculture’, suggest that he retained a lifelong passion for farming and the rural life.

Some researchers maintain that George Bouchier Worgan hanged himself in 1838 (the year George William migrated to Sydney). If George Bouchier did commit suicide, it is reasonable to assume that one of the reasons that drove him to this act of desperation was the knowledge that either his family was linked with the unwanted pregnancy outside of marriage of a minor or a member of his household had become the victim of incest. On the other hand, his depression may have been the cumulative result of his failures as a farmer, provider, researcher/author and headmaster.208 That Worgan built Wadeland House only two years before he died suggests, however, that he was not plagued by despair in his old age. Furthermore, given the fact that George Bouchier’s body was interred in hallowed ground209 (the law of the time ‘enacted vengeance on … [a suicide’s] reputation and fortune’,210 prescribing ‘ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through his body’),211 he cannot have committed suicide.

It is reasonable to conjecture that Charles Parsons’ mother, Charlotte, may have been the ‘Charlotte Elizabeth Worgan’ who had a civil marriage ceremony in Liskeard during the October–December quarter of 1842.212 (After 1837 a couple were able to be married, within a context of civil registration, ‘by the local registrar’.)213 At the time of her marriage

1. Charlotte was 26 years old
2. her son, Charles Parsons, was nine years old (he had only six more years to live)
3. Charlotte and her son were living in Wadeland House (where, presumably, they had lived for the previous six years—since its completion in 1836)
4. George Bouchier had been dead for four years.

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206 Arthur Young Papers, Ad. MSS 35129 (London: British Library). I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
208 See Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall.
209 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan Dies in Liskeard’, above.
210 Pembroke, Arthur Phillip, p. 263.
213 Treseder, ‘Marriage Certificates Explained’, p. 29.
Charlotte’s marriage was probably to the then 27-year-old William Murray, jnr (b. 1815). This can be deduced from

1. documentation concerning civil marriages in Liskeard during the October–December quarter of 1842, which indicates that Charlotte married one of the following men
   a) Joseph Bennet
   b) William Murray
   c) John Runnels
   d) Richard Squire

2. the death certificate of a ‘Charlotte Elizabeth Murray’, who died in Liskeard in 1864 (the only contemporaneous death certificate from Liskeard on which the name ‘Charlotte’ appears).

According to J. Pigot & Co.’s National Commercial Directory of 1830, William Murray, of Church Street, Liskeard, was a ‘watch and clock maker’.

That Charlotte’s marriage took place within the context of a civil ceremony may be explained by the church’s refusal to sanction her marriage because she had given birth to Charles Parsons out of wedlock, as a minor, and perhaps because of the haunting spectre of incest. Love, however, conquers all: William Murray must have been so deeply in love with Charlotte that he was both inspired and empowered to ignore the stigma that attended her.

If Charlotte Worgan and the ‘Charlotte Elizabeth Murray’ who died in 1864 are one and the same person then Charlotte was 48 years old when she died. Her husband almost immediately married his former housekeeper, Jane Whitford, with whom he had been co-habiting for several years.

With the spotlight shining on the protagonists of this family drama, the following summary traces significant events.

- 1746: William Parsons, the future husband of Charlotte Sophia (George Bouchier Worgan’s sister) is born.
- 1757: George Bouchier Worgan is born.
- 1761: Charlotte Sophia (George Bouchier’s sister) is born.
- 1778: Charlotte Sophia marries William Parsons, in London.

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214 Ibid.
216 Pigot, ‘Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 150. The William Murray listed in Pigot’s Directory may have been either father or son. What is certain, however, is that by 1861, William Murray, jnr, was an auctioneer and the high bailiff of the county court. See M. Hall, Random Genealogy.
• 1793: George Bouchier marries Mary Lawry, in Liskeard.
• 1800: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, is born.
• 1805: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, is born.
• 1815: William Murray, the future husband of Charlotte (George and Mary’s servant or adopted daughter?) is born.
• 1816: Charlotte (the servant or adopted daughter) is born.
• 1817: Sir William Parsons, Charlotte Sophia’s husband, dies, in London.
• 1829: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, immigrates to Australia.
• 1833: Charlotte (the servant or adopted daughter) falls pregnant.
• 1833: Charles Parsons, Charlotte’s son, is born.
• 1833?: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, leaves Liskeard(?).
• 1835: George William is inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians, in London.
• 1836: George Bouchier builds Wadeland House, on the outskirts of Liskeard.
• 1837: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, is in Liskeard, and is in trouble with the law there.
• 1838: George Bouchier dies, in Liskeard, aged 81.
• 1838: George William immigrates to Australia.
• 1842: Charlotte (George and Mary’s servant or adopted daughter) marries William Murray, in Liskeard.
• 1846: Mary, George Bouchier’s wife, dies, in Liskeard, aged 82.
• 1848: Charles Parsons, Charlotte’s son, dies, in Liskeard, aged 15.
• 1853: Charlotte Sophia, George Bouchier’s sister, dies, in London, aged 92.
• 1862: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, dies, in Sydney, aged 62.
• 1864: Charlotte (the servant or adopted daughter) dies, in Liskeard, aged 48 (16 years after the death of her son, Charles Parsons).

The simple mention of ‘Worgan’ on Charles Parsons’ baptismal record implies that his true father either was not known or was not named in order to protect someone’s identity, and that George Bouchier Worgan took on the ‘fatherly’ responsibility of raising and providing for Charles Parsons.

That the truth was so effectively suppressed is miraculous. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, English society (especially the aristocracy) appears to have been obsessed with marriage, sex and property.
One of the crucial ingredients in the success of Edward Cave’s [1691–1754] *Gentleman’s Magazine* was the monthly column of marriages, which gave the amount of dowry, real or invented, and any piquant garnishings that could be provided. Marriage gossip was the staple fare of many … correspondences, often with considerable detail of the financial arrangements … Nuptial performance was monitored. Horace Walpole was disappointed that he had ‘no anecdotes of the wedding-night’ to pass on after Lord Fitzwilliam’s marriage in 1744 and when Lord Beauchamp in 1768 married a daughter of Viscount Windsor, an Irish peer, George Selwyn reported of the honeymoon that: ‘Beauchamp is seen out so early in a morning that it does not look as if much business was doing.’

Like the aristocracy, a community as small as Liskeard would have been rife with gossip whenever scandal appeared; after all, ‘entertainment’ (at best) may have been ‘genteel’, but ‘scandal was a drawingroom amusement’. And yet, surprisingly, there is not a whisper, not a rumour concerning Charlotte and George William Worgan.

That Charles Parsons is buried next to George Bouchier Worgan and his wife, Mary, strongly suggests that not only is there a close familial connection, but also Charles Parsons was greatly loved. That there is no mention on Charles Parsons’ tombstone either of his parents or of his relationship to George Bouchier or Mary Worgan (let alone to his mother, Charlotte) encourages conjecture. ‘This is a case in which thoughtful people may reach different conclusions from the same evidence. Any further facts brought forward would certainly be more than welcome.’ All that can be said with certainty is that the circumstances surrounding Charlotte and her son, Charles Parsons, are replete with mystery (and mysteries once solved are, arguably, not as interesting).

### George Bouchier Worgan’s Character and Personality

Edwards regards Worgan as ‘a shadowy figure’, stating that ‘it is difficult to decide what sort of a man he really was’. Evidence, however, suggests otherwise; recurring patterns (as well as all-too-human inconsistencies) in George Worgan’s behaviour provide insights into his character and personality.
He appears to have been a perceptive and articulate man, who had sufficient self-confidence, courage and ability to respond with energy and creativity to life’s challenges.

As a conscientious and caring naval surgeon, Worgan appears, throughout the First Fleet voyage, to have been ‘determined to put [his] … professional skills at the disposal’ of the convicts, marines and crew. His relations with the officers on board the *Sirius* were positive, and he would have found satisfaction in the knowledge that on the voyage to Botany Bay, ‘no cause of complaint was alleged by anyone against’ him. Following his return from Sydney Cove to Plymouth, he was described in the periodical *The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer* as a ‘young gentleman of approved character and merit’.

Following his retirement from the navy, Worgan ‘mixed with other professional men in Cornwall—lawyers, farmers, clergy; but one wonders how he viewed life and society in rural Cornwall after a London childhood and the excitement and adventure of his naval career’. Despite the fact that he was not born in Cornwall, Worgan ‘married, settled, lived and worked locally and served his adopted county as best he could’. There can be little doubt that Worgan was motivated and industrious.

Worgan’s statement that ‘my very earliest inclinations and propensities led me to the study and pursuit of agriculture’ suggests that he retained a lifelong ardour for farming and the rural life. Worgan’s experimental farming methods imply that he was both intrigued and inspired by innovation. At his agricultural best, his proclivity for inventing farm machinery suggests that he had a clear, analytical and creative mind.

Remarks contained in his General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall show that he was bewildered and outraged when he encountered inequitable and disadvantaging laws. And yet, Worgan’s ethics are called into question through his duplicitous and opportunistic involvement in the victualling racket on *Le Caton*. The compassionate side of Worgan’s personality is revealed by the care that he lavished upon his wife and children.

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222 Brooke and Brandon, *Bound for Botany Bay*, p. 198.
224 *The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer*, [Edinburgh], 16 May 1792, Vol. 9, p. 80. In this source, George Worgan’s surname is incorrectly given; he is described as ‘Mr Morgan, surgeon of his majesty’s ship Sirius, who returns to England in the Dutch vessel’ (p. 80).
226 Ibid., p. 10.
227 Arthur Young Papers, Ad. MSS 35129 (London: British Library). I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for *Working the Forge*.
228 See Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall … , ‘Tenures’, Chapter 2, p. 22; ‘Mode of Occupation, Section 2: Rent’, Chapter 4, p. 32; ‘Mode of Occupation, Section 5: Leases’, Chapter 4, p. 38; ‘Obstacles to Improvements’, Chapter 16, p. 178.
That Worgan successfully trained as a schoolteacher late in life suggests that he possessed not only the humility necessary to learn, but also the intelligence, analytical skills, memory, patience and compassion associated with the professional practice of teaching.

Unfortunately, no matter how ‘enthusiastic he may have been in the various stages of his life, he enjoyed a singular lack of success in nearly every venture which he tried’, however, ‘far better it is to dare mighty things … even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat’.

George Eliot’s (1819–80) words seem apposite: ‘the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number that lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.’

The failures in Worgan’s life were rarely caused by his own inadequacies: the square piano that he took to Sydney Cove was ruined by extremes of weather; he failed as a farmer; his farming inventions were ignored in the long term; his research was publicly ridiculed; he did not establish any connections with ‘the industrial or business organisations which were springing up all over’ Cornwall; the school at which he was employed as headmaster closed; his financial situation was often precarious; and the mysterious paternity of Charles Parsons Worgan suggests that the virtue of George’s household had been compromised. Even though the last two years of George Worgan’s life were spent in the comfort of Wadeland House, the presence of Charles Parsons there may have been a constant reminder that disorder and turpitude had visited the household.

Because sexual dishonor was universally regarded as so grave, it served widely as metaphor and marker of disarray, dishonesty, and disrepute. Though aimed in the first instance at women, given their vulnerability … sexual insult/innuendo struck at the men who were supposed to be their custodians, guarantors, and sole beneficiaries.
Impressively, George Worgan remained resilient in the face of tribulation, and with each setback that beleaguered him appears to have recovered with surprising vitality. Worgan showed that ‘man is not powerless when life goes ill, that he can assemble sounds and colours and actions into patterns’, embodying an ‘antidote’ to life’s ‘poison’.235

That Worgan could afford to purchase a Beck piano, and to build Wadeland House, shows that he was capable of thrift. (It also shows that he had good taste, especially in relation to pianos.)

In 1829, the poet, literary scholar and essayist Robert Southey (1774–1843) described the ideals of service that should be pursued by a ‘good and wise man’. Southey’s description rings true in relation to Worgan’s character and personality:

To do his duty first to his family, then to his neighbours, lastly to his country and kind; to promote the welfare and happiness of those who are in any degree dependant upon him, or whom he has the means of assisting, and never wantonly to injure the meanest thing that lives; to encourage, as far as he may have the power, whatever is useful and ornamental in society, whatever tends to refine and elevate humanity; to store his mind with such knowledge as it is fitted to receive, and he is able to attain; and so to employ the talents committed to his charge, that when the account is required, he may hope to have his stewardship approved.236

Some researchers have suggested that George Worgan may have ‘considered himself to have been “a success only at failure”’.237 Others have suggested that his ‘long Calvary of … misfortune’238 broke his spirit and drove him to commit suicide239 (Worgan cannot have committed suicide, for he was buried in hallowed ground).240 Such assessments unfairly malign him, for despite the difficulties Worgan endured, despondence failed to conquer. He appears, overall, to have maintained an optimistic attitude to life as an independent and engaging individual who remained maturely vulnerable and dependably giving to those around him. He was, in the words of his navy colleague Arthur Bowes Smyth, ‘a very sensible good kind of man’.241

235 West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, pp. 747–8.
240 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan Dies in Liskeard’ above.
Significant Events in George Bouchier Worgan’s Life: Summary

The following summary traces some of the significant events in the life of George Bouchier Worgan.

- 3 May 1757: George Bouchier Worgan is christened at St Andrew’s, Holborn.
- 1775: George Bouchier joins the British Navy, and serves as a Surgeon’s Mate on the hospital ship Tiger.
- 1778–79: George Bouchier serves as a Surgeon’s Second Mate.
- 1779: George Bouchier is certified as a Surgeon Fifth Rate.
- 1780–82: George Bouchier serves on board the hospital ship Pilote.
- 1783–85: George Bouchier is unaccounted for; perhaps he worked as a naval surgeon (on the Portsmouth guardship Ganges) or was on some sort of detached list.242
- 1783: George Bouchier purchases a square piano by John Broadwood;243 or
- 1780–86: George Bouchier purchases a square piano by Frederick Beck; or
- 1785–86: George Bouchier purchases a square piano by Longman & Broderip.244
- 1786: George Bouchier serves on the Portsmouth guardship Ganges.
- 30 October 1786: George Bouchier is discharged from the Ganges to the Sirius.245
- 1 November 1786: George Bouchier joins the Sirius.
- 13 May 1787: George Bouchier departs Portsmouth for Botany Bay on board the Sirius.
- 20 August 1787: George Bouchier plays his Beck(?) square piano for fellow officers on board the Sirius in Rio de Janeiro.
- 19 January 1788: George Bouchier arrives at Botany Bay.
- 26 January 1788, approximately 3 pm: George Bouchier departs Botany Bay for Port Jackson on board the Sirius.
- 26 January 1788, approximately 7 pm: George Bouchier arrives at Port Jackson.

242 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
243 See Appendix C, Volume 2 of this publication.
244 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
245 See Gillen, The Founders of Australia, p. 393.
• Between 27 January and 2 October 1788: George Bouchier takes his Beck(?)
square piano ashore at Port Jackson before his departure on the *Sirius* for the
Cape of Good Hope(?).

• 2 October 1788: George Bouchier departs Port Jackson for the Cape of Good
Hope on board the *Sirius*.

• 9 May 1789: George Bouchier arrives at Port Jackson from the Cape of Good
Hope (having circumnavigated the globe).

• By 6 March 1790: George Bouchier’s Beck(?) square piano is permanently
located ashore at Sydney Cove.

• Between January and 7 March 1791: George Bouchier moves his Beck(?)
square piano into John and Elizabeth Macarthur’s new thatched wattle-and-
daub hut.

• Between January and 7 March 1791: George Bouchier gives his Beck(?)
square piano to Elizabeth Macarthur.

• 27 April 1791: George Bouchier departs Sydney Cove for England on board
the Dutch ship *Waaksamheyd*.

• 22 April 1792: George Bouchier arrives at Portsmouth from Sydney Cove.

• 4 May 1792: George Bouchier is discharged from any duties associated with
the colony at Sydney Cove.

• 1793: George Bouchier marries Mary Lawry, in Liskeard, Cornwall.

• 1793–98: George Bouchier serves as surgeon’s first mate on the hospital ship
*Le Caton*.

• 1 March 1794: Samuel Keast, Purser on *Le Caton*, relinquishes his victualling
contract to George Worgan.

• Late January?/early February? 1798: Immediately prior to the *Le Caton* being
converted into a prison ship, George Bouchier retires, because of ill health,
on a half-pay navy pension.

• 1798: George Bouchier is the leaseholder of two farms, one at Bray, and one
at Hendra, in the Parish of Morval, Cornwall.

• 1800: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, is born.

• 1801: Mary, George and Mary’s daughter, is born.

• 8 November 1803: George Bouchier testifies at a naval inquiry in relation
to his involvement with corrupt victualling practices during his period of
service on board *Le Caton*.

• 1804: George Bouchier takes up the lease of a farm at Glynn, in the Parish of
Cardinham, Cornwall.

• 1805: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, is born.

• 1806: George Bouchier experiences financial hardship.
• May 1806: The Cornwall Agricultural Society awards George Bouchier a £3 prize for his farming machinery inventions.
• 1806: Two years after moving his family to the leased farm at Glynn, George Bouchier breaks the lease and leaves the farm owing two years’ rent.
• November 1808: At the behest of the Board of Agriculture, George Bouchier researches and writes his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall*.
• 1809–10?: The Board of Agriculture engages the Reverend Robert Walker, the Reverend Jeremiah Trist and Vice-Admiral Charles Penrose to rewrite George Bouchier’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall*.
• 1809–12: George Bouchier experiences financial hardship.
• 1809–12?: George Bouchier takes up employment as a schoolteacher in Liskeard(?).
• 1811: George Bouchier’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* is first published in London.
• 1812: George Bouchier trains at the Central Schools, Truro, Cornwall, as a schoolteacher.
• 1813: George Bouchier is employed as headmaster of the National Society Boys School, Liskeard.
• 1815: The second edition of George Bouchier’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* is published.
• 1815?: The National Society Boys School, Liskeard, closes.
• 1815? – early 1830s?: George Bouchier is employed as a schoolteacher in Liskeard(?).
• 1822: George Bouchier lives in Dean Street, Liskeard.
• 1828: George Bouchier experiences financial hardship.
• 1829: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, immigrates to Australia.
• 1830: George Bouchier lives in West Street, Liskeard.
• 1833: Charlotte, George and Mary’s servant(?) or adopted(?) daughter, falls pregnant.
• 1833: Charles Parsons, Charlotte’s son, is born.
• 1833?: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, leaves Liskeard(?).
• 1836: George Bouchier builds Wadeland House, on the outskirts of Liskeard.
• 1838: George Bouchier dies, in Liskeard, aged 81.
Chapter 13

Elizabeth Farm Cottage, Parramatta

By early November 1791, George Worgan was sailing between Batavia (Jakarta) and Cape Town on his return journey to England on board the Waaksamheyd. At the same time, thousands of kilometres away, John and Elizabeth Macarthur were returning to Sydney Cove, having spent approximately four months at Rose Hill.

Two months prior to the Macarthurs’ return, the Gorgon arrived at Sydney Cove, on Wednesday, 21 September 1791. The Gorgon carried officers and marines of the NSW Corps (as well as the chamber organ, destined for Norfolk Island, which had been acquired in Cape Town by Lieutenant Philip Gidley King).¹

To [Elizabeth’s] … great joy, several of the newly arrived officers had their wives with them, as had the ship’s captain and the government agent. [Elizabeth writes that] as a result, our little circle has been of late quite brilliant; we are constantly making little parties in boats up and down the various inlets of the harbour … There are so many ladies in the regiment that I am not likely to feel the want of female society as I first did.²

In June 1792, John ‘returned to Rose Hill (by then called Parramatta) … as regimental paymaster. Elizabeth remained in Sydney where their daughter Elizabeth was born.’³ Perhaps the renaming of Rose Hill with the Aboriginal word ‘Parramatta’ had not so much to do with respect for Aboriginal culture, nor with etymological accuracy, as with an assertion of possession, an act of ‘civilising’—a claim to priority through the appropriation of the Aboriginal word. After all, Captain Cook ‘had already set a precedent: when, on the Endeavour voyage … [he] restored St George’s Island to its native name of Tahiti, he was not so much exhibiting his interest in Tahitian sovereignty as his self-interest in establishing his precedence there over the island’s earlier English visitor, Samuel Wallis [1728–95].’⁴

During the absence of her husband, and prior to the birth of her daughter, Elizabeth may have found playing Worgan’s piano a source of solace during her

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¹ See ‘The Colony’s First Pipe Organ’, in Chapter 11, this volume.
² Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 84.
³ Hughes, The Macarthurs, p. 4.
⁴ Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, p. 67.
'vacant hours'.\textsuperscript{5} It is reasonable to assume that Elizabeth’s pianistic skills were still quite basic. As an unaccomplished pianist, she may have been reluctant to play in front of the wives of the newly arrived officers of the NSW Corps. It is likely, however, that the women making up Elizabeth’s ‘little circle’\textsuperscript{6} would have been aware not only that she owned a piano, but also that the instrument had been given to her by surgeon George Worgan.

In January 1793, Captain David Collins, the colony’s first judge advocate, wrote:

> In the course of this month the lieutenant-governor judged it necessary to send an officer to Parramatta, whom he could entrust with the direction of the convicts employed there … as well as to take charge of the public grain. This business had always been executed by one of the superintendents, under the immediate inspection and orders of the governor, who latterly had dedicated the greatest part of his time and attention to these settlements. But it was attended with infinite fatigue to his excellency; and the business had now grown so extensive, that it became absolutely necessary that the person who might have the regulation of it should reside upon the spot, that he might personally enforce the execution of his orders, and be at all times ready to attend to the various applications which were constantly making from settlers.

The lieutenant-governor, therefore (his presence being required at Sydney, the head-quarters of his regiment, and the seat of the government of the country) deputed this trust to Lieutenant John Macarthur, of the New South Wales corps; the superintendants, storekeepers, overseers, and convicts at the two settlements, being placed under his immediate inspection.\textsuperscript{7}

On Tuesday, 12 February 1793, John Macarthur occupied a government land grant of 40 hectares ‘on the south side of the creek leading to Parramatta’.\textsuperscript{8} He did this 13 days before the official paperwork was signed. Macarthur was officially given his land grant on Monday, 25 February 1793. By this time, John had been promoted to captain. By May 1793, Macarthur commanded the military detachment at Parramatta [and] … ran the public works … Macarthur and his seventy-four soldiers [were] … in charge of almost half the colony—including over half the convicts and most of

\textsuperscript{6} See Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{7} Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, &c. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country*, Chapter XX, para. 19.
\textsuperscript{8} Duffy, *Man of Honour*, p. 100.
its agricultural activities—while [acting Governor Major Francis] Grose, his four captains and several hundred soldiers lolled about Sydney Cove enjoying the harbour breezes … apparently not doing much at all.9

Macarthur’s grant—‘some of the best land yet found’10—was ‘to be known by the Name of Elizabeth Farm’ in honour of his wife.11

‘With ample access to convict labour’—the Macarthurs were given 10 convicts to clear and farm the land—‘Macarthur cleared and cultivated 50 acres [20 hectares] of virgin land, thus earning a further hundred acres [40 hectares] grant, and, with unrestricted access to convict craftsmen.’12

John Macarthur immediately set about supervising the construction, by unpaid convict labour, of a small cottage on Elizabeth Farm.

Macarthur was responsible for allocating convict workers … He … creamed the top off the labour market, while those who displeased him received farmhands riddled with tuberculosis, equipped with fewer than the usual number of limbs, or unnaturally interested in the colony’s limited supply of livestock …

A steady trickle of animal husbandry cases came before the courts in the early days of the settlement. Successful prosecutions were difficult because of the requirement that two witnesses give evidence against the accused—offenders not only had to be deviants, but exhibitionists to boot. James Reece was executed in 1799 for making bacon, as was the unfortunate sow he’d befriended. The colonial courts would also order the death of any four-legged party to such proceedings in accordance with Leviticus 20:15.13

One wonders how the unpaid convicts felt about being forced to construct the cottage at Elizabeth Farm.

‘The phrase ‘Kiss my arse!’ was a popular one in Sydney Cove—it appears in the records of the judge-advocate’s court as standard badinage, and may well have been’ muttered by the convicts in response to John Macarthur’s orders as they laboured over the construction of Elizabeth Farm cottage.14

The convicts who formed the bulk of the agricultural and pastoral work-force … were in assignment to private settlers … Some features

9 Ibid., p. 114.
10 Ibid., p. 100.
11 Quoted in Hughes, The Macarthurs, p. 4.
12 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 9.
13 Hunt, Girt, p. 147.
14 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 115.
[of such an arrangement] remained constant, such as the legal basis of the arrangement as a tacit contract between the government and the settler. But the actual context of assignment varied so much, and the situations into which convicts were thrust were so different, that from their point of view it was completely unpredictable … Convicts who got a conciliatory master would be in a position hardly distinguishable from that of a labourer or household servant in England. But those who got a grasping or hostile master, or one infected by a sense of righteousness and a mission to punish the transgressor, might be in for years of brutality and oppression. In cases of dispute, the government would almost certainly step in on the settler’s side.15

Elizabeth Farm cottage sat on the brow of a small hill, and looked across to the Parramatta River (Plate 123).


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Chapter 13

The exact 1793 plan of Elizabeth Farm cottage is unknown. What is known is that it was rectangular, brick, 5.6 metres by 15.5 metres with a ‘parlour’—that is, a drawing room—‘the hall and, presumably, the bedroom (later to become the dining room)’. 16

‘The kitchen and servants’ accommodation were ... separate buildings’17—‘lean-to constructions or skillings, built against the back wall of the house, or, if the recorded length of the house is not an error, built at either end of the house’18—‘giving the ... house, once finished, the air of a set of pavilions. It had, like almost every other building in the colony, plenty of fireplaces and just one storey. The house was surrounded by a three-acre [1.2 hectare] garden and orchard.’19

The main face of the house had a centrally placed square-headed doorway that was flanked on each side by two 12-paned Georgian windows.20

The cottage was made from

hand-pressed clay bricks crudely fired without the benefit of kilns. These were made from ... clay obtained from Clay Cliff Creek, 100 meters north of the house. The creek is now a stormwater channel. The bricks were laid with English bond in a mud mortar, as lime was not readily available before 1795.21

The building had a ‘steeply pitched roof and close-cropped eaves’. 22 ‘The roof was formed of massive baulks of pit-sawn timber held together by wooden pegs without the use of nails or iron, and sheathed with cedar planks.’23

The cottage was ‘roofed with [split] hardwood [swamp-oak] shingles rather than thatch or tiles’.24 ‘In 1793, Elizabeth Farm [cottage] ... was an exemplar of good and conscientious building.’25

Nine months after construction first began—and 17 months after John Macarthur had left his wife in Sydney to take up his position as regimental paymaster at Parramatta—the Macarthurs, now with three young children, moved permanently to Elizabeth Farm, in November 1793.

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16 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 18.
18 Ibid., p. 18.
19 Ibid., p. 109.
20 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
22 Ibid., p. 7.
23 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
24 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 18.
25 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
By August 1794, Elizabeth Farm cottage consisted of ‘four rooms on the ground floor, a large hall, closets, cellar &c.; adjoining is a kitchen, with servants’ apartments and other necessary offices’.26

Worgan’s Piano at Elizabeth Farm

It is probable that in November 1793, Elizabeth took Worgan’s piano to Elizabeth Farm cottage, where it remained as part of the household furniture for at least the next 17 years. When Elizabeth Macarthur first brought the piano to Elizabeth Farm, the instrument would most probably have been put into the drawing room. ‘The elite mistress managed her household property like a museum curator administering her collection, for the neatness and order of a house and furniture was a quintessential feature of genteel economy, a mark too reflective of character to be left entirely to the unexacting care of servants.’27 As an ‘elite mistress’, Elizabeth would have paid ‘precise attention to the physical arrangement of the household’,28 including the exact location of her piano—an instrument that ‘helped to structure family space and activity’.29 Such care ‘for the private dimension, for the home as an expression of the individualism typical of modern man’, was characteristic of the bourgeois spirit, and ‘took concrete form in the search for and in the application of extremely strict norms’.30

That Elizabeth probably chose to place Worgan’s stylishly inlaid square piano in the drawing room is not surprising. During the late eighteenth century, the drawing room—a term derived from the earlier ‘withdrawing room’—was usually adjacent to the dining room. ‘The drawing room was a more flexible space than the dining room, being the place where guests were entertained by the family, or shown into for sherry before a meal.’31 According to Thomas Sheraton, writing in The Cabinet Dictionary in 1803,32 the function of the drawing room was ‘to concentrate the elegance of the whole house, [it being] the highest display of richness of furniture’.33 Here, furnishings were formal and upholstery lavish.34

The danger of luxury, however, was a late eighteenth-century concern.

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28 Ibid., p. 148.
30 Eco, On Beauty, p. 244.
33 Quoted in Riley, World Furniture, p. 137.
34 See ibid., p. 137.
Some worried that there was a tendency for people to pursue the creation of splendid [drawing rooms] … to ‘outshine’ their neighbours. This was thought to be corrupting because it put the ownership and display of material goods before more important moral values. These arguments, combined with the idea … of politeness, which … valued restraint rather than excess, led [some] to [adopt] a taste for plainer furnishings and decoration.\footnote{The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label (for an eighteenth-century room) in the Geffrye Museum, London.}

Not only was the drawing room a space within which guests were entertained, but it was also the room within which that most British of vices—a cup of tea—was served following the evening meal. ‘Tea was a popular drink at the time, and was usually served weak and without milk’ (often with the addition of sugar).\footnote{Yorke, *Georgian & Regency Houses Explained*, p. 100.} Because tea was expensive, ‘tealeaves were kept under lock and key and when finished with were passed onto the servants to be used again or to be sold locally’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 100.} ‘The elegant ritual of tea begat numerous … small tables including a variety supported by a pillar on a tripod base known as a teapoy.’\footnote{Riley, *World Furniture*, p. 138.}

During the early nineteenth century, the 10 500 tonnes of tealeaves that were imported every year to London,\footnote{See Morris, *Why the West Rules*, p. 7.} exclusively from China, were of either the black or the green varieties.\footnote{See Palmer, *The Soanes at Home*, p. 57.} Black tea was more expensive than green. Elizabeth Macarthur would have ‘presided over the tea table, taking the tea from a locked … caddy and making it in a teapot with boiling water heated in an urn or in a kettle heated by a spirit lamp’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 58.} The tea urn was an eighteenth-century icon: ‘it was an urn-shaped kettle with a tap [or spigot] close to the base instead of a spout, first charcoal-heated, and after 1774 with a patented box iron. Silver-plated tea equipages centred around a tea urn led novelty and fashion by the later eighteenth century.’\footnote{Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 164.}

Elizabeth Macarthur may also have served biscuits, cakes and/or sandwiches with tea. (Sandwiches were first referred to as such in ca 1765. They were named after John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, who on one occasion ‘spent 24 hours at the gambling table sustained only by some slices of cold beef between pieces of toast’.)\footnote{Palmer, *The Soanes at Home*, p. 56.} ‘The Complete Servant by Samuel and Sarah Adams of 1825 recommends “Sandwiches should be neatly cut in mouthfuls, so as to be taken up with a fork”.’\footnote{Quoted in ibid., pp. 56–7.}
During the mid to late eighteenth century (for the wealthy at least), ‘dinner’ was usually taken between 2 pm and 5 pm. By the early nineteenth century, this had changed to a time with which we would be more familiar: approximately 5–7 pm. That the meal times of the wealthy moved forward during the second half of the eighteenth century was commented on by a ‘country correspondent [who] in the 1790s complained that … “the manners, the customs, the hours of eating, and in short, the whole face of things is … turned topsy-turvy within these 40 years”’.

For many, dinner was the main meal of the day. If Elizabeth Macarthur took wine with her meal, she may have watered it down, ‘as it was the custom of some ladies to do at the time’. By the early nineteenth century, ‘dining practice had developed many refinements’. When more than one individual attended dinner, such refinements included, for example, ‘serving wine from chilled containers and providing each diner with his or her own wineglass, which was rinsed between refills’.

In the drawing room, chairs and tables were set around the perimeter. The centre of the room was left open. Worgan’s square piano would most likely have been placed close to, and parallel with, the inside wall of the drawing room at Elizabeth Farm cottage (an inside wall was preferred because of temperature stability). When closed, the instrument would have functioned as a side table (the normal role of a square piano).

Most late eighteenth-century square pianos have no veneer or inlay on the spine (as is the case with Worgan’s piano) (Plate 124). This is because the spine was meant to never be seen; the instrument, like a cabinet, was intended to stand against a wall rather than in the centre of a room.

Any piano with a veneered and inlaid spine functioned as an indication of wealth; in the very large rooms of the palaces and great houses of the wealthy, such an instrument was often placed in the centre of the room in order that the spine could be seen.

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47 Koda and Bolton, *Dangerous Liaisons*, p. 17.
48 Ibid., p. 17.
Over the next few decades, Elizabeth Farm cottage was enlarged, reflecting the growing prosperity and dominant social position of the Macarthur family.49

‘John Macarthur appears to have added a verandah to’ Elizabeth Farm cottage ‘shortly after it was built, possibly in 1794’ (Plate 125).50 During the late eighteenth century, verandahs were ‘never appreciated or used as a means of keeping a house cool. Because of their main purpose as passageways’51—as well as ‘a place for meeting and socializing’52—‘verandahs were not arranged with regard to the sun but to the movement of people’.53

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50 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 55.
51 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
52 Rosen, Australia’s Oldest House, p. 19.
53 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
The most ambitious and complicated building program of the late 1820s saw the house transformed into an Indian bungalow.\textsuperscript{54}

In a letter written to his son Edward on Tuesday, 12 September 1826, during the process of refurbishment, John Macarthur states: ‘we are occupying the old drawing room as a dining room … the hall [is] the same as before with an addition of one foot to its length.’\textsuperscript{55} ‘Evidence suggests that further alterations took place in the late-1820s or late-1830s—probably carried out by the architect John Verge (1782–1861).’\textsuperscript{56}

Part of these alterations involved the main fireplace in the 1826 dining room—that is, the 1793 drawing room—which was given a new marble surround and mantle shelves.

\textsuperscript{54} See ‘The Trouble with John’.
\textsuperscript{55} Quoted in Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 5.
No part of the original 1793 building can be seen today, but its walls and ceilings form the dining-room, hall and living-room of its present incarnation.\textsuperscript{57}

Elizabeth Farm is acknowledged as one of the most significant buildings in Australia not only for its associations with \[the Macarthur\] … family, but also as a unique archive of the development of building techniques, architectural styles and social history of the first forty years of British colonization of Australia …

Elizabeth Farm is considered to be of such significance that it is incorporated into the New South Wales Heritage Act (1977) as Permanent Conservation Order Number One.\textsuperscript{58}

In May 1794, the Macarthurs’ son John (junior) was born. Obviously proud of her home and property, Elizabeth wrote to Bridget Kingdon on Sunday, 23 August 1794, describing her house as ‘an excellent brick building 68 feet in length and 18 feet in width, independent of kitchen and servants’ apartments’.\textsuperscript{59}

As inspector of building works, John Macarthur not only controlled the supply of convict labour, but was also in a position to obtain the most skilled workers for his own farm. From the time that the Macarthurs first moved permanently into Elizabeth Farm cottage in November 1793, until just a year later, the number of convicts working there trebled. (‘In 1795, only five of the approximately 40 servants at Elizabeth Farm were female. By 1822, only two of the workers at Elizabeth Farm were female.’)\textsuperscript{60}

Elizabeth continues in her letter to Bridget Kingdon dated 23 August 1794:

\begin{quote}
I have a farm of nearly 250 acres [100 hectares], of which upwards of 100 [40 hectares] are under cultivation and the greater part of which is cleared of timber. In the granaries remain upwards of 1,800 bushels of corn; 20 acres [8 hectares] of fine wheat [is] growing and 80 acres [32 hectares] prepared for Indian corn [maize]. The stock consists of a horse, 2 mares, 2 cows, 130 goats, upwards of 100 hogs and poultry of all kinds … the house is surrounded by a vineyard and gardens of about 3 acres [1.2 hectares], the latter abounding with excellent vegetables.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

The popularity of gardening as a fashionable leisure activity grew during the 18th century … Light, amateur gardening was seen as an

\textsuperscript{57} See ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{58} Sansom, \textit{The Conservation of Elizabeth Farm}, pp. 2–3.
\textsuperscript{59} de Vries, \textit{Females on the Fatal Shore}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{60} Geraghty, \textit{A Change in Circumstance}, pp. 54–5.
acceptable pursuit for women. By the end of the century, a visitor to London observed that ‘every one in town or country had a garden … A woman in very easy circumstances and abundantly gentle in form and manners would sow and plant and rake incessantly’. That, in 1794, Elizabeth Macarthur’s garden abounded ‘with excellent vegetables’ is not surprising, given the ever-present potential for food shortage. (The fear of starvation explains the fact that in Sydney, 33 years later, many houses had ‘substantial gardens “decked out with flowers and teeming with culinary delicacies”’.) By 1824, Elizabeth Macarthur’s garden grew an abundance of peaches, apricots and melons to such profusion that the pigs were fed upon them when they were in season; while loquats, which had been brought from China also did well … Elizabeth Farm had an air of settlement about it. European trees, olive, oak, mulberry, horse-chestnut and others, planted in the early days of settlement, were well established. Flower beds, in which a great variety of roses proliferated, lay around the house.

Elizabeth’s garden may also have had a less practical function, being calculated to imply that she was a ‘woman in very easy circumstances and abundantly gentle in form and manners’. Late eighteenth-century gardens were mainly ornamental and featured paved or rolled gravel paths, beds edged with box or other low-growing plants, and the use of clipped evergreen shrubs. Bulbs and annuals were arranged in neat groups between perennials, and bare soil was left visible between the plants.

Potted plants, which could be moved around easily, were used to add variety, colour and scent to gardens. They were also frequently brought indoors.

Some of these elements—that is, rolled gravel paths, beds edged with low-growing plants, evergreen shrubs and potted plants—can still be seen in the garden at Elizabeth Farm cottage (Plate 125).

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62 The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label (for an eighteenth-century sunroom) in the Geffrye Museum, London.
64 Fletcher, ‘Sydney’, p. 70. Fletcher takes the quotation from P. Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), Vol. 1, p. 40.
65 Geraghty, A Change in Circumstance, p. 51.
66 Excerpt taken from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.
67 The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.
John Macarthur’s Duel

In 1801, ‘the pugnacious John Macarthur, who saw himself as a gentleman and a “man of honour”, foolishly provoked’ his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Governor William Paterson (1755–1810),68 into demanding ‘a duel at a time when duelling was against the law’.69

Duelling between officers was contrary to the army’s Articles of War, section 7, article 2, which declared No officer … shall presume to send a challenge to any other officer … to fight a duel, upon pain … of being cashiered (i.e. dismissed from the army). Moreover, according to article 3 of the same section, all seconds, promoters, and carriers of challenges in order to duels, shall be deemed as principals, and be punished accordingly.70

Anyone connected with a duel therefore found themselves in a predicament. In 1795, the anonymous author of Cautions and Advices to Officers of the Army declared: ‘such is the unaccountable prevalence of custom, that the disobeyer of these orders is generally applauded, while the obeyer of them is obliged to quit the army with disgrace!’71

That John Macarthur regarded himself as an easily affronted gentleman is not surprising. At the very least, he had become a dazzlingly successful self-made man. According to Governor King, when John Macarthur arrived in the colony in 1790, he was £500 in debt.72 In 1801, by the time he had provoked Lieutenant-Governor Paterson into demanding satisfaction, he was worth at least £20 000.73

Lieutenant-Governor Paterson’s second was Captain Neil Mackellar (? – after March 1802). On Thursday, 10 September 1801, Mackellar visited Macarthur and said:

You have abused the confidence Colonel Paterson had reposed in you, he expects you will give him that satisfaction he, as an injured man, has a right to require.

68 An oil-on-canvas portrait of William Paterson by William Owen (1769–1825), dated ca 1800, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG 175; Album ID 874690; Digital order no. a928495).
69 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 74.
70 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 197.
71 Ibid., p. 197. ‘The last recorded duel in New South Wales was in 1851 between a future Premier and the Surveyor General.’ King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 26.
72 See Hoorn, Australian Pastoral, p. 47.
73 See Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 84.
To this Macarthur replied, whatever he pleases. [Macarthur's] friend Captain John Piper\textsuperscript{74} agreed to be his second.\textsuperscript{75}

At 1 pm on Monday, 14 September 1801, the duel took place at an unknown location in Parramatta.

Just prior to the duel, and contrary to custom, Macarthur loaded his pistols himself. This is because his guns were faulty. After the duel, several officers examined Macarthur's pistols, ‘and agreed that, due to various defects, no one unacquainted with one of them could load it without the greatest danger of shooting himself’.\textsuperscript{76}

Lieutenant-Governor Paterson's guns were loaded by his second, Captain Mackellar.

The seconds then tossed a coin to see who would shoot first, and [John] Piper won. They measured out twelve steps, and [Macarthur and Paterson] … took their places facing each other. Macarthur raised his gun and fired, hitting Paterson … in the right shoulder … There was still a chance that Paterson might return fire, but the injury proved too serious to allow this …

The ball could not be extracted from Paterson's shoulder and the doctors couldn’t say if he would survive.\textsuperscript{77}

On hearing of the duel at 8 that evening, Governor King had Captains Mackellar and Piper put under arrest in their barracks. The next day, King had John Macarthur (whom he described as a ‘rich Botany Bay perturbator’)\textsuperscript{78} put under house arrest, confining him to Elizabeth Farm cottage.

Mackellar, Piper and Macarthur were held under arrest, without charge, ‘for eight days, the maximum allowed under military law’.\textsuperscript{79}

‘King decided that it would be too difficult to try Macarthur in the colony, so he … ordered him to prepare himself for a return to England, where he would be’ court-martialled.\textsuperscript{80}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[74] A watercolour portrait entitled Captain John Piper Commandant of His Majesty's Settlement Norfolk Island in the South Pacific Ocean for Six Years by an unknown artist, on ivory, dated ca 1815, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 75; Digital order no. a128921).
\item[75] Duffy, \textit{Man of Honour}, p. 196.
\item[76] Ibid., pp. 197–8.
\item[77] Ibid., p. 198.
\item[78] Macintyre, \textit{A Concise History of Australia}, p. 46.
\item[79] ‘A court martial in 1802 acquitted Piper for his part in the affair after he apologised.’ Cumes, \textit{Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid}, p. 73.
\item[80] Duffy, \textit{Man of Honour}, p. 203.
\end{footnotes}
Arrogantly and presumptuously, Macarthur responded to Governor King’s order by letter. He wrote:

‘I … wish to be acquainted whether my arrest is intended to be so rigid as to prevent me from walking over my own grounds for the benefit of exercise and health, as a close confinement previous to the voyage I have to undertake must necessarily make me very unfit to embark on it.’ King told him he could walk in his garden but no further.81

Perhaps, in the midst of this turmoil, Elizabeth occasionally played Worgan’s piano in order to bring some calm into John’s and her life at Elizabeth Farm.

On Sunday, 15 November 1801, John Macarthur sailed from the colony on board the Hunter, via Calcutta, for his court-martial in England.

With him he took his second and third children, Elizabeth, aged nine … John, aged seven … [and a servant. Macarthur’s] eldest child, Edward, had already returned to England82 to school [two years previously] at the age of … [ten, in 1799].83 Elizabeth remained in the colony with her youngest children, Mary, James, and William, to manage Macarthur’s affairs.84

That two years previously the 10-year-old Edward Macarthur (1789–1872) had been sent alone on board the Marquis Cornwallis … to England to be educated [must] … have been an extraordinarily wrenching experience for Elizabeth and possibly John, neither of whom was to see him for many years. That he was sent, and at such an early age, indicates the importance of a good education in a young gentleman’s life, and also, perhaps, his parents’ desire to remove the growing boy from the pernicious influence of New South Wales.85

By remarkable good fortune … [John Macarthur’s] ship … was forced to put into Ambiona [now Ambon, in Indonesia] to shelter from a gale. There he met the British resident, Sir Robert Farquhar, son of the influential Sir Walter Farquhar, who was physician to the Prince

81 Ibid., p. 205.
82 ‘Edward was born on 16 March 1789 at Bath, England.’ In 1790, ‘he went to Sydney with his parents … and spent his boyhood’ in Sydney ‘and at Elizabeth Farm’ until 1799, when he was ‘sent to England to be educated … He returned to Sydney in 1806’ at the age of 17. A. J. Hill, ‘Macarthur, Sir Edward (1789–1872)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1974], Vol. 5.
83 See ibid.
84 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 11.
85 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 150.
of Wales. Macarthur was able to give young Sir Robert some advice which he regarded as valuable; and when the disgraced ... [Macarthur eventually reached England he was welcomed by Sir Walter with great cordiality.]

(Not long after, and as an expression of his gratitude, Sir Walter Farquhar (1738–1819) used his influence to obtain a generous land grant in New South Wales for John Macarthur.)

On Monday, 29 March 1802, four months after Macarthur’s departure in disgrace from Sydney Cove, Lieutenant-Governor Paterson’s second in the infamous duel, Captain Neil Mackellar, left for England on the American whaler Caroline. Mackellar carried documents that were to function as evidence in his prosecution of John Macarthur in London. He also carried John Macarthur’s confiscated sword.

Captain Mackellar and the Caroline were never heard from again. The death of the unfortunate Mackellar ‘was a considerable stroke of luck for John Macarthur’. The absence of any witnesses in England (apart from Macarthur himself) made his court-martial untenable.

**John Macarthur’s Happy Sheep**

Macarthur also managed to wriggle out of the charges laid against him by distracting attention away from his behaviour in the colony, to matters concerning the development of the wool industry in New South Wales. Macarthur’s timing was impeccable. Britain was experiencing a crisis of supply in the wool market.

The political disruption of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon had cast doubt upon the British textile industry’s continued access to Spanish super-fine wool. Therefore, textile manufacturers sought access to an abundant supply of wool within the Empire to satisfy this need. Macarthur [believed] ... that the wool industry in NSW had the potential to expand in the same way the cotton industry had done in America, which had developed into an enormously lucrative industry.

When Macarthur left Sydney Cove on Sunday, 15 November 1801 for his court-martial, the owners of the largest flocks of sheep in New South Wales were either military or civilian officers: Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Foveaux (1767–1846)

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86 Wannan, *Early Colonial Scandals*, p. 84.
87 Ibid., p. 211.
owned 1250; Paymaster William Cox (1764–1837) owned 1000; Commissary John Palmer (1760–1833) owned 650; Quarter-master Thomas Laycock (1786?–1809) and Reverend Samuel Marsden (1765–1838) each owned 340.89

Macarthur’s interest in breeding sheep first began in 1794. Macarthur initially purchased ‘sixty Bengali ewes and three Irish sheep from the captains of convict ships. These animals, bred for mutton rather than wool, were crossed by Macarthur and the result was an improved grade in the wool.’90 Three years later, in 1797, Macarthur bought ‘a number of merino sheep’91 from the Second Commander of the Reliance, Henry Waterhouse (1770–1812), who, in June 1797, was ‘the first to import merino into Sydney’92 and ‘crossed them with his own flock, by 1800 some 600 strong’. In 1801, ‘he augmented his flocks with another 1200 sheep … through purchasing [Joseph] Foveaux’s’ Toongabbie farm, which was ‘for sale following Foveaux’s [move] from the colony’ to Norfolk Island as acting Lieutenant-Governor.93

‘By 1800, thirty-four officer-farmers had accumulated 14,584 acres [5900 hectares] of land, 6,295 head of stock, and held 1,528 acres [600 hectares] under cultivation.’94

In 1803, whilst in England for his court-martial, Macarthur prepared a *Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Breed of Fine Woollen Sheep in New South Wales* for the Government and, in a remarkable exercise of self-promotion, established himself as the colony’s representative of the industry and the most worthy recipient of preferential support for its development.95

Macarthur’s ideas attracted the attention of the Committee of the Privy Council on Trade and Foreign Plantations. Not only were the charges against him dropped, but also through his friendship ‘with Sir Walter Farquhar, [he] was given the opportunity to buy [six] … Spanish pure merino rams and a valuable merino ewe’,96 which were ‘auctioned’97 from His Majesty’s Spanish flock. ‘Through the kind intercession of Sir Walter Farquhar, John Macarthur prepared a *Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Breed of Fine Woollen Sheep in New South Wales* for the Government and, in a remarkable exercise of self-promotion, established himself as the colony’s representative of the industry and the most worthy recipient of preferential support for its development.95

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90 Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral*, p. 47.
91 Ibid., p. 47.
92 Ibid., p. 48.
93 Ibid., p. 47.
95 Broadbent, *Elizabeth Farm Parramatta*, p. 11.
received a grant’ from Lord Camden (1759–1840), the Secretary of State for War and Colonies, of 2000 hectares of ‘the best pasture land in New South Wales for raising sheep’.98

Macarthur was promised an additional 2000 hectares if his ambitious merino sheep-breeding venture was a success.

It is not surprising that Macarthur’s grant of 2000 hectares—‘selected at the Cowpastures, rich pastoral land to the south-west of Sydney’99—was named Camden after the Secretary of State for War and Colonies. Lord Camden also gave Macarthur 30 convicts to work his newly acquired land,100 as well as permission to resign from the army. Commander Henry Waterhouse, who sold a number of merino sheep to John Macarthur in 1797, ‘described the Cowpastures, across the Nepean [River] and at the foot of the Blue Mountains, as a beautiful park, totally divested of underwood, interspersed with plains, with rich luxuriant grass’.101

The first sheep were more like large dogs than today’s fat, waddling woolly creatures. Like dogs, the most prized sheep wore collars … Elizabeth Macarthur, had she lived long enough to see [Australian sheep] … in their paddocks in … [the twenty-first century], would have realized that they were about seven times as heavy as her original sheep.102

John Macarthur Returns to New South Wales

John Macarthur returned to New South Wales in June 1805. Fortunately for John Macarthur, Lieutenant-Governor Paterson survived his duelling wound. This survival did not come, however, without its psychological consequences. In January 1803, two years and one month after Macarthur had left Sydney Cove for his court-martial in England, Paterson ‘had himself examined by no fewer than five doctors, all of who concurred that he needed to maintain as easy and tranquil a state as possible’.103

Following a severe and unpleasant falling out with Governor King, Paterson wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, stating: ‘Not having a very good constitution, the anxiety and uneasiness I suffered injured my health so materially as to require absolute retirement.’104

99 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 11.
100 See Birmingham, Leviathan, p. 269.
101 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 231.
103 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 219.
104 Ibid., p. 219.
William Paterson died on his voyage back to England.

‘When his widow arrived at Portsmouth in November 1810, Macarthur met her’ (between 1809 and 1817, Macarthur was in virtual exile in London) ‘and returned to town yesterday bringing under my escort Mrs Paterson, who appears to be grateful for this mark of attention—you know I sometimes like to return disobliging acts this way’.105

Such an act of kindness (regardless of Macarthur’s motives) was uncharacteristic. Macarthur was a compassionless and unforgiving enemy. ‘Anyone who thwarted his wishes and ambitions was marked for his deepest hatred.’106 He boasted to Governor Ralph Darling (1772–1858) that he had ‘never yet failed in ruining a man who had become obnoxious to him’.107 One can only wonder at what it was that had driven him into such a state of moral sickness.

There can be little doubt that the Macarthurs saw themselves as members of the colonial elite, having aspirations to live out the image of gentility in the colony. During the early 1800s, however, their idea of gentility was already becoming, if not obsolete, then certainly old-fashioned in England. It was feudal and rural. It belonged more to the 1720s than the [early 1800s]. It parodied an ideal of privilege they had never had and, moreover, was distinguished by its absolute inability to relax. English gentility defined itself in relation to an aristocracy above and a peasantry and serving classes below. But its vision of the ‘good yeoman’ did not apply very well in convict Australia, whose peasantry was, by definition, not good.108

Nevertheless, the Macarthurs were members of the colony’s pastoral gentry. As an officer of the original settlement, John Macarthur (like some of his peers) had a prickly sense of [his] … own status as … [a gentleman,] which was maintained by a ceremonious code of interaction (it was taken as an insult to leave the word ‘Esquire’ off the address of a letter), and a constant display of deference from social inferiors (it was taken as an insult not to raise one’s hat to a gentleman in passing) …

The accumulation of wealth turned a considerable part of [the colony’s] … social elite into an economic force which moved from trade towards pastoralism, seeking not only profit but also the traditional prestige of large land ownership …

105 Ibid., p. 325.
106 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 40.
107 Birmingham, Leviathan, p. 267.
Pastoralism under the gentry created a polarised, patriarchal society in the countryside, a deep gulf of status, property and power separating the work-force from the rulers.\textsuperscript{109}

Within the cold embrace of respectability, however, the status of gentleman had to be carried not only with subtlety, but also with ‘a languid elegance’.\textsuperscript{110} The proud Lord Chesterfield (1694–1773), for example, advised his illegitimate son: ‘Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out merely to show you have one … Perfect good-breeding is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness and an awkward bashfulness.’\textsuperscript{111} Despite outward appearances, the Macarthurs may well have been ‘afflicted by the fear of losing status and wealth which gnaws at all members of the bourgeoisie [who] … scratch and claw … their way to prominence’.\textsuperscript{112}

\section*{George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Elizabeth Macarthur’s Life}

On her upstream estate in 1800, Elizabeth Macarthur would have regarded the downstream ‘first’ settlement as a bustling one. At Sydney Cove,\textsuperscript{113}

\begin{quote}
high on ‘the rocks’ above [a] … dockyard … was [a] stone windmill, situated so as to catch the harbour wind and process the grain being grown upstream and north on the Hawkesbury. A sandstone granary [had been] … built on the western side of the Tank Stream, not far from the Hospital Wharf … An assembly of small huts dotted the hillside, connected by winding pathways rather than streets. There were homes, shops, pubs, and even a theatre.
\end{quote}

All the houses faced the Heads, the gateway to the world to which the town was increasingly connected after [12 years] … of settlement.\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{flushright}
110 de Botton, \textit{Status Anxiety}, p. 189.
111 P. D. Chesterfield, \textit{Letters to His Son on the Fine Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman} (Last updated 14 February 2007), Letter 30, Bath, 22 February 1748.
113 See oil-on-canvas painting entitled \textit{Sydney. Capital New South Wales} by an unknown artist, dated ca 1800, housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG 56; Album ID 825790; Digital order no. a1528055).
\end{flushright}
Chapter 13

Sydney had ‘quickly developed in precisely the opposite way to the original vision for the colony; instead of a closely supervised, harsh, subsistence agricultural settlement, it was a distinctly urban place with considerable freedom’.  

The harbour at Sydney Cove was also a hive of activity. For example, whenever a ‘convict transport arrived, the local people took to the water in small “bumboats” to tout fresh fish and vegetables and re-establish links with anticipated or unexpected friends and relatives’.  

The convict Joseph Holt described such a scene: having anchored at Sydney Cove ‘on a Sunday morning in January 1800’, Holt found that within the course of half-an-hour, fifty boats were alongside; all the robbers, pickpockets, and thieves had plenty of acquaintance, but I did not see a soul to whom I was known … Next morning there were twice as many boats alongside as on the previous day, every one bringing presents to their acquaintance.

For Elizabeth Macarthur at Elizabeth Farm, playing Worgan’s square piano may have been one of several ‘genteel escapes’ that sometimes engaged her attention. Elizabeth may have found such an escape desirable, given that her ‘difficulties’ concerning the running of Elizabeth Farm were never ending. In a letter dated Sunday, 15 April 1804 (written during her husband’s first absence overseas between 1801 and 1805), she admitted to her friend ‘the kindly and luxury-loving [Captain] John Piper’ (who had acted as John Macarthur’s second during his duel with Lieutenant-Governor Paterson): ‘The management of our concerns gets troublesome to me in the extreme, and I am perpetually annoyed by some vexation or other.’  

Many of the letters of contemporaneous English aristocratic women reveal that they ‘engaged in matters that took them beyond narrowly domestic affairs. They were most successful in doing so when circumstances left them without the presence of a male head of household.’  

Elizabeth Macarthur was no exception.

When it came to playing Worgan’s piano, perhaps Elizabeth (in a manner reminiscent of the novelist Jane Austen) was discreet; there may have been a

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117 Ibid., p. 68.
resemblance between the musical circumstances and pianistic skills of Elizabeth Macarthur and Jane Austen. In her *Memoir* of 1867, Jane Austen’s niece Caroline reminisced:

> Aunt Jane began her day with music—for which I conclude she had a natural taste; as she thus kept it up—’tho she had no one to teach; was never induced (as I have heard) to play in company; and none of her family cared much for it. I suppose that she might not trouble them, she chose her practising time before breakfast—when she could have the room to herself—She practised regularly every morning—She played very pretty tunes, I thought—and I liked to stand by her and listen to them; but the music (for I knew the books well in after years) would now be thought disgracefully easy.¹²²

(Austen owned a square piano by Christopher Ganer. In May 1801, she sold the instrument when the family moved from the village of Steventon, near Basingstoke, in Hampshire—where, until that time, Jane had spent all her life—to Bath.)¹²³

On the other hand, Elizabeth may not have played her piano at all. In her letter to Bridget Kingdon dated Monday, 7 March 1791, she revealed her concerns related to the possibility for ongoing pianistic progress once George Worgan had departed from the colony: ‘I fear that without my master I shall not make any great proficiency.’¹²⁴ Or perhaps McGuanne’s judgment of Elizabeth Macarthur is closer to the truth than is comfortable. He states (without supporting evidence): ‘When Surgeon Worgan left the colony … he left the first piano as a present to Mrs. Macarthur, but the instrument was silent for want of a player—the … lady was not a musician.’¹²⁵

**George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano Escapes Destruction for the First Time**

Between Sunday, 4 March and Monday, 5 March 1804, Worgan’s piano escaped destruction by a fire that had been planned by the leaders of a convict uprising. Although the rebellion ‘seems to have involved English as much as Irish [convicts,
the uprising] … was officially given an Irish identity, for the Irish convicts had acquired the image of monopolizing such turbulent tendencies and rebellious intentions as existed’. Some Irish convicts had been transported to the colony for committing ‘offences that were uniquely Irish. For example, the innumerate or unipedal Mary McLoghlin was transported for “felony of sock”’.127

Whilst taking supper at the Anglican Reverend Samuel Marsden’s Parramatta home one Sunday evening, Elizabeth was informed that the convicts (known as ‘croppies’)128 were at the Macarthurs’ Seven Hills and Pennant Hills farms; a house at Castle Hill was in flames (signalling the beginning of the uprising), and the rebels were approaching Parramatta129 (‘the flames from burning Castle Hill were visible from Parramatta’).130 The Marsdens and the Macarthurs were friends, frequently enjoying each other’s hospitality. Eliza Marsden131 ‘found Elizabeth Macarthur [to be] a charming … woman who rejoiced in the company of her … children’.132 Moreover, Eliza wrote that Elizabeth was ‘a very pleasant agreeable lady’.133

Elizabeth described the moment when a manservant burst into the parlour, ‘pale and in violent agitation. “Sir”, says he, looking wildly at Mr Marsden “Come with me”. And “you too”, looking at me. Then half shutting the door he told us that the “croppies” had risen.’134

The Reverend Marsden135 was particularly loathed by the croppies. ‘Known as the “flogging parson”, he was responsible for [mercilessly] flogging many Irish Catholic convicts.’136 Marsden identified Catholicism with rebellion … He predicted: ‘it is more than probable that if the Catholic Religion was once allowed to be celebrated by authority, that the colony would be lost to the British Empire in less than one year’. His supporting argument ran thus. The number of Catholic convicts was very great; most of them were Irish of the lowest class, ‘wild, ignorant and savage … men that have been familiar with robberies, murders and every horrid crime from their infancy’.

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126 O’Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community in Australia, p. 5.
127 Hunt, Girt, pp. 149–50.
128 See King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 31.
129 See ibid., p. 31.
130 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 27.
131 A watercolour portrait of Elizabeth Marsden by Richard Read (ca 1765–1827?), on ivory, dated 1821, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 74; Digital order no. a128728).
132 King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 37.
133 Quoted in Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 40.
135 A watercolour portrait of the Reverend Samuel Marsden by Richard Read (ca 1765–1827?), dated 1833, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML 29; Album ID 874693; Digital order no. a928171).
136 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 75.
To Marsden they seemed ‘destitute of every principle of religion and morality ... governed entirely by the impulse of passion, and always alive to rebellion’. Were the Mass allowed, it would become the occasion of seditious assemblies which would issue in assassination, arson and destruction and the overthrow of the government; for not only was there the ‘natural ferocity’ of the Catholic Irish, but they would infect other convicts with their turbulence, and that horror of the colony’s rulers, a mass convict mutiny, would surely occur.137

The Reverend Marsden’s cruelty as a magistrate was confirmed by Commissioner John Thomas Bigge (1780–1843),138 ‘who wrote that his character as a magistrate was “stamped with severity”’.139 ‘In an age that was far from squeamish in the matter of cruelty, Marsden was singled out by reputable men of the colony as a magistrate whose punishments were extraordinary severe.’140

Apart from his anti-Catholic bigotry, the Reverend Marsden’s lack of mercy may also ‘be attributed to his high-mindedness, his passionate detestation of sin and his conviction that Parramatta was such a sink of iniquity that morality could be preserved only by the most rigorous disciplinary measures’.141 For all that, ‘the flogging parson’ was commonly regarded in the colony as an unattractive character.

Marsden was

a busy squire, attending to his rich estates; he was a money-lender and an investor; he engaged extensively in trade and manufacture; he was a magistrate; he was a vigorous contender in political squabbles; he was a persistent litigant; he travelled extensively. These were the occupations that largely filled his days.142

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138 A watercolour portrait of John Thomas Bigge by Thomas Uwins (1782–1857), dated 1819, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. P2/290; Digital order no. a1528261).
140 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 182.
141 Yarwood, ‘Marsden, Samuel (1765–1838)’.
142 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 173.
Leaving Elizabeth Farm cottage (including Worgan’s piano) in the care of servants (who must have been every bit as scared as Elizabeth herself), Elizabeth and her children, in the company of the Marsdens, fled from Parramatta to Sydney by boat, arriving at 3 am.\textsuperscript{144}

The boat that took the refugees to Sydney probably belonged to one of the watermen who plied the estuary at the head of the harbour, and who was subject to the comprehensive set of port regulations published as a proclamation in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, on Sunday, 10 July 1803: ‘to be more circumspect in their conduct towards their passengers ... The boats to be always kept tight, furnished with at least four oars in case the passengers may wish to assist in rowing, and with one mast and sail. To treat the passengers with civility.’\textsuperscript{145} Given the extreme circumstances, one can only hope that the boatman did not charge the stipulated 1s per adult and 6d per child for the journey, but made the journey gratis. (Had the boatman been a compassionless opportunist, he may have hired out the ‘whole boat’ for the prescribed ‘£1 6 shillings’.)\textsuperscript{146}

Elizabeth and her children were accommodated in the Marsdens’ Sydney residence, to which, wrote Elizabeth, ‘our little frightened, sleepy tribe were escorted and civilities poured in upon us from every quarter’.\textsuperscript{147}

\section*{The Convict Uprising is Defeated}

The convict rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed. Superior firepower enabled ‘less than three dozen troops to defeat over 250 rebels’.\textsuperscript{148} Major George Johnston’s (1764–1823)\textsuperscript{149} men were so enthusiastic in their pursuit of the convicts that ‘he had to threaten to shoot some of them to stop them killing the convicts they had taken’.\textsuperscript{150} Retribution was savage: 15 rebels ‘were butchered ... eight hanged and more flogged in an effort to obtain information’\textsuperscript{151}—proving Georges

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{143} A watercolour drawing entitled \textit{The Landing Place at Parramatta, Port Jackson}, attributed to George William Evans (1780–1852), dated 1809?, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXD 388; Album ID 823548; Digital order no. a1313034).
\item \textsuperscript{144} An engraving entitled \textit{By Water to Parramatta; With a Distant View of the Western Mountains Taken from the Wind Mill Hill at Sydney}, by James Heath (1757–1843), dated 1798, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DL Pd 764; Digital order no. a1528096).
\item \textsuperscript{145} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, 10 July 1803, Vol. 1, p. 2, Trove, National Library of Australia.
\item \textsuperscript{146} See ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Macarthur, ‘Letter to John Piper, 15 April 1804’. Quoted in King, \textit{Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World}, p. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Keneally, \textit{Australians}, caption for image ‘Convict uprising at Castle Hill’, between p. 180 and p. 181.
\item \textsuperscript{149} A watercolour portrait of George Johnston by Robert Dighton (1752–1814), dated 1810, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML 511; Digital order no. a1528248).
\item \textsuperscript{150} Duffy, \textit{Man of Honour}, p. 228.
\item \textsuperscript{151} Macintyre, \textit{A Concise History of Australia}, p. 45.
\end{itemize}
Clemenceau’s (1841–1929) ‘point that “military justice is to justice what military music is to music”’. 152 ‘The bodies of the fifteen rebels killed in the battle … were left to rot where they lay.’153

The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 11 March 1804 gives an account of how an end was put to the uprising:

Major and trooper advanced within pistol shot, and endeavoured to persuade [the rebels] … to submit to the mercy that was offered them … which they refused. The Major required to see their chiefs, who after some deliberation met them half way, between the detachment and the insurgents, when by a great presence of mind and address the Major presented his pistol at the head of the principal leader (Philip Cunningham), and the trooper following his motions, presented his pistol also to the other leader’s head, (Wm. Johnston) and drove them into the detachment without the least opposition from the body of the insurgents. Major Johnston immediately ordered Quarter Master Laycock to advance with the detachment, &c and cut the body to pieces, which immediately filed off and fled in all directions, pursued by the detachment and followers, several shots were fired by the Insurgents without effect. As the pursuit was along the road & on each side in the woods, the number of dead are not yet ascertained; nine bodies were found about the road, and several were known to be killed in the pursuit through the woods. A number were overtaken and made prisoners, among whom was the leader (Philip Cunningham), who was to all appearances left dead on the road … Philip Cunningham the principal leader … being still alive, and very properly considered by Major Johnston as a proper object to make an immediate example of, by virtue of the martial law that then existed, and the discretionary power given him by His Excellency, and after taking the opinion of the officers about him, directed him to be publicly executed on the stair case of the public store, which he had boasted in his march he was going to plunder … ten … including the two leaders Johnstone and Humes … were … sentenced to be hanged—Johnstone and Humes to be hung in chains: a part of the sentence was carried into execution at 6 o’clock on Thursday evening, upon Humes, Charles Hill, and John Place … Humes gave much important information, respecting the secret contrivers; and on Friday morning Johnston, Harrington, and Neale were executed at Castle Hill.154

Plate 126 portrays the unfolding of events; in keeping with a particular style of eighteenth-century painting, different stages of the conflict are depicted simultaneously.

The tragic tale is told thus: in the centre distance, a dark-coated figure, Father James Dixon (1758–1840), a Roman-Catholic priest, asks the convict rebels to ‘Lay down your Arms you deluded Countrymen’. (After the rebellion had been ‘bloodily repressed, the … panic-stricken Protestant establishment’ was convinced ‘that Father Dixon had been in some way implicated, and that, obscurely, the rebellion was the outcome of Catholic teachings. Dixon’s privileges of public ministry were withdrawn.’)\(^{155}\) The convict leader, Philip Cunningham, standing in the foreground on the right-hand side, cries ‘Death or Liberty Major’. Major George Johnston (mounted on the brown horse) aims his pistol at Cunningham’s head and replies, ‘You scoundrel, I’ll liberate you’. Inspired by Major Johnston, the trooper mounted on the black horse aims his pistol at the head of the other convict leader, William Johnston, and orders, ‘Croppy lay down’. William Johnston immediately cries out, ‘We are all ruin’d’. Quartermaster Thomas Laycock (1756?–1809) strikes the convict leader with his sword, saying ‘Thou Rebel Dog’. The bleeding convict despairingly cries, ‘Oh Jesus’. The troops open fire on the rebels. In the distance (behind the trees on the left-hand side), two convict leaders, Humes and Johnstone, are hanged on the gallows—‘a grim reminder to would-be rebels that the empire would always strike back’.\(^{156}\)

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Following the 10 days of martial law that were declared in the colony, Elizabeth Macarthur and her children returned to Elizabeth Farm cottage. Subsequently, she was informed that the convicts had intended ‘to set fire to her home as they knew of her lonely situation and thought that the soldiers would immediately go in strength to her aid. The defence of the barracks would thus be weakened.’

That the Irish convicts singled out Elizabeth Macarthur suggests that she had become a person of importance in the colony, and that the rebels were aware of her social prestige. In a letter written to Captain John Piper on Sunday, 15 April 1804, Elizabeth remarked: ‘Thank God all was happily prevented.’ Worgan’s piano had escaped a fiery demise, surviving the convict rebellion to sound another day.

158 Quoted in ibid., p. 31.
Elizabeth Macarthur at Leisure

During the extended absences of John Macarthur overseas (1801–05 and 1809–17), when not engaged in the day-to-day management of Elizabeth Farm, Elizabeth may have been occupied with

plain sewing, visiting, fancy needlework, the taking of tea and the reading of novels.  

A catalogue of the books at Elizabeth Farm, made in 1854, revealed that, once the farm was established, Elizabeth’s choice of imported books covered a wide field from Roman history to the novels of Walter Scott [1771–1832] and the poems of Lord Byron [1788–1824].

(At one time, Elizabeth became ‘so fascinated by Afghanistan that she borrowed all she could on the subject’.)

During the early nineteenth century, a leisure culture emerged that ‘revolved around literary institutions, lectures … concerts’ and the reading of books.

At the centre of such a culture, there lay a view of men and women as beings having freedom of will, responsibility for any actions flowing from that freedom, and capable of ‘standing on his or her own two feet’. As an autonomous being, responsible for what he or she made of his or her life, the individual would see self-help and ‘improvement’ as a duty …

‘Improving’ leisure became synonymous with ‘respectable’ leisure.

‘Respectable’ leisure was commonly linked with reading.

In the eighth chapter of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Charles Bingley lists the skills that an ‘accomplished’ woman must possess: music, singing, drawing, dancing and languages. Bingley continues by remarking that an accomplished woman must also ‘possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions’.

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159 ‘Elizabeth Farm: John and Elizabeth Macarthur’, in *Historic Houses Trust*.
163 Ibid., pp. 77–8.
164 Ibid., pp. 77–8.
165 Ibid., p. 43.
Darcy continues the conversation by stating: ‘All this she must possess … and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.’

In 1838, the Quaker William Howitt (1792–1879) linked leisure-time reading with happiness. ‘Happiness’, he said,

does not consist in booths and garlands, drums and horns, or in capering round a May-pole. Happiness is a fire-side thing. It is a thing of grave and earnest tone; and the deeper and truer it is, the more it is removed from the riot of mere merriment … the more our humble classes come to taste of the pleasures of books and intellect, and the fire-side affections which grow out of the growth of heart and mind, the less charms will the outward forms of rejoicing have for them.

‘Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Quakers … habitually condemned theatre and dancing … travelling actors were blamed by the godly for everything from encouraging sin to … yellow fever epidemic.’ Not that Elizabeth Macarthur was of the ‘humble classes’. Nevertheless, sitting near the fireside with a book, in private, constituted ‘respectable’ leisure, because ‘a contented home was the … proper alternative to the increasingly private leisure of the drinking place’ (for many, it was the fireside of the pub that beckoned).

That Elizabeth Macarthur’s reading matter was eclectic is not surprising given: first, her engagement, as a ‘respectable’ lady, with the ‘improving’ and ‘respectable’ leisure pastime of reading; second, the fine education that the Reverend Kingdon had provided for her in her youth; third, her apparent desire to be ‘accomplished’; fourth, her thirst for knowledge; and fifth, her innate and apparently incisive intelligence.

166 Ibid., p. 43.
168 Potter, ‘Music by the ‘Celebrated Mozart’’, p. 91.
169 Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c. 1780–c. 1880, p. 89.
Two Hundred and Seventeen Years Later, Worgan’s Piano Returns to Elizabeth Farm

On Thursday, 11 February 2010, Worgan’s piano was taken from its current location (in Ermington, Sydney) and placed in the 1826 dining room of Elizabeth Farm cottage. This room was selected because prior to the room’s 1826 refurbishment, it may have been the Macarthurs’ drawing room—the most likely location of Worgan’s piano.

The 1826 dining room is now a rather stark and loveless shell, a space of ineffable blandness (Plate 127). The room feels empty, sad and subtly remote. There is little sense of the warmth and passions of home life, time having consumed John and Elizabeth’s extraordinary past. Gone is the lavish paraphernalia that once reflected the couple’s sensibilities. Even a sudden burst of sunshine through the windows fails to uplift the heart. The room remains immoderately poignant; all is grace and melancholy.

Plate 127 shows the 1826 dining room as it appears now. The colour of the walls is similar to the colour they were painted in the early 1830s.\footnote{See ‘Drawing Room’, in \textit{Historic Houses Trust: Discover Elizabeth Farm} (n.d.).} Note the bare wooden floorboards, which are in keeping with late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century norms; to clean them, ‘household manuals advised that they should be scrubbed with hot sand. A dark brown stain was also recommended to hide dirt.’\footnote{The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.} Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano, positioned next to the fireplace that faces the front windows, was subsequently photographed (Plates 128 and 129). As the first time in more than 200 years that Worgan’s piano has sat in Elizabeth Farm house, the instrument entrancingly resumed its place as a medium of beauty and cultural sophistication.
Plate 127 Elizabeth Farm cottage: 1826 dining room.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 128 George Worgan’s Beck piano in the 1826 dining room of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 129 George Worgan’s Beck piano in the 1826 dining room of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

Source: Photo by the author.

The Historic Houses Trust describes Elizabeth Farm cottage as ‘Australia’s oldest European building’.172 Moreover, Ian Sansom states: ‘Elizabeth Farm contains the structure of the oldest remaining building in Australia.’173 Historian Sue Rosen, however, convincingly demonstrates that Experiment Farm Cottage, built by John Harris, surgeon to the NSW Corps, is ‘the oldest surviving European building in Australia’,174 and reveals the damage that may be done ‘when heritage “experts” refuse to engage with historians’.175

The Macarthurs would probably have laughed had they known that people would someday pay money to visit their home.

Precedent forces us to suppose that later generations will one day walk around our houses with the same attitude of … amusement with which

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172 ‘Elizabeth Farm’, in Historic Houses Trust: Venues (Historic Houses Trust, n.d.).
174 Rosen, Australia’s Oldest House, p. 118.
175 Ibid., Back cover.
we now consider many of the possessions of the dead. They will marvel at our wallpapers and our sofas and laugh at aesthetic crimes to which we are impervious.\textsuperscript{176}

The Macarthurs may also have been astonished, perhaps grateful, to think that people would be curious about, or deeply moved by, the domestic space that they simply took for granted.\textsuperscript{177}

Mrs Macquarie’s Piano: An anecdote

Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano is particularly portable. Because the instrument’s legs are hinged to the bottom of the case, Elizabeth Macarthur would have been able to easily move the piano and its stand (presumably with the help of a servant’s straining arms). An anecdote describing the use of Mrs Elizabeth Henrietta Macquarie’s (not Elizabeth Macarthur’s) piano to frighten Indigenous trespassers reveals that only two people were needed to carry an ‘old piano’ (a square piano?).\textsuperscript{178}

The anecdote may have its source in the writings of the colonial-born author John George Lang (1816–64). Lang included among his fictional stories, ‘often with a strong factual content, an account of Mrs Macquarie’s piano, providing an image of its civilizing qualities together with its powers as a successful deterrent to marauding Aborigines’.\textsuperscript{179}

Lang writes:

The next morning, soon after daylight, Romer came into my apartment, and, with a smile upon his face, said, ‘This old piano, it occurs to me, may be turned to very profitable account.’

‘How?’ I inquired.

‘We may make it an instrument of terror to the blacks. Of late they have become awfully troublesome in the matter of spearing the cattle, merely for the fat wherewith to grease themselves, and only last week we lost in this way a very valuable cow. I will send for some of the tribe and frighten them, or rather you must, by playing on the bass keys.’

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{177} See H. Sachs, \textit{The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824} (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), p. 12.\\
\textsuperscript{178} See J. Lang, \textit{Botany Bay, True Tales of Early Australia, XIII: Music a Terror} (n.d.).\\
\end{flushright}
I liked the idea vastly. Besides, I was very curious to see the expression of a savage's face when, for the first time, he heard music.

The encampment of the blacks was only three or four miles [5 or 6 kilometres] distant, and a stockman was sent to bring several of them; and at noon, about eight or nine of them, in all their nudity, made their appearance. Mrs. Romer had a strong objection to admit them in or near the house, and so Romer and I carried the old piano [a square piano?] out into the open space in front of the dwelling.

The aboriginal native of New Holland—just like the native of India—cannot help touching and examining everything that is strange to him; and no sooner did ‘the blacks’ whom we summoned observe the old piano, than they moved towards and examined it very attentively. One of them at last opened the instrument, and touched the keys rather heavily, and (like, Fear in the ‘Ode to the Passions’), terrified at the sound he had produced, recoiled backwards, his spear poised ready to be thrown, and his brilliant black eye firmly fixed on the demon, for as such he regarded the old piano. His companions also poised their long spears, and retreated cautiously step by step.

Romer now begged of them not to be alarmed, and with some little difficulty brought them back to the piano, where he represented to them that inside was a fearful demon, who would eat up the whole of their tribe if he were told to do so; but that, if they did nothing to offend or annoy him [Romer], they had nothing whatever to fear.

I corroborated this statement by nodding my head; and, advancing to the instrument, I touched the keys and began to play as loudly as possible. Who shall describe their faces and their attitudes? Some of them grasped their boomerangs, others poised their spears ready to repel any sudden attack that the demon might make upon them. It was a scene such as I would not have missed on any account.

When I had ceased playing, Romer explained to them that I had been telling the demon what he was to do, on the next occasion of a bullock, a cow, or a calf being speared on the run; and they must have believed every word he said, for from that day forward the nuisance abated, and the tribe very rarely came near the forest where our cattle used to graze; so that the old piano, after all, was by no means dear at the price I paid for it, to say nothing of the amusement which it afforded to Romer's children.180

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180 Lang, *Botany Bay, True Tales of Early Australia*, XIII.
George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano Escapes Destruction for the Second Time

On Saturday, 26 January 1805—10 months after Worgan’s piano had escaped destruction by fire during the Irish convict uprising—Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano once again narrowly escaped a raging conflagration. The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 27 January 1805 reports that when fire broke out in the detached kitchen of Elizabeth Farm cottage, annihilation of the residential section of the house was narrowly prevented:

Yesterday, between the hours of twelve and one at noon, a fire broke out on the farm of Mrs. M’Arthur, at Parramatta, by which a detached kitchen was in a short time destroyed. From the direction of the wind the flame several times reached the dwelling-house, but was happily extinguished every time with scarce perceptible damage by the military detachment on duty at Parramatta, whose active exertions prevailed in subduing the fire, and limiting its ravage to the former building [that is, the kitchen], which was however totally consumed.181

Elizabeth Macarthur Purchases Thomas Laycock’s Piano

James Broadbent states that in 1810, ‘Elizabeth Macarthur appears to have replaced Worgan’s piano with a larger and finer instrument (perhaps a piano in upright form) that was purchased at auction in Sydney from the estate of Thomas Laycock [1756?–1809] for the then substantial sum of £85’182 (approximately four times the price of a new square piano in London). Elizabeth may have used Worgan’s piano as part payment for her ‘new’ piano; such a transaction would have been regarded as a viable part of purchasing a second-hand instrument. There is, however, no evidence suggesting that Elizabeth actually got rid of Worgan’s piano in 1810. Even though it is logical to propose that Elizabeth’s new piano was ‘larger’ and ‘finer’ than Worgan’s piano, we do not know exactly how it differed from Worgan’s piano.183 Furthermore, there is no evidence that Thomas Laycock’s piano was an instrument in upright form.

183 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
‘Structural problems inherent in square piano fabrication, as the makers strove for a more powerful tone, [and] increasing string tensions while at the same time widening the case to accommodate extended keyboards caused many [piano makers] … to ponder the merits of a new type of piano in upright form.’\textsuperscript{184} (Many design difficulties specific to the upright piano were successfully overcome by late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century makers; in 1811, the Viennese piano maker J. F. Bleyer, on examining an upright piano, wrote: ‘When we examine this action closely, we observe the drops of sweat shed by its inventor.’)\textsuperscript{185}

That an upright piano would have found its way to Australia so soon after its invention in London is unlikely. Significant dates pertinent to the development of the upright piano are listed below.

- 1795: Patent for Robert Stodart’s ‘upright grand piano-forte in the form of a bookcase’—commonly referred to as an ‘upright grand’ (Plates 2, 130 and 131).\textsuperscript{186}
- December 1798: Patent for William Southwell’s ‘upright square’ piano.\textsuperscript{187}
- 1800: John Isaac Hawkins’ (1772–1855) small upright piano (‘patent portable grand’).\textsuperscript{188}
- 1811: Patent for the inventive William Southwell’s ‘cabinet piano’ (Plate 132).\textsuperscript{189}
- ca 1811: Broadwood begins to make cabinet pianos.\textsuperscript{190}
- 1811: Robert Wornum’s (1780–1852) ‘cottage upright’.\textsuperscript{191}

If Laycock’s piano arrived with him in September 1791 on board the Gorgon, the instrument could not have been in upright form—such pianos were not invented until 1795. There remains the possibility that Laycock imported an upright instrument into the colony sometime after 1795 and before his death.

\textsuperscript{184} Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{186} Patent no. 2028, registered Monday, 12 January 1795. See Gadd, \textit{The British Art Piano and Piano Design}, p. 250, fn. 36.
\textsuperscript{187} Patent no. 2264, registered Thursday, 6 December 1798. See ibid., p. 250, fn. 43.
\textsuperscript{190} See Cole, \textit{Broadwood Square Pianos}, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{191} The height of Wornum’s ‘cottage upright’ was approximately 1.5 metres. By the mid-1830s, ‘the square piano was being replaced by the [cottage] upright … which took up even less room and became the favourite domestic instrument of the Victorian household’. Goold, \textit{Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano}, p. 273.
on Wednesday, 27 December 1809. If his piano (after Thursday, 4 January 1810, Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano) had been such a rare and innovative type of instrument (and this within the contexts both of English and of colonial culture), remarks would certainly have been made by contemporaneous colonial commentators, who remain silent on the matter.

Left: Plate 130 Upright grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons (London, 1815).

Source: Ralph Schureck Collection, Sydney. Reproduced with permission of Ralph Schureck. Photos by the author.
It did not take too long, however, for upright pianos to find their way to the colony. The first mention in the antipodean press of an upright piano appears in an advertisement published in the *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen’s Land Advertiser* on Friday, 9 April 1824. The first mention of an upright piano in the Sydney press appears in an advertisement for the raffling of ‘an elegant patent upright piano-forte, by Wornum’, published in *The Australian* on Wednesday, 18 April 1827. In both instances, these advertisements appear more than a decade after Elizabeth Macarthur purchased Thomas Laycock’s piano at his estate auction on Thursday, 4 January 1810.

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A portrait of the merchant, pastoralist, politician and philanthropist Robert Campbell at Wharf House, Sydney, painted by Charles Rodius in 1834, shows Campbell ‘seated on a gilt japanned chair beside a table … In the background can be seen an upright grand piano’ (or, because the instrument’s proportions are inaccurately depicted, perhaps a cabinet piano), with a typical ‘pleated silk front’ panel (commonly known as the ‘sunburst’ or ‘cloudburst’ design) in the upper section.194

Approximately one year after Campbell’s portrait was painted, the pianoforte maker John Benham195 designed (?) and produced the first Australian-made piano. This extant instrument is in upright form (a ‘cottage’ piano).196

Having bought a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate, Elizabeth Macarthur may have held onto Worgan’s piano for sentimental reasons (it would be surprising if Elizabeth had not formed at least some degree of attachment to Worgan’s piano), having in her possession (for a time at least) two pianos at Elizabeth Farm cottage. If this was the case (there is no documentary evidence to support the notion), Elizabeth may not have been the only colonist to have had two pianos in her home. The ‘sale of the contents of John Palmer’s [1760–1833] Woolloomooloo House in 1816 … included two pianofortes’.198 (‘John Palmer arrived in New South Wales with the First Fleet … as purser of [the] … Sirius.’)199

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for families who owned two pianos, one piano usually functioned as a practice instrument. Normally, the practice piano had been in the family’s possession for some years, and was the older of the two pianos.

If Elizabeth held onto Worgan’s piano when she acquired her ‘new’ piano from Laycock’s estate, Worgan’s piano—as an ‘old-fashioned’ practice instrument—may have been relegated to an ‘unimportant’ room. Elizabeth’s new, more fashionable piano would have taken pride of place in the drawing room of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

195 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 9 July 1835, p. 3.
196 This instrument is part of the Powerhouse Museum Collection, Registration no. H8405.
197 Woolloomooloo House, ‘mortgaged for over £13,000, was eventually sold to’ the merchant and pastoralist Edward Riley (1784–1825) ‘for £2,290 in May 1822, though the stock and furnishings were auctioned in 1816’. J. Conway, ‘Riley, Edward (1784–1825)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.
What is certain is that on Thursday, 4 January 1810 Elizabeth purchased a piano from the estate of Thomas Laycock for the seemingly extortionate sum of £85.\textsuperscript{200} Reckoned in today’s monetary values, Elizabeth’s new piano cost approximately £2900 (A$5000).\textsuperscript{201} There are several explanations for why Elizabeth Macarthur paid the not inconsiderable sum of £85 for Laycock’s piano.\textsuperscript{202} Perhaps she was an unfortunate victim of the financial opportunism that sometimes existed in relation to the cost of square pianos sold by Sydney residents to other citizens of that city; after all, the population of the colony was relatively small, and pianos were a rare and desirable commodity. On Sunday, 24 July 1803, for example, a piano (presumably square) was advertised for sale in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*;\textsuperscript{203} the asking price was an exorbitant 60 guineas (approximately three times the price of a new square piano in London). Judge Advocate Ellis Bent provides another example of the unprincipled practice. In a letter dated Friday, 27 April 1810, Bent, writing from Sydney to his mother in England, recounts:

> Mrs. Paterson had a small pianoforte [that is, a square piano] but she asked for it £40. and the sounding board was broken [a testament perhaps to the extremes of temperature and humidity in Sydney], and the instrument was in other respects not a good one. I offered her £26 for it, but it was not accepted, tho’ it did not cost her more than £25 and she had used it for ten years.\textsuperscript{204}

Mrs Paterson ‘was the wife of the lieutenant-colonel of the New South Wales Corps and had arrived with her husband in 1791. At the time Bent wrote she was packing to leave for England.’\textsuperscript{205}

One assumes that the piano purchased by Elizabeth Macarthur at Thomas Laycock’s estate auction on Thursday, 4 January 1810 was, unlike Mrs Paterson’s square piano, in good condition. ‘Either Mrs Macarthur had been practising assiduously since Worgan’s departure, or she was determined to give her daughters the early opportunities she herself had lacked.’\textsuperscript{206} One also assumes that Elizabeth was so drawn to the instrument that she was prepared to spend £85 to acquire it.

\textsuperscript{200} *Macarthur Papers*, pp. 9, 11. See Broadbent, *Elizabeth Farm Parramatta*, p. 38. See also ‘The Allure, for Elizabeth Macarthur, of Laycock’s Longman & Broderip(?) Piano: Summary’ in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{201} Currency conversion via the National Archives; and Universal Currency Converter.

\textsuperscript{202} See ‘Brian Barrow’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano: Elizabeth Macarthur’s Second Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{203} *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 24 July 1803, Vol. 1, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{204} Bent, ‘Letter to His Mother’, 27 April 1810. See *Ellis Bent Correspondence* (Canberra: National Library of Australia), MS 195, pp. 147–8.


\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
Thomas Laycock

Thomas Laycock had been quartermaster to the NSW Corps. He arrived in Sydney on the Gorgon in September 1791. In February 1793, Laycock was granted 32 hectares ‘at Parsley Bay, later the site of Vaucluse House … [and] by 1807’ he held a total of 670 hectares.207 Given Elizabeth’s social aspirations and pretentions, it is not surprising that she bought a piano that had belonged to one of Sydney’s most eminent gentlemen and owner of one of the largest flocks of sheep in New South Wales.

By 1810, Elizabeth Farm was ‘well established and well ordered with its comfortable cottage, its gardens and orchard’.208 At this time, Governor Lachlan Macquarie spoke of Elizabeth Farm: ‘This [has] … by far the finest soil and best pasturage I have yet seen in the colony; the grounds are beautiful and bounded by a large creek … I saw some fields of fine promising wheat and several numerous flocks of sheep and herds of horned cattle.’209

Because of Thomas Laycock’s wealth, it was almost inevitable that (even as a second-hand instrument) his ‘elegant piano-forte’210 was likely to be an expensive item to purchase at his estate auction. (Laycock had already contributed to Elizabeth Macarthur’s pianistic aspirations; it was he who led the detachment of soldiers that suppressed the Irish convict uprising of 1804. The Irish rebels had threatened Worgan’s piano with destruction by fire, and Laycock’s actions had inadvertently preserved the instrument from damage.)

In 1805—the year after Laycock had helped subdue the Irish convict uprising—a letter was written by one officer of the NSW Corps to another concerning the scandalous behaviour of Thomas Laycock:

> It gives me extreme uneasiness to relate to you unpleasant news concerning … Mr. Laycock … whose conduct has been so extremely improper since his wife has left the colony as to be noticed by almost every person and if possible every succeeding day has been marked in him with some fresh act of folly, indecency or un-officer-like behaviour … It is with regret that I add the father’s bad example has been follow’d by the son [Thomas Laycock, 1786–1823]—You will perhaps scarcely credit that L' Laycock escorted his fathers convict whore through the

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208 King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 56.
209 L. Macquarie, Lachlan Macquarie Governor of New South Wales, Journals of His Tours in New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land 1818–1822 (Sydney: Library of Australian History in association with the Library Council of New South Wales, 1979), p. 2. Quoted in Hoorn, Australian Pastoral, p. 34.
streets arm and arm on duty in full regimentals & had the indecency to walk with her on the public parade last Sunday whilst the band of the regiment was playing.211

Four years after this letter of condemnation was penned, Laycock’s son was struck by lightning whilst picnicking at South Head.

[O]n Sunday 15 January 1809, a ‘genteel pleasure party’ of fourteen officers and ‘ladies’ went to the South Head where, between 3 and 4 o’clock in the afternoon, they were preparing to take a cold collation beneath a fig tree. They had tables set up, with knives and forks, and it was supposed that the cutlery attracted the lightning which, without warning, suddenly struck the picnic party. No one was killed but a young lady had her hair set ablaze, Mr [John] Harris [1754–1838] and Mr Sloane were knocked down, Lieutenant Laycock was lamed, Captain Porteous felt the shock and Mr Gregory Blaxland [1778–1853], who later, with [William] Lawson [1774–1850] and [William Charles] Wentworth [1790–1872], found a way across the Blue Mountains, had a bottle knocked out of his hand but escaped injury.212

Eleven months later, Thomas Laycock the elder died—mentally deranged and unable to manage his affairs—’at his house in Pitt’s Row’,213 on Wednesday, 27 December 1809.

It appears that Thomas Laycock, jr, had no wish to keep his father’s piano. Perhaps Thomas, jr, having married Isabella Bunker on Thursday, 1 June in 1809, already owned a piano himself, or perhaps he simply ‘was not sufficiently interested [in music] to retain … [the piano] of his father’.214

**Thomas Laycock’s Estate Auction**

Four days after the death of Thomas Laycock, sr, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 31 December 1809 advertised the auctioning of his estate:

Sale by Auction, by Mr. Bevan,

On Thursday next the 4th of January, 1810, on the premises of Mr. Laycock, deceased, in Pitt’s Row, at ten o’clock in the forenoon, all

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213 Ibid., p. 105.
214 Ibid., p. 105.
the neat household furniture, consisting of bedsteads, beds, bolsters, blankets, and mattresses, tables and chairs, table linen, sheeting, a small quantity of plate, knives, forks, and all kinds of kitchen furniture, a quantity of wearing apparel, some fine Hyson tea, sugar, wine and spirits, an elegant piano-forte with music books.\textsuperscript{215}

The auctioneer, David Bevan, owned sales rooms in George Street. Bevan’s description of Laycock’s piano as ‘elegant’ may have carried a very specific implication.

From at least 1815 Broadwood price lists offered certain pianos with an optional ‘Elegant’ decoration.

For example, in 1815, Broadwood offered a ‘Square, elegant’ for £26 … a ‘Square with single action’ for £17 6s [and] … a ‘Square with double action’ for £18 3s.

What was so special about the ‘Elegant’ that it should cost more than any other square piano.\textsuperscript{216}

William Frederick Collard (1776–1866) used the same description, at least until 1832, as did Robert Wornum, at least until 1838.

Collard offered a square ‘elegant, with rounded corners’ for £40 … this was more expensive than six other sorts of square piano and less expensive than three other types.

Wornum’s ‘Elegant … from 46 to 50 guineas’ [was the most expensive of six types].

How do we de-code their use of the word ‘Elegant’? Could it, for example, have meant buhl \textit{[boulle]} or other inlay?\textsuperscript{217}

Although this seems likely, the perplexing problem of ‘elegant’ pianos remains as a tantalising goad to the cryptologist. What is obvious is that ‘elegant’ pianos were intended for higher-end customers.

That Elizabeth Macarthur travelled from Elizabeth Farm to Sydney to attend the auction of Thomas Laycock’s estate indicates the degree of her resolve to acquire another piano (and perhaps an ‘elegant’ one at that). That she acquired the piano of the eventually disreputable Thomas Laycock, sr, is astonishing, given her tendency towards snobbery. That she could make time to travel to the auction is remarkable; Elizabeth constantly worked to ensure that Elizabeth

217 Ibid., p. 184.}
Farm did not fail. Writing to the wealthy Sydney merchant and trader Garnham Blaxcell (1778–1817) on Saturday, 20 May 1809, Elizabeth confessed that ‘every day I feel such an accumulated weight of responsibility and care, that whatever tends to lighten any part of it is desirable’.218 Perhaps Elizabeth hoped that the purchase of a ‘new’ and ‘elegant’ piano from the estate of Thomas Laycock would catalyse the creation of music-making contexts within which her ‘accumulated weight of responsibility and care’ might be lightened.

A letter written by John Macarthur—who was into his second year of what was to become an eight-year absence in England—to Elizabeth on Friday, 3 August 1810, reveals that he knew that his wife was constantly pressured by the decision-making and day-to-day activities associated with running the farm. He writes:

I am perfectly aware, my beloved wife of the difficulties you have to contend with, and fully convinced that not one woman in a thousand, (no one that I know) would have resolution and perseverance to contend with them all, much more to surmount them in the manner that you have so happily done. That I am grateful and delighted with your conduct I think it is needless for me to say.219

Elizabeth appears determined to be financially successful, presumably in order both that her family could enjoy the benefits of a prosperous life and that she would never again be poor (memories of her youthful status as a ‘charity child’ would doubtless have strengthened her resolve). At the time, poverty was regarded as the result of a deficient character,220 and Elizabeth would have done all in her power to avoid being regarded in such a way. A common upper-class view was that poverty was a product of indolence and that the indigent poor had only themselves to blame.221

Elizabeth’s purchase of a piano from Laycock’s estate on Thursday, 4 January 1810 suggests that music-making may still have been a part of her life, perhaps a pleasurable and contemplative foil to the daily pressures associated with her running of the farm. It is possible that since Worgan’s departure in 1791, she

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220 Attitudes have not changed. Dr John Falzon, Chief Executive of St Vincent de Paul Society’s National Council and a member of the Australian Social Inclusion Board, and Sally Cowling, Research Manager, UnitingCare Burnside, state in an essay written to mark the start of Anti-Poverty Week: ‘For nearly 15 years, welfare reform in Australia has been driven by breathless enthusiasm for America’s “new Paternalism” and its “close supervision of the poor”. It presumes people “doing it tough” are living examples of moral failure.’ J. Falzon and S. Cowling, ‘Poverty of Ideas in Welfare Crackdown’, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 October 2010, [Opinion], p. 13.
221 Bridges, Foundations of Identity, p. 23.
had continued to practise the piano, and despite her concerns (‘but I fear that without my master [George Worgan] I shall not make any great proficiency’),\(^{222}\) the standard of her playing had improved.

**Music Books**

The advertisement published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 31 December 1809 for the auctioning of Laycock’s estate mentions the inclusion of ‘music books’\(^{223}\) with the ‘elegant piano-forte’. The addition of music books would certainly have made the lot more attractive to potential buyers. This was because

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\text{Australia was a captive local retail music market, perpetually kept waiting and hungry by its geographical isolation for new imported, usually printed, musical product from homeland Britain and Europe. Imagining how limited the available repertoire was, is not hard; emigrants—professional and amateur—may well have brought their own music collections with them on the voyage out … once here, they were literally stuck with their ‘desert island’ selection, save for periodic arrival of shipments of ‘new music’ from home (always prominently advertised by music-sellers).}\(^{224}\)
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It is not known whether or not Elizabeth could play the pieces contained in the music books that were sold along with Laycock’s piano at David Bevin’s George Street sales rooms, nor is it known specifically what repertoire these music books contained. The books may have contained works by composers listed in a letter dated Tuesday, 9 December 1806, written by the explorer Matthew Flinders to his mother-in-law asking after his family:

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\text{Have you a piano forte in the house for them: if you have, be so good as to lay out two guineas for me in music and present to them in my name: it will be proper to get some friend in London to chuse the newest and best … [Ignaz] Pleyel, [Daniel] Steibelt, [Joseph] Mazinghi and [Joseph] Heydn [Haydn] are amongst the best authors.}\(^{225}\)
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Or perhaps the music books that Elizabeth Macarthur purchased contained works by the composers listed in a letter dated Friday, 27 April 1810, written in Sydney by judge advocate Ellis Bent to his mother: ‘If the piano should be sent

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\(^{223}\) *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 31 December 1809, p. 1.


I should like a few books of well selected music, to be sent with it including, songs, operas, sonatas, lessons etc’, of Joseph Mazzinghi, Louis von Esch (d. ca 1819), James Hook, Joseph Haydn, Ignaz Pleyel and others.\textsuperscript{226}

**Why Did Elizabeth Macarthur Purchase Thomas Laycock’s Piano?**

The acquisition in 1810 of an ‘elegant’, and possibly more ‘modern’, piano\textsuperscript{227} may have represented Elizabeth’s desire to appear cultured, wealthy and up-to-date (in 1810, Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano would have been decidedly old-fashioned). By 1810, Sydney was a culturally self-confident city and Elizabeth Macarthur one of the burgeoning colony’s more prominent citizens. As surgeon Joseph Arnold (1782–1818) wrote to his brother on Sunday, 18 March 1810:

>[A] person coming into Sydney cove would think himself in the midst of a large city. If he dines out here he finds all the luxury and elegance of the first English tables: and elegant equipages are often observed in the streets: the accommodations at the inns are as good as any where in England and you may have wines of almost every kind.\textsuperscript{228}

Elizabeth Macarthur’s ownership of a piano was a status symbol. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the piano attracted attention as a status symbol to an even greater extent than had been the case with the harpsichord. An expensive, attractively decorated piano implied a certain economic and social standing; a small shabby instrument might well be taken as evidence of the limited means of its owner. There was every incentive to be seen to be able to afford the latest and most fashionable type. Yet it was not merely a question of physical appearance; the pianoforte was undergoing rapid development, and there were thus good musical reasons for constantly updating one’s model ... Pianos ‘with additional keys’ were often advertised, and they were keenly sought by players.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{226} I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for making his transcription of this letter available.

\textsuperscript{227} See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.


Pianos ‘with additional keys’

John Broadwood was the first piano maker to extend the keyboard compass of the English grand piano to 5.5 octaves. ‘Until 1790 all known pianos sold by Broadwood were of 5 octaves’ (FF–f3). [T]hese 61-note [fully chromatic] keyboards correspond exactly with the resources required by all published music of the period’,230 and represent the keyboard compass commonly encountered throughout most of late eighteenth-century Europe. From 1790, Broadwood added (for some grand pianos) an extra half-octave in the treble. This resulted in a compass of FF–c⁴. Broadwood added the extra notes in response to a request from the pianist-composer Jan Ladislav Dussek, who asked that they be incorporated for ‘dramatic sparkle’.231 The extra treble notes were soon commonly referred to as ‘additional keys’.

The inventive Irish harpsichord, piano and harp maker William Southwell had already made the first extended compass square piano during the early 1780s.232 The ‘earliest known square piano with a five-and-a-half-octave keyboard is … inscribed “Southwell Fecit 1784”’.233 This is the earliest known piano of any kind to have a 5.5-octave keyboard.234

In order to incorporate the additional keys into the limited space available in a square piano, Southwell extended ‘the soundboard to the left, above the treble keys’, and lengthened ‘the bridge into a recurving U-shape’.235 The hammers for the additional notes struck ‘a separate order of strings’236 (attached to a new little hitch-pin block fastened to the back of the case) through a slot ‘cut in the far edge of the soundboard … [The] top eight keys and hammers (f³–c⁴)’237 were ‘fitted to a separate keyframe so that the mechanism’ did not need to be curtailed, and passed ‘right underneath the soundboard’.238

Around the 1830s, additional keys in square pianos were added by lengthening the entire instrument, and having ‘all the notes in one run’239 without any need for ‘a slot [to be] cut in the … soundboard for the extra hammers to rise through’.240

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230 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 69. ‘In Spain the standard keyboard was usually GG to g3.’ Ibid., p. 69, fn. 51.
232 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 70.
233 Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 73.
234 See ibid., caption for Plate 5, between p. 210 and p. 211.
235 Ibid., p. 105.
236 Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, p. 58.
237 Ibid., p. 58.
Square pianos with additional keys began to appear frequently during the early 1790s. It is reasonable to assume that Southwell’s belated patent for the idea (number 2017, granted in London on Saturday, 18 October 1794) was conceded by all other piano makers. Those who incorporated additional keys into their instruments may have paid Southwell a fee for the use of his invention.

In 1793, Culliford, Rolfe & Barrow made and sold three square pianos with additional keys—violating their Monday, 2 January 1786 14-year exclusive contract with Longman & Broderip, in which they had agreed not to make or sell pianos on their own. Broadwood began making 5.5-octave square pianos in 1793.

The fact that by 1793 the extended keyboard compass was being used—with or without Southwell’s permission—by esteemed piano makers may have caused the inventor to seek a patent in 1794. The demand for pianos with additional keys gave rise to music composed especially for such instruments. For example, on Tuesday, 19 November 1793, Longman & Broderip published ‘A Sonata for the Grand and Small Piano Forte with Additional Keys. Composed, and Dedicated to Mrs Chinnery, by J. L. Dussek. Op. 24’. Another work in which the extended keyboard compass was exploited followed from their press, on Friday, 4 April 1794, and ‘by that autumn Longman & Broderip were ready to enter the market of building and selling pianos on which to play this music’.

The earliest extant Longman & Broderip 5.5-octave square piano is dated 1796 (serial number 306). Five-and-a-half-octave Longman & Broderip square pianos were subject to a serial number series that ‘ran from approximately 1795 to 1798 and [to] a serial number of approximately 900’.

Thomas Laycock arrived in Sydney in 1791. If he brought a piano with him, and if the instrument was a square piano, it may have had additional keys. If this was so, that fact may have enticed Elizabeth Macarthur to purchase the instrument at Laycock’s estate auction. Given that eminent and fashionable makers such as

242 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, pp. 70–1.
243 See Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, pp. 50–1, 82. See ‘9) Thomas Culliford (1747–1821)’, in Volume 2 of this publication.
244 See Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, p. 59, fn. 39.
249 See ibid.
Broadwood began making 5.5-octave square pianos in 1793 (three years after Laycock arrived in Sydney), and Longman & Broderip in ca 1794, it seems unlikely, however, that Laycock’s instrument had additional keys.

An advertisement published on Saturday, 30 October 1813 in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser lists ‘[f]or sale, a capital piano forte, with the additional keys, made by Bolton’. This is the first advertisement appearing in the Sydney press in which a piano with additional keys is described. It is reasonable to assume that this Bolton instrument was a square piano.

(Bolton’s identity remains a mystery. He may have been the ‘T. Bolton’ who composed ‘Six Waltzes, Composed and Adapted as Lessons for the Piano Forte, with Accompaniments for a Tambourine and Triangle (ad libitum); And Instructions for Performing on the Tambourine’. An anonymous critic writing in The Monthly Magazine; Or, British Register of Tuesday, 1 April 1800 described Bolton’s ‘Six Waltzes’ in the following way: ‘lovers of tambourine music will find a variety of useful hints. The flamps, semi-flamps, the travale, the double-travale, the gūgles, the bass, the turn, and other necessary particulars, are explained. The waltzes are, for the most part, uncommonly pleasing, and well calculated for tambourine and triangle accompaniments.’

The advertisement for the Bolton piano with additional keys (appearing in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 30 October 1813) was published only three years after Elizabeth Macarthur had purchased Laycock’s pianoforte at David Bevin’s, on Thursday, 14 January 1810.

Whilst it is possible that Laycock’s piano was an instrument with additional keys, there is no documentary evidence to support the notion. If the instrument had additional keys, David Bevan did not need to mention the fact in his advertisement for the piano’s sale at Laycock’s estate auction (published in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser on Sunday, 31 December 1809).

By 1809, a 68-note keyboard compass (5.5 octaves: FF–c⁴) was nothing special.

The casework and/or nameboard of Laycock’s ‘elegant’ piano was probably more opulently and/or intricately ornamented than that of Worgan’s Beck piano.

251 T. Bolton, Six Waltzes, Composed and Adapted as Lessons for the Piano Forte, with Accompaniments for a Tambourine and Triangle (ad libitum); And Instructions for Performing on the Tambourine (London: Goulding, Phipps & d’Almaine, n.d.).
254 Concerning the meaning of the term ‘elegant’ in relation to pianos, see ‘Thomas Laycock’s Estate Auction’, above.
this being a factor that enticed Elizabeth Macarthur to buy.\footnote{See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.} Although Elizabeth may have been eager to display her ‘wealth in a material way … unlike [some] … who rode the wave of pastoral prosperity … [she] was never vulgar. When [the] … newly acquired wealth [of others] resulted in flashy opulence, [Elizabeth was] … “of the best polish”’.\footnote{Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, pp. 38–9.} The maintenance of her good taste may have been supported by the fact that she and her children kept ‘more clear of the mob than any family in the colony’.\footnote{H. Scott, ‘Letter to His Mother, August 1824’, in Scott Papers (Sydney: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales), A2264.} Regardless of the intricacy of the casework on Laycock’s piano, the instrument’s possible modernity—when compared with Worgan’s Beck piano\footnote{See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication. No documentary evidence exists to support the notion that Laycock’s piano had additional keys.}—may have made it desirable to Elizabeth.

It is at this point—1810—that Elizabeth Macarthur ceases to be part of the history of Worgan’s square piano. Unfortunately, Elizabeth Macarthur subsequently endured a great sadness.

Early in 1817, after what must have been a wrenching eight-year sojourn in London, John Macarthur returned to New South Wales.

   Eight years is a long time for any couple to be apart. All we know about their long anticipated reunion is the fact that it was not always a happy one …

   John was more irascible and high-handed while Elizabeth had lost any trace of shyness. She had become a woman of property, used to giving orders and being obeyed by her staff.\footnote{de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, pp. 86–7.}

Late in life, John Macarthur succumbed to insanity (today, he would probably have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder). He seesawed between bursts of great energy and deep depressions leading finally to madness. He accused Elizabeth of adultery and wanton behavior and as a punishment banished her from the family home [at Camden Park]. Elizabeth hoped this separation [she lived at Elizabeth Farm cottage] was only for a short time, but she never saw John again, he died … [on Friday, 11 April] 1834 at the age of sixty-seven; his wife was in Sydney assisting her daughter Mary give birth when the news reached her. Elizabeth grieved in private and stoically showed no indication of the

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255 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
256 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, pp. 38–9.
258 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication. No documentary evidence exists to support the notion that Laycock’s piano had additional keys.
pain she must have felt when told her husband never spoke of her again. However, a letter to her son Edward in England is said to have carried a mark where a tear had fallen.260

‘To her credit Elizabeth continued to be respected by many of the leading colonial families, even when [John] Macarthur’s psychosis developed, by June 1832, to the point that physical restraint was necessary.’261 (She confided to her son Edward: ‘Let us be thankful to the Almighty, that a wholesome restraint was placed upon your beloved father before his malady had induced him to acts of greater violence.’)262

### John Macarthur Dies

The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Tuesday, 15 April 1834 published John Macarthur’s obituary. It contains some of ‘the conventional (and somewhat empty) eulogistic pieties of the day’:263

**Died**

At Camden, on Friday last, John McArthur, Esq. M. C. This gentleman in political life, advocated the imperious principle of confining all offices and civic honours to emigrants. In private society he united the highest qualities. His prisoner servants never had occasion to complain of deficient sustenance: and it is much to be regretted that strong political prejudices should have so much sullied the otherwise excellent disposition of such a man.264

Perhaps an observation made in 1822 by the colonist Robert Scott (1799–1844) represents a more complete insight into John Macarthur’s personality: ‘the leading man in the colony … very clever, shrewd calculating man, with an extraordinary degree of perseverance and foresight, but a man of the most violent passions, his friendship strong and his hatred invincible.’265

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260 Kennedy, ‘Elizabeth Macarthur (1766–1850)’.
261 Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance*, p. 25.
262 Quoted in King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 154.
Although Elizabeth deeply mourned the death of her fractious … husband … life at Elizabeth Farm was pleasant. As a widow she had more visitors than as the wife of a very quarrelsome man, and she enjoyed their conversation. She accepted without question that her sons would in future make the major decisions within the family. In her widowhood, they sometimes consulted her but, while she remained the centre of her family’s affections, she was never its head. 266

Elizabeth Macarthur Dies

Sixteen years after the death of John Macarthur, Elizabeth Macarthur died, aged 83, on Saturday, 9 February 1850, on the eve of the discovery of gold in Australia. 267 She was ‘beloved and revered by all who knew her’. 268 One of Elizabeth’s greatest strengths ‘was her ability to build and maintain a strong and harmonious family life, even through the long absences of her husband … and the innumerable demands of farm life’. 269 Elizabeth appears to have regarded her main roles in the colony ‘as … setting … social standards and … nurturing … a society of responsible people’. 270 Perhaps her ‘most remarkable achievement was her management of the Macarthurs’ complex agricultural and business empire’. 271 She was a woman of ‘energy, endurance and culture who provided a background of solid worth and modest cultivation [both] for … [her] menfolk and for … [colonial] society as a whole’. 272

The Sydney Morning Herald of Saturday, 16 February 1850 announced Elizabeth Macarthur’s death in a perfunctory way, seemingly insensible to her lifelong courage, vision and tenacity: ‘Died. On the 9th instant, at Clovelly, the residence of H. Watson Parker, Esq., Elizabeth, widow of the late John Macarthur, Esq., of Camden, aged 83 years.’ 273

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266 Atkinson and Aveling, Australians, p. 114.
270 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 21.
271 Ibid., p. 29.
272 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 27.
Chapter 14

George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano Offered for Sale?

In order to continue our journey with surgeon Worgan’s piano, we must backtrack to an event that transpired on Thursday, 4 January 1810, 40 years before Elizabeth Macarthur’s death. This event was the auction at which Elizabeth purchased a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate.

There are gaps in our knowledge of what became of Worgan’s piano following this auction. The instrument may have been sold at auction ca 1810, and if so, it may have been sold by one of Sydney’s leading merchants, the public auctioneer and emancipist Simeon Lord (1771–1840).¹

Simeon Lord

Simeon Lord’s business establishment was situated in a large four-storey house—the largest in the town—adjacent to the Tank Stream bridge,² on what is now the corner of Bridge Street and Macquarie Place.³ Although substantial, Lord’s house was built ‘with a minimum of decoration’.⁴

‘Instead of facing the water, Lord’s house [looked] … up the hill towards Government House, which’, although it was separated from the harbour’s edge by gardens, ‘was somewhat smaller and shabbier than his home. Its deliberate aspect might have reflected deference or hubris.’⁵

Lord built his house in 1803, using ‘local sandstone for the house walls … two floors were lined with cedar’.⁶ (In the same year, on Monday, 25 July, 1803 . . .

¹ A watercolour portrait of Simeon Lord by an unknown artist, on ivory, dated ca 1830, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 92; Digital order no. a128827).
² Simeon Lord’s house is depicted in a watercolour drawing entitled East View of Sydney in New South Wales by John Eyre (1771–?), dated ca 1809, housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DI. Pg 49; Digital order no. a1528247). Lord’s house is the large four-storey building in the distance, situated adjacent to the bridge over the Tank Stream.
⁵ Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 71.
⁶ Ibid., p. 71.
at an auction held at his Sydney warehouse, Lord offered a pianoforté for sale. Judging by the advertised price of 60 guineas, it is reasonable to assume that the instrument was a grand piano. This is the first advertisement to appear in Australia’s earliest newspaper concerning the sale of a piano.) In 1811, D. D. Mann, in his Present Picture of New South Wales, described Lord’s house as ‘the most magnificent in the colony’, but, from the evidence available, ‘little except the very generously proportioned front doorcase with side-lights and large semicircular fanlight and the house’s unrivalled bulk supports such praise’ (‘houses, roads [and] … avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years’).

The enormous size of Lord’s house can be explained by the fact that it was ‘planned as a shrewd business manoeuvre’, functioning simultaneously as a boarding-house, a business centre and a private home. Second Commander of the Reliance, Henry Waterhouse, when writing to Sir Joseph Banks on Tuesday, 10 June 1806, described Lord’s dwelling as ‘a good & neat … house, at which a stranger on his arrival might lodge & board, or eat by himself, this was so convenient to the masters & mates of merchant vessels, that Lord got the disposal of most of their investments’.

The lowest level of Lord’s house comprised storerooms. The ground floor was above these, comprising ‘four large rooms including a counting house and auction room … on the first floor there were bedrooms and dressing rooms and at the top were fourteen single rooms. Lord’s house became a focal point for trade and business … and the recognized rendezvous and shore base for visiting ships’ captains.’

Simeon Lord was one of the colony’s first merchants ‘to demonstrate their success materially in the size and appearance of their establishments’. As a successful merchant, Lord made his fortune ‘by moving local timber, Pacific sandalwood, Hunter River coal, Tahitian pork, South Seas whale oil’ (whaling was Australia’s first primary industry), ‘Indian rum and British manufactured goods through the harbour on their way to local buyers or markets overseas. That the colony imported more than it exported remained a constant.’

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8 Ibid.
14 Bridges, Foundations of Identity, p. 55.
16 Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 74.
Lord became so wealthy that he even ‘bought a Spanish ship, captured by a British whaler as a war prize, renamed it the *Anna Josepha* in honour of Governor King’s wife and used it to ship coal and timber spars to the Cape of Good Hope’.  

In fact, Simeon Lord and his wife, Mary (née Hyde; 1779–1864), ‘became one of the richest couples in the Colony of New South Wales, with only six Sydney residents having greater landholdings’.  

If not to Simeon Lord, Elizabeth Macarthur may have sold Worgan’s piano to another of the several socially acceptable merchants and auctioneers who conducted their business in Sydney.

**1810: David Bevan**

The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 31 March 1810 contains an advertisement for the sale of ‘an elegant’ piano forte. The advertisement states:

> Sales by Auction, by Mr. Bevan,

> At his rooms in High Street, Sydney, on Monday next the 2d of April, at ten o’clock in the forenoon, a quantity of Brazil tobacco, black and white lace, ladies dresses, bed-gowns, gowns, petticoats and shifts, a few dozen bottles of capers, ladies and gentlemen’s shoes, buggy and [?] key whips, large pin glasses, an elegant piano forte, ladies’ side saddles, a child’s English chair, a small quantity of crockery ware, glass, and plate, writing desks, iron pots and other kitchen furniture, and a variety of other fashionable and useful articles.

Apart from three advertisements listing a piano for sale on board the *Mary* in May 1812 (immediately following that ship’s arrival in Sydney), this advertisement is the only one appearing in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* between 1810 and 1812 listing a piano for sale in Sydney.

Given that Elizabeth Macarthur purchased a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate on Thursday, 4 January 1810, it may be conjectured that she arranged (at that time) for David Bevan to sell Worgan’s piano sometime after the auction.

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17 Ibid., p. 73.
18 N. Bannan, ‘Relationship with Simeon Lord’, in *Bannan Family Australian Relatives* (Unpublished ms, n.d.), p. 4. I am indebted to Nicholas Bannan of Perth for providing me with a copy of this unpublished text.
19 Implications of the term ‘elegant’ (in relation to pianos) are discussed in ‘Thomas Laycock’s Estate Auction’ in Chapter 13, this volume.
Because of the commonly encountered ‘trade-in’ practices of the time (usually related to ‘updating’ a piano), Worgan’s piano may even have formed part of Elizabeth’s payment for Laycock’s instrument. Within this context, Worgan’s piano may have come into the possession of the auctioneer David Bevan. If so, Worgan’s piano may be the unidentified elegant pianoforte that was subsequently offered for sale by Bevan at his salerooms in ‘High Street, Sydney’ on Monday, 2 April 1810.

1813: Robert Jenkins

Two years and seven months later, in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 30 October 1813, another piano is advertised for sale. This piano is described as having additional keys and was ‘made by Bolton’.22 It was sold by R. Jenkins (1777?–1822), ‘licensed auctioneer, Macquarie street’.23 Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano has a fully chromatic compass of 61 notes (FF–f3), and as such cannot be described as an instrument with additional keys. The piano advertised on Saturday, 30 October 1813 in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser cannot be Worgan’s piano.

1814: David Bevan

A year later, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 8 January 1814 advertises ‘[a]n excellent piano forte’ for sale at auction.24 This auction took place at 11 am25 on Wednesday, 12 January 1814, at Bevan’s George Street sale rooms. The piano’s vendor is unidentified, so it cannot be ascertained whether or not this instrument is Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano.

1815: Mr Charters, 68 George Street, Corner of Market Street

We do not know what became of Worgan’s piano during the five years between Thursday, 4 January 1810—the date of Elizabeth Macarthur’s purchase of Laycock’s piano—and Saturday, 14 January 1815.

On 14 January 1815, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser includes the following advertisement: ‘Now on sale, at 68, George street, corner

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22 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 30 October 1813, p. 1.
23 Ibid., p. 1.
25 Ibid.
of Market Street, some choice Newcastle cedar, in inch, three quarter inch, and half inch boards. N. B.—A very handsome piano forte by Beck, in perfect order, to be disposed of.'

This advertisement signals the beginning of a period of approximately four and half months during which a Beck piano was offered for sale six times in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*.

That the piano is described in the advertisement as being both ‘very handsome’ (implying exceptional case decoration and exquisite design) and ‘by Beck’ strongly suggests that it was Worgan’s instrument. The 1780/86? Beck square piano currently owned by Stewart Symonds in Sydney (identified in this study as having belonged to George Worgan) has an attractively veneered and inlaid nameboard and a beautifully inlaid case. Uniquely for English square pianos, the instrument has exquisite square-tapered cabriole legs. The curved inside edge of each leg is inlaid. These elegant design and decorative elements more than suggest a ‘very handsome’ instrument.

That Frederick Beck’s name is specifically mentioned in each of the six advertisements published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* in 1815 is significant. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century in Sydney, the inclusion of a maker’s name in advertisements for the sale of a piano was rare (pianos were most commonly described only as ‘piano forte’).

In 1815, in the absence of any sources suggesting otherwise, Worgan’s piano was the only instrument in Australia made by Frederick Beck. The mention of Beck’s name in the advertisement may have alerted astute potential buyers not only to the piano’s uniqueness, but also to the fact that the instrument had been owned by one of the colony’s most prominent citizens, Elizabeth Macarthur.

Perhaps the asking price was high, as the piano did not sell immediately. A month later, the following advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 4 February 1815: ‘To be disposed of, a very handsome piano forte, by Beck, in perfect order, with a small collection of music. Enquire at No. 68, George-street, corner of Market-street.’

Two months later, the following advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 15 April 1815: ‘Further particulars

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26 The Sydney Town Hall is currently located at this address.
27 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 14 January 1815, p. 2.
28 Comprising a simplified form of Tunbridgeware inlay, consisting of an ebony stringer adjacent to a boxwood stringer, with a band of cross-banded fine ribbon-grained brown timber (beech?), followed by a band of alternating diagonally cut boxwood and an ebony stringer.
29 *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, Saturday, 4 February 1815, p. 4.
made known by applying to Mr. Charters, 68, George street, corner of Market-
street. NB.—A very handsome piano forte in perfect order to be disposed of, for
which a negociable bill will be taken in payment … Apply as above.’30

Still the piano did not sell. A month later, another advertisement appeared in
the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, on Saturday, 13 May 1815:
‘Now on sale, at 68, George street, corner of Market-street … Also, an excellent
piano forte, by Beck, in perfect order.’31

A week later, Charters again offered the piano for sale: ‘Now on sale, at 68,
George street, corner of Market-street … Also, an excellent piano forte, by
Beck, in perfect order.’32

Despite these efforts, Charters still had no success in selling the piano. Two
weeks later, on Saturday, 3 June 1815, the following (and final) advertisement
appeared in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, on Saturday,
3 June 1815: ‘Now on sale, at 68, George street, corner of Market-street … Also,
an excellent piano forte, by Beck, in perfect order, for which a negociable bill
will be taken in payment.’33

No further advertisements for the sale of the Beck piano appeared.

George Chartres

‘Mr Charters’ was the lawyer George Chartres (fl. 1810–17). Dublin born, he was
convicted of fraud on Saturday, 14 July 1810,

and sentenced to be transported for seven years. [In July 1811,] he
arrived at Sydney in the Providence. He was given a ticket-of-leave
on his arrival and soon afterwards was appointed clerk to D’Arcy
Wentworth [1762?–1827] superintendent of police, at a salary of £30, a
position he held throughout his stay in the colony … [In 1812,] Chartres
advertised that he would transact all manner of conveyancing and was
ready to render professional assistance ‘as might appear requisite for
the prosecution or defence of suits’ in the courts … On 27 February
1813 he was sentenced to the Coal River (Newcastle) for misconduct, but
received another ticket-of-leave in December, returned to Sydney and on

30 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 15 April 1815, Vol. 13, No. 583, p. 2, Trove, National
Library of Australia.
31 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 13 May 1815, Vol. 13, No. 598, p. 2, Trove, National
Library of Australia.
Library of Australia.
33 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 3 June 1815, Vol. 13, No. 601, p. 1, Trove, National
Library of Australia.
13 June 1814 was conditionally pardoned. Five days later he announced his intention of resuming his legal activities, now at 68 George Street, though he accompanied his practice by mercantile dealings and keeping a public house.34

Having ‘sold his stock, his house and other assets’, he left Sydney for England ‘with his wife in the Harriet on 22 December 1817’. Although judge Jeffery Hart Bent (1781–1852) ‘wrote in 1819 that [Chartres] … had become bankrupt, nothing more of him is certainly known’.35

It is reasonable to assume that George Chartres maintained possession of the Beck piano for almost two years until the month before he left Sydney for England on Monday, 22 December 1817.

1817: Simeon Lord

On Saturday, 8 November 1817, the following advertisement appeared in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser concerning an auction, by Simeon Lord, scheduled for Thursday, 13 November 1817:

Sales by Auction … by Mr. Lord, at the residence of Mr. Chartres, [68] George-street, Sydney, on Thursday next, the 13th Instant, at eleven in the forenoon, and on every succeeding Thursday at same hour (until the whole shall be disposed of), the remaining stock in trade, consisting of men and women’s cotton hose, English prints, haberdashery, &c. &c.—Likewise, the household furniture; comprising an elegant rose-wood four-post bedstead, fluted and carved, running on brass castors, with English chintz hangings, rose-wood secretary, chest of drawers, parlour and drawing room chairs, sofas, dining and other tables, ladies and gentlemen’s portable writing desks, &c. &c. &c.—Also, a very excellent toned piano forte by Beck, a few volumes of books, an elegant gig and harness, a black gelding, well adapted for farming purposes, and a valuable gold watch, by Moon, London.36

Given the changes in piano sound and musical aesthetic that had occurred by 1817, that the piano is described as ‘excellent toned’ is a remarkable comment to make in relation to an instrument made in 1780/86?. The description is doubtless a sales ploy. It is not known if a buyer emerged for the Beck piano.

35 Ibid.
1838: John Blackman

Given that pianos advertised for sale in the Sydney press during the 1820s and 1830s do not usually include any instruments made by Beck, any mention of a Beck piano must alert the senses. This is the case in an advertisement published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Tuesday, 5 June 1838, in which ‘one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London’ is mentioned:

> For Sale by Auction, by Mr. Blackman, To-Morrow, the 6th June, 1838, at his rooms at 11 o’clock precisely, without reserve, 48 pair of fancy striped and railway drill trowsers 20 pair of superfine blue cloth trousers 2 pieces of English Parramatta cloth 15 elegant China crape shawls, various colors 2 bags sugar.

Also, one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London.37

Was this Worgan’s piano? It does seem likely. That London is specified enables a narrowing of the field to occur.

1. During the first half of the nineteenth century, there were only three piano makers with the surname of Beck in the world
   a) Carl Friedrich Beck (1790–1839),38 who worked in Berlin between ca 1820 and 1839
   b) Johannes Beck (1817–63),39 who worked in Ebingen between 1817 and 1863, making six-octave square pianos (no surviving instruments are known)
   c) an unidentified Beck, possibly Joseph Beck, who worked in Paris between 1819 and 1822.40

As far as is known, these makers never worked or had a sales outlet either in London or anywhere in the British Empire.

2. During the 1820s and 1830s there were more than 220 piano makers and dealers in London.41 Not one of these London piano makers has the surname of Beck—or anything that resembles it. In fact, there had not been a piano maker named Beck in London since Frederick Beck established his workshop at 4 Broad Street, Golden Square, in ca 1771 (Beck died ca 1798). Moreover, during the 1820s and 1830s there appears to be no evidence for

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38 See ibid., p. 45.
39 See ibid., p. 45.
41 See Appendix H, Volume 2 of this publication.
a) pianos made by Beck being commonly available for sale in England; during the 1820s and 1830s, the only advertisement published in the British press in which a second-hand Beck piano is offered for sale appears in The Bury and Norwich Post of Wednesday, 27 April 183142

b) pianos made by Beck being exported from England for subsequent sale in Australia.

The mention of ‘one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London’ in the advertisement in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of 5 June is tantalising.

Perhaps the auctioneer John Blackman included Beck’s name in his advertisement not only to alert potential buyers to the instrument’s age (in 1838, Beck’s piano would have been extremely outmoded), but also to its uniqueness in Australia. By the 1830s, any mention of a piano made by Beck would most probably have caused curiosity (if not indifference); this is because other piano makers had gained prominence in Sydney.

In the 14 years between 1828 and 1842, 17 piano makers/firms are specifically mentioned by name in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser:

- Anderson (mentioned once)43
- John Benham44 (mentioned eight times)45
- Broadwood (mentioned 43 times)46
- Broadwood & Sons (mentioned 18 times)47

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42 See Appendix N, Volume 2 of this publication.
44 John Benham (fl. 1831–45), ‘whose origins are uncertain, built the first piano in Australia’. Housed in ‘the Old Mint Building, Sydney, it is constructed of Australian red cedar’. See Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano, p. 27.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

- John Chace (mentioned twice)\textsuperscript{48}
- Clementi & Co. (mentioned 15 times)\textsuperscript{49}
- Collard & Collard (mentioned 16 times)\textsuperscript{50}
- Dale & Co. (mentioned twice)\textsuperscript{51}
- Elliott & Co. (mentioned five times)\textsuperscript{52}
- Joseph Davis (mentioned five times)\textsuperscript{53}
- Gerock & Co. (mentioned four times)\textsuperscript{54}
- Gunter (mentioned twice)\textsuperscript{55}
- Isaac Henry Robert Mott (mentioned six times)\textsuperscript{56}
- Small, Bruce & Co. (mentioned once)\textsuperscript{57}
- Stodart (mentioned six times)\textsuperscript{58}
- Tomkison (mentioned 15 times)\textsuperscript{59}
- Wolfe & Co. (mentioned once).\textsuperscript{60}


\textsuperscript{48} Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 11 April 1840; 11 June 1840, Vol. 38, Trove, National Library of Australia.


\textsuperscript{57} Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 5 September 1840.

\textsuperscript{58} Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 14 April 1832, Vol. 30, Trove, National Library of Australia; 26 January 1839; 29 January 1839; 31 January 1839; 2 February 1839; 5 February 1839.


\textsuperscript{60} Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 19 May 1840.
By way of summary, the Broadwood firm occupies pride of place (61 times), followed by Clementi & Co. (including Collard & Collard; 31 times), Tomkison (15 times), Benham (eight times), Mott and Stodart (six times each), Elliott & Co. and Davis, Gerock & Co. (five times each), Chase, Dale & Co. and Gunter (twice each), and Anderson, Small, Bruce & Co. and Wolfe & Co. (once each).

These data suggest that in Sydney, at least by the 1830s, not only was private music making a common pastime amongst those who could afford to purchase a piano, but also a ready supply of instruments and sheet music was available. (‘In April 1828, the South-Asian Register reported that “Professor” Edwards’, who owned a ‘music warehouse in Underwood’s Buildings near the wharf in George Street … sold, during the previous three years, no fewer than twenty-three new pianos in Sydney, imported from London’.61 Furthermore, on Monday, 19 December 1831, Anne Maria Bourke, the daughter of the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Richard Bourke, observed that in Sydney ‘a good many ladies play the harp and pianoforte very well’.)62

Apart from ardent amateurs, Sydney’s musical life also included professional musicians of talent and ability. For example, Vincent Wallace (1812–65), who settled in Sydney in January 1836,63

had been one of the leading violinists in the orchestra accompanying [Niccolò] Paganini [1782–1840] for his Dublin concerts in August–September 1831, and in the theatre orchestra directed that season by the renowned London leader, Paolo Spagnoletti [1768–1834].64

While he was in Sydney … Wallace’s violin fantasies a lâ Paganini, and piano solos après Herz, reportedly pleased audiences less than

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61 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 106. Cumes sources his information from the South-Asian Register, p. 290.
63 Having ‘emigrated to Hobart Town with his wife and infant son, his sister Elizabeth, a soprano, and his brother Wellington, a flautist’ in November 1835, Wallace gave one recital there before he and his family moved to Sydney. For this recital, Wallace used a piano made by Goulding, d’Almaine & Potter. The instrument was owned by the artist and engraver Thomas Bock (1790–1855), who, having arrived in Hobart Town in January 1824, kept it at his home in Campbell Street, Hobart Town. The piano came to Van Diemen’s Land on the Tiger, which ran aground on a sandbank in the Derwent River; Bock’s high-quality piano had to be rescued from this precarious situation. William Bradshaw purchased the instrument from a second-hand dealer (the piano had become available because of a divorce; the husband sent the instrument from Tasmania to a Melbourne warehouse, from where it was sold to Bradshaw). The instrument, along with its original piano stool, is currently housed in a private collection. I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information. Quotation taken from C. Mackerras, ‘Wallace, William Vincent (1812–1865)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography. Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.
his improvisations on their favourite airs, the same sort of sentimental ballads for which his [opera] *Maritana* later became (and long remained) famous.65

Wallace came to Sydney unknown as a musician save to a few, went to the bush, and was for a time engaged on a station. He returned to the metropolis, and some friends hearing him play by accident were amazed to discover in a simple immigrant a violinist of the first rank, and at the solicitations of Sir Richard Bourke, the Governor of the colony, he was induced to give a concert, which took place on the 12th February, 1836, and proved a great success. He played his own compositions, both for violin and pianoforte … He then advertised himself as ‘Leader of the Anacreontic Society and Professor of Composition of the Royal Society’, and commenced teaching. Wallace did not remain long in Sydney. He went to New Zealand, from there he proceeded to South America, passed through a variety of incidents, and then returned to London, where he composed the opera of *Maritana*, and became famous, not only as an operatic writer, but as a composer of music for the pianoforte … his finest being the fantasia on *Maritana*, seldom performed.66

On Saturday, 19 March 1836, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* referred to Vincent Wallace as ‘the Australian Paganini’.67 There can be no doubt that Wallace was the most talented and brilliant musician to perform in Sydney during the 1830s.

In the presence of a musical talent as dazzling as Vincent Wallace, it is unlikely that during the 1830s any mention of a piano made by Frederick Beck would have impressed.

It has been shown above that between 1828 and 1842, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* specifically mentions 17 piano makers/firms by name. During the same period, *The Sydney Herald* mentions 10 piano makers/firms

- Allen (mentioned twice)68
- Ashton (mentioned once)69
- Broadwood (mentioned 10 times)70

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65 Ibid., p. 32.
The Broadwood firm occupies pride of place (10 times), followed by Clementi (six times), Stodart and Tomkison (five times each), Davis (four times), Allen (twice), Ashton, Dettmer, Kirckman and Smith (once each).

Between the late 1820s and early 1840s, information published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* and *The Sydney Herald* suggests that the pianos most often purchased in Sydney as new instruments were imported from London, and were made by Broadwood, Clementi (including Collard & Collard), Stodart or Tomkison. (As early as 1802, Clementi’s pianos were estimated to be among the best in the world. In 1802, the London correspondent of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* [General Music Journal] wrote that Clementi & Co. ‘without doubt produce the finest but also the most valuable instruments in the world, whose quality has been refined by Clementi’s technical mind and artistic experience’.)

Auctioneer John Blackman’s advertisement for ‘one second-hand pianoforte, by Beck, of London’ published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Tuesday, 5 June 1838, appeared 21 years after the last mention of a...
Beck piano had been made in the Sydney press. After Blackman’s advertisement, the surname ‘Beck’ is never again mentioned in any Sydney newspaper in connection with a piano.

John Blackman’s auction was held on Wednesday, 6 June 1838; this was three months and two days after George Bouchier Worgan had died in Liskeard. Blackman had established his ‘Auction Mart’ sale rooms at ‘Mr. Hutchinson’s Buildings, No. 5, King-street’ four years before, on 29 March 1834. The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Tuesday, 1 April 1834 contains the following observation: ‘Another competitor for public favour as an auctioneer enters the arena, in the person of Mr. John Blackman. His rooms are in King-street.’

Two days later, on Thursday, 3 April 1834, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser more informatively reveals that ‘a Mr. John Blackman, has opened business as an auctioneer, at No 5, King-street, in the house lately occupied by Mr. Brenand.’

By the time John Blackman offered the Beck piano for sale on Wednesday, 6 June 1838,

there were nearly twenty thousand people in Sydney … Sixteen thousand of these were free and there was agitation to stop the transportation of convicts. The granting of free land had been abolished in 1831 and land sales now helped to raise money to assist free immigration … In 1836 … [there were] 570 arrivals in Port Jackson, and only 16 of these were convict ships. Of the rest, most were immigrant vessels, whalers, traders and local coasters carrying passengers and produce.

However vibrant a picture these statistics may paint, two years before John Blackman’s auction, the English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–82) left Australia after a brief visit with the following valediction: ‘Farewell Australia! you are a rising child, and doubtless some day will reign a great princess in the south; but you are too great and ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect. I leave your shores without sorrow or regret.’

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79 An advertisement appearing in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser concerning an auction (scheduled for Thursday, 13 November 1817) at which Simeon Lord offers for sale ‘a very excellent toned piano forte by Beck’. See Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 8 November 1817, p. 1.
80 The author has searched for mention of a Beck piano in Sydney newspapers up to, and including, 1954.
81 The Sydney Herald, 7 April 1834, p. 1.
82 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 1 April 1834, Vol. 32, p. 2.
83 Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 3 April 1834, p. 3.
84 Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 84.
85 Quoted in Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 223.
That Accounts for the Coke in the Milkanut:¹
William Bradshaw’s stock book entry and three differing provenance versions

It is not known what became of the Beck piano after John Blackman’s auction of Wednesday, 6 June 1838. Hypotheses pertaining to the history of the instrument after 1838 can be created using information derived from four sources

1. William Bradshaw’s stock book entry detailing his purchase of the 1780/86? Beck square piano (Plates 328e and 328f)

2. three differing provenance versions, each of which is based on hearsay.

None of the four sources conclusively proves that the Beck piano came to Botany Bay with the First Fleet.

William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: The entry dated 29 October 1973

Bradshaw kept meticulous records of his acquisitions. Data for each acquisition were recorded in a large purpose-printed ledger, and comprised handwritten information (in ink) entered into columns spaced over two adjacent pages. Each column was headed (respectively, left to right)

- left-hand page
  1. day of purchase or receipt, and hour of day
  2. description of old wares purchased or received
  3. date (a handwritten heading)
  4. cost (in pounds).

- right-hand page
  5. name and surname of person by or through whom purchased or received

6. name and surname of person from whom purchased or received
7. business and place of abode of person from whom purchased or received.

Data concerning Bradshaw’s purchase of the 1780/86? Beck piano are found in one of his stock books (Plates 133 and 133a). Bradshaw’s stock book entry for his purchase of the Beck square piano reads

1. left-hand page (slashes within the quotation delineate each column): ‘Oct 29 11.30 / Square Piano by Beck for self / 1786 / 150’ (the last column’s pound-sign heading has been overwritten with a dollar sign: ‘$’)
2. right-hand page: ‘W. F. Bradshaw / Adam Barber / 82 Murriverie Road North Bondi’.

At the top left-hand corner of the left-hand page, Bradshaw has written (in blue ink) ‘1973’. Paul Kenny, the eminent antiques importer, Bradshaw’s close friend and colleague and the current custodian of Bradshaw’s stock books, posits that the address ‘82 Murriverie Road’ written in black ink at the top centre of the left-hand page was written by Bradshaw.

The Beck piano entry is the last of three entries dated 29 October 1973. The first two entries detail the acquisition of: 1) a 1760 Chippendale tea table; and 2) two gilt chairs dating from 1850.

Bradshaw’s stock book entry indicates that he purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano on Monday, 29 October 1973 from Adam Barber at 82 Murriverie Road, North Bondi, Sydney (Plate 133a). It is not known how or when Barber acquired the piano.

Oddly, there is no mention of an Adam Barber in any of the Australian Electoral Rolls for 1968, 1972 or 1977 (compulsory enrolment for federal elections existed from 1912). One assumes that: 1) Adam Barber was Australian;

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2 I am indebted to Brian Barrow for providing me with a photographic copy of the first half—that is, the left-hand page—of Bradshaw’s stock book entry detailing his purchase of the Beck square piano. I am also indebted to Paul Kenny for supplying me with a photographic copy of the adjacent page—that is, the right-hand page—upon which is written the continuation of Bradshaw’s stock book entry detailing his purchase of the Beck piano.
3 ‘Paul Kenny’s friendship with Bill Bradshaw goes back to the 1950s when Bradshaw was his mentor in Market Street and Kenny had a share in an antique business in Orange.’ Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’. See also ‘Tea, Cake, Convivial Company and a Proposed Provenance’ in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
4 In the 1970s Bradshaw and Kenny ‘worked together on the furnishing of the restored Elizabeth Bay House’. Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’.
5 Telephone conversation between the author and Paul Kenny, Wednesday, 7 August 2013.
and 2) Adam Barber did not substitute either his middle name or another name for his Christian name (the Australian Electoral Rolls for 1968 and 1977 list no person with a middle name of Adam and a surname of Barber).7

Plate 133 The left-hand page of William Bradshaw’s handwritten entry in one of his stock books regarding acquisition of the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano (detail).


Plate 133a The right-hand page of William Bradshaw’s handwritten stock book entry regarding acquisition of the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano (detail).


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7 See Electoral Rolls for 1968 and 1977 in ibid.
At first sight, Bradshaw’s stock book entries dated 29 and 31 October 1973 appear to have been written at the same time. Did Bradshaw manufacture Adam Barber’s name? It does seem unlikely. In order to possess a trading licence, the law required antiques dealers—if they were not *exclusively* antiques *importers*—to keep detailed accounts of purchases and sales. Government officers would regularly appear unannounced at Bradshaw’s shop in order to inspect his records; on many an occasion these inspectors were anything but pleasant. The licensing sergeants would often visit the addresses listed in Bradshaw’s stock books in order to substantiate the veracity of his data. Since Bradshaw was mortally afraid of authority, it is reasonable to assume that the details provided in his business records are true.8

Did Adam Barber mislead Bradshaw by giving a false name, and if so, why? Barber would not have needed to falsify his name unless he had acquired the Beck piano illicitly, or was not entitled to sell the instrument to Bradshaw. A fictitious name would have allowed Barber to reinvent the Beck’s history.

A fabricated name would also have allowed Bradshaw (if he was aware that Barber’s name was false) to invent a provenance. Such a scenario, however, would represent a departure from Bradshaw’s character. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny on Tuesday, 2 July 2013, Kenny, Bradshaw’s friend and colleague and a man blessed with an acute memory, remarked that Bradshaw, in relation to provenance details, might ‘embellish a story, but he wouldn’t invent; he was a truthful man’.

When Bradshaw acquired the piano from Barber, the owner of 82 Murriverie Road was Charlotte Barnes, who had purchased the property one year earlier, on Wednesday, 18 October 1972. When Barnes acquired the Murriverie Road property, she was living at 3/315 Military Road, Vaucluse, Sydney (in 1980, the Electoral Roll gives the same address for Charlotte, who is described as a ‘designer’).9 Charlotte may have regarded 82 Murriverie Road as an investment property; she owned it for only 15 months, subsequently selling it on Friday, 18 January 1974 to Gianni Finelli and his wife, Patricia.10

Since Bradshaw’s stock book entry indicates that he purchased the Beck piano from Adam Barber at 82 Murriverie Road, it is reasonable to assume that Barber was renting the property to live in. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny on Wednesday, 7 August 2013, Kenny proposed that the reason Adam Barber sold the instrument to

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8 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for this information.
10 I am indebted to Phillip Barrow for this information.
Bradshaw (along with a 1760 Chippendale tea table and two 1850 gilt chairs)\textsuperscript{11} may have been because he was moving out of 82 Murriverie Road; given that 82 Murriverie Road was sold only two and a half months after Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano from Barber, Kenny’s speculation is logical.

Bradshaw’s stock book entry dated 31 October 1973—that is, two days after he had purchased the Beck piano—indicates that he returned to 82 Murriverie Road, where he purchased the following antiques from Adam Barber (Plates 328e and 328f):

1. a 1790 satinwood fire-screen desk
2. a Viennese square piano dated 1800
3. an 1850 gilt couch
4. a 1790 mahogany table
5. a 1760 gilt armchair.

Ten days later, on Saturday, 10 November 1973, Bradshaw once again returned to 82 Murriverie Road; his stock book entry indicates that he made further purchases from Bobby Lee\textsuperscript{12} and Adam Barber (Plate 328e). These purchases comprised

1. a 1790 Chippendale serving table
2. a William and Mary chest from ca 1685
3. a 1760 George II side table.

That within 13 days Bradshaw purchased 12 antiques from Adam Barber reinforces Kenny’s speculation that Barber intended to move out of 82 Murriverie Road.

Bradshaw’s three visits to Barber may be explained by the fact that, ‘knowing Bill’,\textsuperscript{13}

1. the first set of acquisitions (on 29 October) went immediately into Bradshaw’s shop window, and sold within a day or two
2. with money in hand, Bradshaw returned to 82 Murriverie Road (on 31 October) in order to purchase more stock, which sold quickly

\textsuperscript{11} See Plate 133.
\textsuperscript{13} I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for the following hypothesis, which emerged within the context of a telephone conversation with the author, Wednesday, 14 August 2013.
3. once again, with money in hand, Bradshaw returned (on 10 November) in order to acquire more antiques from Adam Barber.

Within the context of this series of events, Bradshaw (conjecturally) sold a good deal of stock. These transactions may have enabled him to cover the outlay for the Beck piano—an instrument that he did not intend to sell, but had acquired for himself.

Apart from the details in Bradshaw’s stock book relating to the 1780/86? Beck square piano, three differing provenance versions for the instrument exist. The proponent of each provenance version holds a deep personal conviction that the version is true. The three provenance versions are given below.

**Provenance Version 1: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm ‘30 miles out of Sydney’**

Hearsay—derived from the doyen of the Sydney antiques scene, William Bradshaw, and subsequently recounted to the author by Stewart Symonds—tells us that at John Blackman’s auction of 6 June 1838, the 1780/86? Beck piano was sold to the owners of a farm located ‘30 miles [48 kilometres] out of Sydney’. According to Bradshaw/Symonds, this information came from John Blackman’s auction records.14

If Worgan’s piano was sold on 6 June 1838 to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney, the notion that such a distance from Sydney could be anywhere is not viable. In 1838, there was not much ‘30 miles out of Sydney’, with the exception of a town that may have been connected with the nineteenth and twentieth-century life of Worgan’s piano. This town is Windsor.

**George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Windsor**

Hearsay derived from Bradshaw/Symonds proposes that in 1973, Bradshaw was either ‘tipped off’15 or saw an advertisement concerning a ‘spinet’ for sale. In England and Australia during the twentieth century, some antiques dealers understood the term ‘spinet’ as being synonymous with small keyboard instruments. Moreover, the term spinet was ‘often mistakenly used

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14 Advertisements published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* reveal that the administratrix of John Blackman’s estate was Sarah Blackman. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 October 1846, Vol. 21, p. 1, Trove, National Library of Australia.

15 According to Stewart Symonds, Bradshaw had friends in Windsor who may have alerted Bradshaw to the instrument’s availability.
by antique dealers to refer to square pianos’. The use of ‘spinet’ may have arisen as a response to the then unfamiliar shape and sound of square pianos. The ‘spinet’ was located in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was in fact a square piano made by Frederick Beck in 1780/86.

The instrument had been passed down through generations of the family who owned it—perhaps even since John Blackman’s auction of 6 June 1838. The owners of the instrument were adamant that it had come to Australia with the First Fleet. Although there was no documentary evidence proving that the instrument was George Worgan’s piano, the lady of the house recounted that the recurring mantra uttered by generations of mothers in the family to their children was: ‘Don’t bang on that piano; be careful with it, because it came out with the First Fleet.’ Accordingly, for generations, members of the family had been allowed to play the instrument only under the strictest supervision.

The piano was housed in the laundry, and the owners wished to sell the instrument in order to finance the purchase of a new washing machine.

Times and ideas change. In 1973, antique pianos were not always regarded or treated with the reverence that is often accorded to them today. If the owners’ attitude towards their Frederick Beck square piano was one of indifference (as the instrument’s storage context suggests), the fact that they told Bradshaw that the piano was the First Fleet piano is paradoxical; the owners were aware of the instrument’s historical importance, yet stored it in their laundry. Perhaps:

1) familiarity with the instrument had bred contempt; or 2) the laundry was the safest place for the instrument to be housed; or 3) space in their home was limited; or 4) the owners did not feel that the instrument was worthy of much respect because of its age.

The piano had fallen into a state of subtle disrepair. The owners may have been reticent to keep the instrument in good playing condition because of

1. financial constraints
2. the fact that they did not know of (or could not find) a restorer with the appropriate skills
3. their wish not to alter the fabric of the instrument through restoration for fear that information that could be of benefit to posterity might be lost

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16 Burnett, Company of Pianos, p. 16.
18 Attempts by the author to locate anyone in Windsor who remembers the presence or sale of the Beck piano have proved fruitless; the trail leading to relevant data appears to have gone cold. History may sometimes blot out a paragraph here and there, but rarely does it tear out the leaves of a whole volume, leaving only a coloured frontispiece remaining to tease us. See West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, pp. 846–7.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

(this seems unlikely, however, given the state of the instrument and its storage context)

4. a belief that because the instrument was both antiquated and unable to meet the musical demands inherent in nineteenth and twentieth-century keyboard repertoire, the piano was not worth the expenditure associated with restoring it to playing order

5. indecision resulting from the frustration of not knowing quite what to do with the instrument.

William Bradshaw believed the instrument to be surgeon Worgan’s piano, and purchased it immediately.

These details make up ‘provenance version one’. Provenance version one contradicts ‘provenance version two’,19 ‘provenance version three’20 and data recorded in Bradshaw’s stock book.21

When the current owner of the 1780/86? Beck piano, Stewart Symonds, first saw the instrument in early October 1986, he obtained the piano’s provenance (conveyed in the form of provenance version one)22 from Bradshaw (the then owner of the instrument). Within the context of a conversation held between the author and Stewart Symonds on Sunday, 12 May 2013, Symonds recounted that Bradshaw had encouraged him to purchase the Frederick Beck piano not only by informing him of the instrument’s provenance, but also by stating ‘it should be in your collection’ as the instrument is ‘important to Australia’. When Symonds purchased the instrument from Bradshaw in mid-October 1986—that is, a week or two after first seeing it—Bradshaw reiterated provenance version one. Moreover, on each of the several occasions when Bradshaw took Symonds to dinner following Symonds’ acquisition of the instrument, Bradshaw used the circumstances to reiterate provenance version one.23

22 The substance of provenance version one emerged consistently unchanged within the context of many intermittent conversations held between the author and Stewart Symonds between 2007 and 2014.
23 It was not until 2006 that signs of Bradshaw’s encroaching dementia began to appear. Between the mid-1980s and the first five years of the twenty-first century, Bradshaw’s recollections remained clear and unconfused. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Stewart Symonds on Sunday, 28 July 2013, Symonds remarked—in relation to the reliability of Bradshaw’s memory between the mid-1980s and 2005—that Bradshaw ‘was very sharp’. During the initial period of research for this study, conversations between the author and Bradshaw concerning the Beck piano were sadly hindered by Bradshaw’s illness; verification of the facts surrounding Worgan’s piano as Bradshaw understood them was, alas, not possible.
Chapter 15

John Blackman in Windsor

John Blackman, the auctioneer who, according to Bradshaw/Symonds, sold the 1780/86? Beck piano to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney, established his salesrooms at 5 King Street, Sydney, on 29 March 1834. On Saturday, 26 February 1831, an advertisement published in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser mentions ‘Mr Blackman’ in connection with Windsor. The advertisement reads:

To Let.

Royal Oak Inn, Windsor.

To be let, that old established inn, now in full trade, and situate in Baker-street, with a coach-house, stables, &c.—The premises are too well known to need further description. For terms of letting, and other information, apply to Mr. Blackman, Windsor Hotel, Windsor; or, Mr. Richard Wm. Cobcroft, Wilberforce. 23d February, 1831.

Was the advertisement’s ‘Mr Blackman’ the auctioneer John Blackman, and if so, did Blackman (whilst in Windsor) forge a link with the family to whom he sold the 1780/86? Beck piano seven years later at auction, on 6 June 1838? After all,

1. according to Bradshaw/Symonds, the piano was purchased by the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney—that is, possibly Windsor
2. according to the advertisement published on 26 February 1831 in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, Blackman’s address (at least in late February 1831) was the Windsor Hotel, Windsor.

If the advertisement’s Mr Blackman is the auctioneer John Blackman, and if Blackman knew the family who purchased the Beck piano at his auction rooms on 6 June 1838, these suppositions (given their association with Windsor) viably unite with provenance version one.

Windsor, Floods and the Absence of Water Damage

When Governor Lachlan Macquarie arrived in New South Wales in 1810, he brought with him a letter of instruction from the Colonial Office outlining, amongst other things, the establishment of towns.

25 See Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 1 April 1834, p. 2.
27 See ‘1838: John Blackman’, in Chapter 14, this volume.
The letter indicates that the basic purpose of towns will be civil rather than military; that people should be grouped together for their civil concerns and security; towns were to be accessible, near to a river or the coast; there was to be a military presence, but there was also to be a town hall and other public buildings; there was to be a church and a school, along with lands allotted to sustain them …

In his zeal, Macquarie founded no less than five towns within as many weeks in December and January 1810–11, all within seven kilometers of each other. Windsor was to become the most important of these towns.28

There had, in fact, been a small settlement there before Macquarie’s time, called the Green Hills. A government granary had been built there, a town common had been set aside by Governor King, and a modest house built for the accommodation of the governor or other officials on ‘this sweet delightful spot’.29 Green Hills officially became known as Windsor in 1810.30 On Thursday, 6 December 1810, Governor Macquarie dined with a group of friends at Green Hills, after which, as he writes:

I christened the new townships, drinking a bumper to the success of each. I gave the name of Windsor to the town intended to be erected in the district of the Green Hills, in continuation of the present village, from the similarity of this situation to that of the same name in England.31

Windsor had all the stated attributes explicit in Governor Macquarie’s letter of instruction. It was situated on high ground on a navigable river (‘as the river silted up, a prosperous river trade declined’32 and the ‘commercial centre of the town shifted south towards the railway which was established in 1864’);33 Windsor had areas set aside for church and community affairs, a graveyard, church site, rectory site and glebe; it had military barracks (‘the first garrison had been stationed in Windsor since 1795’),34 courthouse and gaol, as well as a house for occupation by the Governor on his visits.35

Regulations were promulgated on 11 May 1811 for the orderly development of the town. No person was to build a house without

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29 Ibid., p. 2. A watercolour drawing entitled The Settlement on the Green Hills, Hawkesbury River New South Wales, 1809, attributed to George William Evans (1780–1852), is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXD 388; Album ID 823548; Digital order no. a1313052).
32 The main businesses of the town were related to agriculture. See ibid., p. 108.
33 Ibid., p. 108.
34 Ibid., p. 105.
submitting a plan to the resident magistrate, and no town leases were to be granted without such a plan. The town allotments were not uniform in size, nor were the blocks arranged in regular squares.36

If George Worgan’s piano was sold at auction on 6 June 1838 to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney (the farm being located near the newly established town of Windsor), the instrument, despite being at the time regarded as old-fashioned, would doubtless have aided the progress of the social aspirations of its new owners.

Given that Windsor and the area around it dedicated to farming are located in the Hawkesbury River flood zone, it is a miracle that Worgan’s piano was not overwhelmed in the waters of one of the many extensive floods that beset the region. During the first half of the nineteenth century,

almost every farm established in the district ... was beside a river or a creek which flooded, sometimes disastrously. Countless settlers faced danger head-on ... when the river rose to extreme heights and many of the farmhouses were under water. A great many farms had no high land, and so whole families were forced to shelter on the roofs of their dwellings.37

A report written in 1806 reveals the horrors endured by those seeking safety from the raging waters:

[T]orrents of rain pouring with unabating fury; and not a house ... to be seen, the roofs of one or two of the highest on the opposite side of the water being ... only visible ... many were devoted to undergo a night of horror the most inexpressible ... the dismal cries from distant quarters, the report of fire-arms dangerously charged in order to increase the noise of the explosion; the howling of dogs that had by swimming got into trees, all concurred to shock the feelings of the few that were out of the reach, but were sorrowful spectators of the calamity they could not relieve.38

Some sought refuge on the roof of their house. For example, during the floods of 1806, Hannah Dight and Margaret Catchpole had to climb onto the roof. Margaret later wrote: 'We had not binn thear [the loft] ... befor the first chimley went dowen and middell warl went. Then I expected the next chimley to goo and all the warles and then to be crushed to dead. The weater was bout five feet deep in the howes at the time.'39

36 Ibid., p. 4.
38 Quoted in ibid., p. 415.
39 Quoted in ibid., p. 415.
Perhaps the home of the family who purchased Worgan’s piano was situated on the ‘higher grounds’ to which, during the 1806 floods, for example, ‘great numbers had been taken up and left in safety’.\(^40\) Or perhaps when floods threatened, the owners of Worgan’s piano had the foresight to remove the instrument from their flood-prone house to a place of known safety.

Regardless of how Worgan’s piano managed to survive the recurring and calamitous flooding of the Hawkesbury River during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it appears that the 1780/86? Beck square piano, in the absence of any apparent water damage (if the instrument was sold at auction on 6 June 1838 to the owners of a farm in the Hawkesbury River flood zone, and if the instrument remained in the area until Bradshaw acquired it in 1973), miraculously defied the turbulent waters and remained unscathed.

**Provenance Version Two: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano in London**

> Things are seldom what they seem; Skim milk masquerades as cream.\(^{41}\)

The following provenance details first emerged within the context of a conversation held between the author and Brian Barrow\(^42\) on Saturday, 28 July 2012.\(^43\)

About 2006–07, Bradshaw informed Barrow ‘in a hushed voice’ that he had

1. purchased Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Beck square piano in London
2. scratched off the little round British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker after he had purchased the instrument.

These details make up ‘provenance version two’.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 415.
\(^{41}\) W. S. Gilbert and A. Sullivan, *H.M.S. Pinafore* (London: First produced at the Opera Comique, 1878), Act II, ‘Things are Seldom What They Seem’ (Buttercup and Captain Corcoran).
\(^{42}\) Brian Barrow is an antiques restorer, fortepiano aficionado and owner of the Longman & Broderip square piano dated 1785/86? discussed in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
\(^{43}\) The substance of provenance version two re-emerged within the context of two further conversations between the author and Brian Barrow between 2012 and 2013.
Chapter 15

Provenance version two contradicts

1. data recorded in Bradshaw’s stock book
2. provenance version one
3. provenance version three.

If provenance version two is true then Bradshaw appears to have had no qualms in telling Stewart Symonds, one of his closest friends, on several occasions that he had purchased the Beck in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and that the instrument was the First Fleet piano. Such a disquieting inconsistency casts doubt upon the veracity of any provenance details attested to, and/or recounted by, Bradshaw.

Moreover, that Bradshaw would knowingly recount two contradictory provenances in relation to the same antique artefact appears to be inconsistent with his character. During the 1980s, Paul Kenny (the eminent antiques importer and Bradshaw’s close friend) regularly left Australia in order to purchase antiques. Kenny would meet Bradshaw in England, and, by combining resources, the two gentlemen would jointly ship new acquisitions to Australia. Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny on Tuesday, 2 July 2013, Kenny remarked: ‘As far as I know, Bill [that is, Bradshaw] didn’t buy a Beck in London.’

Within the context of a telephone conversation held on Sunday, 28 July 2013 between the author and Brian Barrow’s brother Phillip, Phillip stated that, following inquiries he had made with relevant UK antiques dealers, he had found no anecdote or record concerning the sale of a Beck square piano.

There appears to be no evidence supporting the notion that Bradshaw purchased the 1780/86 Beck square piano in London. It is reasonable to conjecture that provenance version two is not viable.

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44 See ‘William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: the entry dated 29 October 1973’, above.
45 See ‘Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, below.
46 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Windsor’, above.
47 See ibid.
49 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London

What, never?
No, never!
What, never?
Hardly ever!  

On Wednesday, 19 June 2013, the author held a telephone conversation with Brian Barrow. Within the context of this conversation, Barrow recalled that about 2006–07 Bradshaw informed him that he had

1. purchased Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Beck square piano in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London
2. scratched off the little round British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker after he had purchased the instrument.

These details comprise ‘provenance version three’.  

Provenance version three contradicts provenance versions one and two.

Provenance version three may, however, be interpreted as conforming with data recorded in Bradshaw’s stock book.  

Provenance version three raises two significant questions: if the 1780/86? Beck square piano is the First Fleet piano, when and why was the instrument taken from Australia back to England—a sequence of events necessary in order for Bradshaw to purchase the Beck in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London? Conclusive evidence for this sequence of events has not yet come to light.

As things stand, it seems unlikely that the First Fleet piano returned to England.

Provenance version three implies that the British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker remained on the 1780/86? Beck square piano after its acquisition by the unidentified ‘someone who had purchased the instrument in London’. Having acquired the instrument from this unnamed person, Bradshaw subsequently scratched off the sticker.

50 Gilbert and Sullivan, H.M.S. Pinafore, Act I, ‘I Am the Captain of the Pinafore’.
51 The substance of provenance version three re-emerged within the context of one further conversation between the author and Brian Barrow in 2013.
52 See ‘William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: the entry dated 29 October 1973’, above.
During the second half of the twentieth century, some antiques dealers would place a British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker on an artefact for sale in order to increase that object’s status and value. Generally, antiques dealers rarely removed the sticker. That Bradshaw removed the British Antique Dealers’ Association sticker from the 1780/86? Beck piano after he had acquired the instrument is, to quote Paul Kenny, both ‘interesting’ and ‘peculiar’.

Why did Bradshaw remove the sticker? Perhaps he did so in order to create a false provenance trail; by removing evidence of the instrument’s recent origins in London, Bradshaw could advocate provenance version one. Such a discomforting proposition is—to say the least—extreme. Throughout his life, Bradshaw was commonly regarded as one of the most respected members of Australia’s antique dealers’ fraternity, and although he might ‘embellish’ a provenance story, ‘he wouldn’t invent; he was a truthful man’. On the balance of probabilities, it seems unlikely that Bradshaw, who enjoyed (and doubtless sought to maintain) his reputation as a trustworthy and respected antiques dealer, would fabricate a provenance.

Substantial incompatibilities exist between provenance version three—that is, Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London—and provenance version one—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano.

Given the presence of these incompatibilities, and also the fact that Bradshaw, according to Brian Barrow, recounted provenance version three ‘in a hushed voice’ (an odd behaviour for Bradshaw), if provenance version three or one is true, doubt must be cast upon the veracity of any provenance details attested to, and/or provided by, Bradshaw.

If Paul Kenny’s recollection that Bradshaw did not buy a Beck in London is correct, and details in William Bradshaw’s stock book entry concerning his purchase of the 1780/86? Beck piano on 29 October 1973 are accurate (and there is no reason or evidence suggesting that the records are anything other than true), provenance version three becomes viable.

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53 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for this information. During the second half of the twentieth century, Australia’s cultural cringe was a potent and pervasive force.
54 These remarks were made within the context of a telephone conversation between the author and Paul Kenny on Tuesday, 2 July 2013.
56 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
Another Path of Investigation: Kenneth Muggleston’s memories and George Worgan’s piano in Windsor

On Sunday, 24 November 2013, the author received an email from the independent filmmaker Joel Daniel Robinson (b. 1975). Robinson, within the context of research for his documentary entitled The Devil’s Wilderness, had spoken with Kenneth Muggleston (b. 1930), an Australian-born British Oscar-winning set decorator and production designer, whose illustrious career included movies such as Lawrence of Arabia (1962), Doctor Zhivago (1965), The Taming of the Shrew (1967), Oliver! (1968), Waterloo (1970) and The Piano (1993). Robinson’s email includes remarks made by Muggleston that are pertinent not only to the First Fleet piano, but also to Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86 Frederick Beck square piano. Muggleston’s remarks seem to lend weight to those made by Bradshaw at the time he sold the 1780/86 Beck piano to Symonds—that is, the instrument was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano.

For many years (on and off), Bradshaw employed Muggleston as his ‘gentleman’s gentleman’. Not only did Muggleston shop, cook and clean for Bradshaw, but also, given that Bradshaw did not have a drivers’ licence and Muggleston did, he was on occasion Bradshaw’s chauffeur. It was Muggleston who, at the front door of Bradshaw’s shop, would often extend the initial greeting to visitors.

Muggleston recalled to Robinson that Bradshaw had owned the First Fleet piano, and that the instrument had come from the Macarthur-Onslow family. The Macarthur-Onslows are direct descendants of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. Unfortunately, Muggleston could not remember exactly why he associated the Macarthur-Onslows with the piano. Muggleston had the strong impression that the instrument was Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86 Beck.

In 1974, Muggleston returned to Australia from Italy to accept a job as a drama designer at the then Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation; ABC). Muggleston recalled that within that context, he had worked with a Macarthur-Onslow. It is reasonable to conjecture that whilst employed by the ABC, Muggleston encountered Arthur Leslie ‘Red’ Harrison (1932–2008).

59 A film inspired by and concerning colonial expansion across the Blue Mountains in New South Wales.
60 Kenneth Muggleston won an Oscar in 1969 in the category ‘Best Set Decoration’ for the film Oliver! (1968). This award was one of the film’s six Oscars.
61 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
moniker ‘Red’ was given to Harrison because of his florid complexion. Harrison was the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio correspondent in Sydney, and between 1981 and 1986, presenter of ABC Radio’s flagship current affairs program, AM. Apart from his journalistic prowess, Harrison possessed diverse skills, not the least of which was manifested by his proficiency as a classical pianist. Harrison owned a baby grand piano and an upright piano. Harrison’s second marriage, in 1971, was to the trained horticulturalist, technical and further education (TAFE) teacher and gardening columnist for Sydney’s Sun Herald newspaper, Pamela Jane Macarthur-Onslow (1936–2012). Harrison and Pamela lived at Macquarie Grove, Camden, a property adjoining the Camden Park estate established by John Macarthur in 1806.

It is reasonable to suppose that Harrison and/or Pamela spoke to Muggleston about the First Fleet piano.

The Macarthur-Onslow family owned a dairy farm 17 kilometres from Windsor, the Gilbulla Stud Farm, at Grose Wold (Gilbulla had the only pure-blood Jersey cows outside Jersey Island itself).

If Bradshaw purchased the First Fleet piano from the Macarthur-Onslows at Gilbulla, was he protecting the owners’ privacy (often wealthy/eminent people do not want it known that they are selling any of their possessions) by vaguely stating to Symonds that he had purchased the instrument at an ‘old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor’?

On Thursday, 5 December 2013, the author visited Sandra Ruth Macarthur-Onslow (b. 1936) at her home. Sandra lived at Gilbulla between ca 1939 and 1949 (she left Gilbulla 24 years before Bradshaw’s acquisition of the 1780/86? Beck square piano).

Conjecture aside, and given that a single fact can spoil a good argument,

1. Sandra Macarthur-Onslow recalled that during the period of her upbringing at Gilbulla Stud Farm (ca 1939–49), there had been no piano there (she also remarked that there was only one homestead on the property)

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65 I am indebted to Susan Hayman—a descendant of Elizabeth Macarthur—for information regarding Harrison’s pianos, which emerged within the context of a telephone conversation with the author, Monday, 30 December 2013.
66 Camden Park House, completed in 1835 and located on the Camden Park estate, is the oldest private residence in Australia that is still owned and occupied by descendants of its original family; it remains a home, not a museum. ‘The word “park” was most used to describe forested land by the first settlers, who assumed that Australian landscapes were natural pastures.’ B. Gammage, The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011), pp. 14–15.
67 I am indebted to Sandra Macarthur-Onslow for this information.
2. Kenneth Muggleston clearly remembers that he never chauffeured Bradshaw ‘as far out’\textsuperscript{68} of Sydney as Windsor.

Perhaps during the 24 years between Sandra Macarthur-Onslow leaving Gilbulla in 1949 and Bradshaw’s acquisition of the 1780/86? Beck square piano in 1973, descendents of Elizabeth Macarthur came to regard their First Fleet piano as being so old-fashioned that they relocated it from their ancestral seat at either Elizabeth Farm cottage or Camden Park to Gilbulla Stud Farm. Furthermore, and for the same reason, any one of Elizabeth Macarthur’s descendents may have sold the instrument.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Susan Hayman—a descendant of Elizabeth Macarthur—on Monday, 30 December 2013, Susan recalled that her father, James Arthur Macarthur-Onslow (1898–1959), was particularly annoyed when his mother Enid—wife of James William Macarthur-Onslow (1867–1946), the great-grandson of Elizabeth Macarthur—sold a piano that had been located at Camden Park House. The sale of this instrument took place during the early 1940s—a date reminiscent of the 1942 sale by the Mat(t)hews family, whose home was located in the vicinity of Parramatta, of Brian Barrow’s 1785/86? Longman & Broderip square piano to William Bradshaw.\textsuperscript{69} Susan Hayman was unaware of the type or provenance of this piano. Apparently, Enid Macarthur-Onslow ‘sold so many things’.\textsuperscript{70}

Paul Kenny’s observation seems apposite: ‘The Macarthur–Onslow connection with pianos has always been the stuff of myths and legends.’\textsuperscript{71}

Notwithstanding Sandra Macarthur-Onslow’s statements and Kenny’s observation, Kenneth Muggleston’s recollections (although comprising hearsay) appear elusively to relate to Bradshaw’s assertions that

1. at John Blackman’s auction of 6 June 1838, the 1780/86? Beck square piano was sold to the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney—that is, Windsor
2. he had purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano from a family in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor
3. the 1780/86? Beck square piano had been passed down through generations of the family who owned it

\textsuperscript{68} Email from Joel Robinson to the author, 29 November 2013, in which Robinson recounts some of the words uttered to him by Kenneth Muggleston within the context of a recent conversation.

\textsuperscript{69} See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{70} Email from Rosemary Freeman—daughter of Susan Hayman—to the author, 5 January 2014.

\textsuperscript{71} Email from Paul Kenny to the author, 3 December 2013.
4. the owners of the instrument were adamant that it had come to Australia with the First Fleet.

Of one thing Muggleston seems certain: any who regard Brian Barrow’s 1785/86 Longman & Broderip square piano as the First Fleet piano are deluding themselves.

It is logical to surmise that Muggleston was aware that Bradshaw had owned the First Fleet piano because he had spent time working for Bradshaw. Bradshaw may have shown him the instrument (Bradshaw owned the 1780/86 Beck square piano between 1973 and 1986). Moreover, it is reasonable to speculate that it was Bradshaw who informed Muggleston that the instrument was connected with the Macarthur-Onslow family.

On Thursday 23 January 2014, the author held a telephone conversation with Annette Rosemary Macarthur-Onslow (b. 1933) — sister of Pamela Harrison, the wife of Arthur Leslie ‘Red’ Harrison; when, approximately seven weeks before, the author had visited Sandra Macarthur-Onslow at her home, she mentioned that Annette knew much of the history of the Macarthur-Onslow family’s furniture. Annette made no mention of Arthur Leslie ‘Red’ Harrison ever having owned either the First Fleet piano or a square piano. Furthermore, Annette (like Sandra) had no remembrance of there ever having been a piano at Gilbulla Stud Farm. Annette was not aware of the circumstances associated with Enid Macarthur-Onslow’s selling (during the early 1940s) of a piano that had been located at Camden Park House.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the Macarthurs established Camden Park House as the repository of the family’s archives.

Elizabeth Macarthur’s journals and correspondence … would establish the foundations of this archive. Her sons would improve on this most notably James [1798–1867] and William [1800–82] who saved all their personal papers—thirty boxes and 296 large volumes of which are now in the State Library of New South Wales.

… Later descendents … would also continue the tradition of ‘never throwing anything away’, so that the Macarthur papers on the public record continue well into the 21st century.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Joel Robinson on Friday, 24 January 2014, Robinson recalled that at some time

72 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
73 Email from Joel Robinson to the author, 29 November 2013, in which Robinson recounts some of the words uttered to him by Kenneth Muggleston within the context of a recent conversation.
during November 2013 he had spoken not only with the archivists of Camden Park House, but also with the current owner/occupants of that historic home, John Gregory Macarthur-Stanham and his wife Edwina.  

The archivists informed Robinson that they had not located any evidence concerning the presence of the First Fleet piano (or of a square piano) at Camden Park House. Furthermore, John Macarthur-Stanham told Robinson that he had no knowledge of a square piano ever having been located at Camden Park House.

An oil painting by Thomas Watling (1762–ca 1814) entitled ‘A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove’—the earliest oil painting of Sydney—functions as an analogy for connections (real or fantastical) between the First Fleet piano and the descendents of John and Elizabeth Macarthur. Just as the ‘neat … Georgian buildings of Sydney Town keep to a [luminous] harbour shoreline … [encircled] by a dark forest wilderness’, so too the fate of the First Fleet piano is encircled by a dark wilderness comprising confusions of hearsay and the sometimes confounding complexities of Australian colonial history.

New Horizons: Stewart Symonds

If Bradshaw believed the 1780/86? Beck piano was the First Fleet piano, it is not surprising that he purchased the instrument for inclusion in his personal collection, rather than as an antique for sale. His intention is revealed by his atypical purchase book entry: ‘Square Piano by Beck for self’ (emphasis added) (Plate 133). (Then again, the instrument’s high-quality casework, elegant cabriole legs and unique campaign-furniture-inspired stand may also have given Bradshaw enough reason to acquire the piano for himself.)

Inexplicably, Bradshaw does not seem to have made much of a fuss over his ownership of what may have been the First Fleet piano. In a conversation held on Wednesday, 19 June 2013 between the author and Bradshaw’s friend Brian Barrow, Barrow revealed that he had ‘met every piano’ that Bradshaw owned, and had no memory of ever seeing the 1780/86? Beck instrument at Bradshaw’s shop/home.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Paul Kenny—a reliable source of much information concerning Bradshaw—on

75 John Macarthur-Stanham is the great-great-great-great-grandson of John Macarthur.
76 T. Watling, A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove (1794): oil on canvas; 91 x 121 centimetres. This painting is currently housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
78 See ‘Intersections’, below.
79 See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
Wednesday, 7 August 2013, Kenny (a man blessed with an alert mind and keen memory) recounted that on Monday, 13 August 1973, he had departed from Australia to live for a time in England. As a result, Kenny ‘missed’ Bradshaw’s purchase of the Beck piano, which, according to Bradshaw’s stock book, took place on Monday, 29 October 1973 (approximately two and a half months after Kenny’s departure). Consequently, Kenny knew little about the circumstances surrounding Bradshaw’s acquisition of the instrument.

The author first met William Bradshaw at the end of winter 1974—that is, 10 months after Bradshaw had acquired the Beck square piano from Adam Barber. This initial encounter was followed by regular visits to Bradshaw’s shop/home over the course of the ensuing three years. During many of these visits, Bradshaw enthusiastically showed the author his extensive piano collection, which comprised an unbelievable number of instruments housed in the attic, rooms, hallways, shop and freestanding garage and workshop of his terrace house/shop at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra, Sydney. Like Brian Barrow, the author has no memory of ever seeing (within the context of these visits) the 1780/86? Beck square piano. Of course, this does not mean that Bradshaw did not have the Beck piano in his possession; Bradshaw could have stored the instrument out of sight and/or inaccessibly anywhere in his home.

The 1780/86? Beck piano emerged from hiding in early October 1986, when Stewart Symonds first saw the instrument ‘in passing’ during one of his almost weekly visits to William Bradshaw’s shop. At the time, Bradshaw informed Symonds of the instrument’s provenance. The instrument was housed in the large freestanding, uninsulated red-brick garage and workshop at the rear of Bradshaw’s shop/home. Over the years, grand pianos and square pianos had vied for space in this backyard structure; the building was filled with the many instruments owned by Bradshaw for which there was no room in his terrace house.

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80 See ‘William Bradshaw’s Stock Book: the entry dated 29 October 1973’, above.
81 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
82 In this building in 1973, the author was privileged to hear Ferrucio Busoni’s (1866–1924) astonishing ‘reproducing piano roll’ performance of Frédéric Chopin’s (1810–49) ‘Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Opus 23’, played on a Bechstein grand ‘reproducing piano’. Reproducing piano rolls are an early form of recording. They can be easily confused with the domestic pianola roll, as they look similar. Unlike the pianola roll, however, on the reproducing piano roll every subtlety and nuance of the recorded performance is captured. Such rolls began to appear during the early twentieth century. They effectively died out as a result of the Depression in the 1930s. Reproducing pianos have a unique pneumatic mechanism, specific only for playing reproducing piano rolls. Such instruments were rare even in their heyday (1905 – ca 1935). The instruments were produced by a handful of piano manufacturers. These manufacturers built pianos that could only play rolls exclusively designed for their instruments. The early twentieth century’s greatest pianists and composers recorded reproducing piano rolls—for example: Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Ignaz Friedman (1882–1948), George Gershwin (1898–1937), Leopold Godowsky (1870–1938), Edvard Grieg (1843–1907), Josef Hofmann (1876–1957), Josef Lhévinne (1874–1944), Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953), Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943), Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), Artur Schnabel (1882–1951), Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971).
Bradshaw did not venture out of Australia in order to acquire antiques until Monday, 8 June 1970. On this trip, Bradshaw

1. travelled to England via America
2. stayed in San Francisco with the sister of Kevin Fahey, an eminent expert on early colonial furniture in New South Wales and Tasmania
3. arrived in the United Kingdom on Sunday, 14 June
4. returned to Australia on Friday, 31 July. 

During the 1980s, Bradshaw regularly left Australia—sometimes three times a year—to acquire antiques. In the 1980s, Bradshaw’s first trip in each year usually took place ca March/April, at the end of the English winter. At this time of year, antiques buyers from England and the Continent tended not to venture out into the cold to buy. As a consequence, English antiques shops were well stocked because turnover was slow. This meant that often dealers would offer Bradshaw substantial discounts on his purchases.

About April 1986, Bradshaw returned from England with, amongst other things, an 1817 George Brysson (fl. 1824–30) square piano. On Thursday, 15 May 1986, Stewart Symonds paid a deposit to purchase the Brysson instrument. On Tuesday, 14 October 1986, Symonds made the second and final payment. The total purchase price of the instrument was approximately A$900. ‘One could always “buy well” from Bill Bradshaw. This ability to magically procure the important and rare at a level that allowed ordinary collectors a chance was the essence of his reputation as a dealer.’ Bradshaw’s ‘magnet-like ability to attract objects and find missing objects … [was] uncanny … If he bought a decanter without a stopper, the stopper would come to him. If he bought five chairs, the sixth matching one would come to him.’

Approximately one month after his return from England—that is, ca May 1986—Bradshaw spent two weeks in the United States purchasing American antique furniture. He returned not only with many articles dating from 1800 to ca 1830, but also with a square piano made in New York in 1853 by Martins

83 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for this information; the data pertaining to travel dates were obtained from Bradshaw’s passport. Paul Kenny was one of William Bradshaw’s closest friends, and an importer of fine antiques. Following Bradshaw’s death on Wednesday, 18 November 2009, Kenny moved Bradshaw’s household/shop effects into his own warehouse, subsequently making these effects available to auctioneers for valuation. Kenny currently possesses Bradshaw’s passport and business records.
84 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information. Paul Kenny recalls that Bradshaw usually ventured overseas once a year (telephone conversation between the author and Paul Kenny, Tuesday, 2 July 2013.)
85 Serial number 462. George Brysson was both a piano maker and a piano dealer, whose premises were at 18 Bridgehouse Place, Newington, London. See Clinkscale, Makers of the Piano, p. 64.
86 Oakman, ‘Man of Antiques Lived on Fruit Cake’.
87 Lawson, ‘The Other Man in Keating’s Life’.
& Ouvrier. On Saturday, 14 June 1986, almost immediately after Bradshaw had returned from America, Stewart Symonds purchased the Martins & Ouvrier instrument.

In mid-October 1986, a week or two after first seeing the 1780/86? Beck piano, Symonds placed a deposit of A$1000 to purchase the instrument from Bradshaw.

The receipt for Stewart Symonds’ deposit reads: ‘Received from … Esq. the sum of $1,000 deposit on a late-18th century square piano in mahogany on a stand … With thanks, W. F. Bradshaw.’

Symonds subsequently made three further payments for the instrument—on
1. Monday, 17 November 1986
2. Thursday, 18 December 1986

The total purchase price of the instrument was A$3800. In 1986, this was a large amount of money to pay for a square piano. The price reflects not only the instrument’s rarity and elegance, but also its heritage value.

An Instrument ‘Drained’

Why did Bradshaw wait 13 years before selling the 1780/86? Beck piano? In fact, given the instrument’s cultural significance, it is surprising that Bradshaw elected to sell it at all, rather than keeping the instrument as a part of his formidable personal piano collection. Bradshaw, however, in his own enigmatic words, would only keep a piano or piece of antique furniture for himself until he had ‘drained it’.

After Bradshaw had ‘drained’ an instrument, he was often reluctant to part with it. Bradshaw, however, had no room to store every instrument that he acquired, nor could he afford to keep every piano that he purchased. In such circumstances, his friend Stewart Symonds was usually given first offer to buy the drained instrument. Consequently, Symonds became one of Bradshaw’s biggest clients.

88 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for information concerning both Bradshaw’s travels in 1986 and Symonds’ purchases prior to acquiring the 1780/86? Beck piano.
89 Apart from the instrument’s proposed association with George Worgan, it was—and still is—the only piano located in Australia made by Frederick Beck, and is one of 32 extant Frederick Beck instruments. See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
90 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
91 I am further indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.
It may be argued that Bradshaw’s intention when purchasing the Beck piano on 29 October 1973 was to reduce his tax bill in the future. Bradshaw would have known that the eventual sale of such a culturally significant instrument would yield a considerable profit (Bradshaw purchased the instrument on 29 October 1973 for A$150, and sold the piano in mid-1986 for A$3800—a substantial return of A$3650.)

In 1973, Bradshaw’s stock book entry ‘Square piano by Beck for self’ indicates that he did not categorise the instrument as shop stock; the piano is described as Bradshaw’s private property. A quiet sale of the instrument sometime after its acquisition (as it turned out, 13 years) would ensure that earnings from the sale were kept ‘off the radar’. Since the piano was Bradshaw’s private property, the instrument could not be regarded as a generator of taxable income derived from his business.

When Stewart Symonds purchased the 1780/86? Beck square piano from Bradshaw in mid-October 1986, payment was made by cheque. If Bradshaw had hoped to disguise his taxable earnings, a quiet sale for cash would have been more expedient, and yet Bradshaw made no request that cash be involved in the transaction. Furthermore, Bradshaw created a paper trail by providing Symonds with a receipt.

It could be conjectured that in 1973 Bradshaw did not acquire the Beck piano for himself as a tax dodge, but rather (perhaps) as a response to his belief not only that the instrument was the First Fleet piano, but also that such an important instrument would sit well in his personal collection. Until the Beck piano’s eventual sale to Stewart Symonds 13 years later, in mid-October 1986, Bradshaw kept the instrument until he had ‘drained it’.

Bradshaw is Caught Out?

Having informed Stewart Symonds of the 1780/86? Beck piano’s provenance (in the form of provenance version one) when Symonds first saw the instrument in early October 1986, Bradshaw subsequently reiterated the piano’s provenance

1. when Symonds purchased the instrument in mid-October 1986
2. on each of the several occasions when Bradshaw took Symonds to dinner following Symonds’ acquisition of the instrument.

Within the context of a conversation held between the author and Stewart Symonds on Sunday, 12 May 2013, Symonds recounted that Bradshaw had encouraged him to purchase the 1780/86? Beck square piano not only by

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92 See Plate 133.
93 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for information concerning Bradshaw’s reiteration of the 1780/86? Beck square piano’s provenance.
informing him of the instrument’s Windsor-related provenance, but also by stating: ‘it should be in your collection’, as the instrument is ‘important to Australia’. Symonds also recounted that when he gave Bradshaw a deposit to purchase the Beck piano in mid-October 1986, Bradshaw asked him not to ‘brag about it’, and not to ‘make a noise’ about owning the instrument or in relation to the instrument’s provenance.

Bradshaw’s remark invites concern in relation to his motives for making such a request. Perhaps

1. Bradshaw had altered his view concerning the significance of the 1785/86 Longman & Broderip piano that Brian Barrow had purchased from him 17 years earlier (Bradshaw told Barrow, on several occasions, that the instrument had once belonged to Elizabeth Macarthur and was most likely the First Fleet piano)

2. Bradshaw was not as certain as he appeared to be about the significance of the 1780/86 Beck square piano that he had just sold to Symonds.

In either case, Bradshaw’s request suggests that he did not want to be ‘caught out’ one way or another. (‘Noël Godin [b. 1945], the great Belgian entarteur or pie-thrower, observes that a great deal about a person’s character is revealed in the first seconds after they’ve been hit by a pie.’) One could speculate that Bradshaw had—in response to provenance information associated with the Beck piano he had purchased on 29 October 1973—revised his opinion concerning the significance of the 1785/86 Longman & Broderip piano that he had sold to Brian Barrow four years before, in 1969. In other words, new and more recent information had resulted in the formation of new conclusions. (In the reassuring words of Marcus Aurelius: ‘Remember that to change thy mind and to follow him that sets thee right, is to be none the less a free agent.’) It is also reasonable to speculate that the Beck piano’s Windsor-related/First Fleet piano provenance is a fabrication.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

Intersections

The final section of an article written by Heather Clarke, entitled ‘Australian Colonial Dance: Australia’s First Piano’, comprises ‘17 Responses to “Australia’s First Piano”’. On Wednesday, 12 December 2012, ‘Sandy’ posted the following ‘response’:

Way back in the 70’s I had a friend who worked in an antique shop in Woollahra, a very well-off Eastern suburb of Sydney.

He showed me a piano his boss thought was the First Fleet piano (all I have is a vague memory of a rectangular box).

According to Paul Kenny, Sandy’s friend may have been John Reilly, a well-known amateur diver who lived in Randwick, Sydney. Reilly’s business activities involved the supply and installation of security alarms, and it was within this professional context that he first met Bradshaw. Bradshaw affectionately referred to Reilly either as ‘The Princess Kinkara’ (because of Reilly’s tea-making abilities) or as the ‘Mermaid’. The two men irrevocably fell out with one another after a Georgian teapot was thrown at Bradshaw. No damage was done except to the teapot, and thus the friendship was ended.

Sandy, however, recalls that the initials of her friend may have been ‘KL, a name I vaguely remember’, thereby rendering Paul Kenny’s proposal moot.

On Sunday, 19 May 2013, Sandy appended another response: ‘The only other thing I can remember definitely is that the shop was on the Sydney side of Queen St & I vaguely remember we were upstairs, so it was at least 2-storeys,— as were all the other shops in the street.’

Using Sandy’s comments as a basis for conjecture, the instrument in question may be Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano. This is because certain facts associated with the Beck instrument appear to conform with Sandy’s recollections:

- ‘Way back in the 70’s’ (emphasis added), William Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano, on 29 October 1973 (Plate 133); after acquiring the Beck, Bradshaw kept the instrument for 13 years

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102 Clarke, ‘Australian Colonial Dance’.
103 ‘Sandy Says: December 19, 2012 at 1:01 am’, in ibid.
104 See Keating, ‘Eulogy’, p. 4.
105 I am indebted to Paul Kenny for information regarding Sandy, John Reilly, and the teapot incident (email from Paul Kenny to the author, 2 December 2013).
106 Heather Clarke, ‘Sandy Says: December 3, 2013 at 8:43 am’ in ’20 Responses to ‘Australia’s First Piano’’ in Clarke, ‘Australian Colonial Dance’.
107 ‘Sandy Says: May 19, 2013 at 11:36 am’ in ‘17 Responses to “Australia’s First Piano”’ in ibid.
• ‘an *antique shop in Woollahra*’ (emphasis added): William Bradshaw’s antiques shop was at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra

• ‘the shop was on the Sydney side of Queen St & I vaguely remember we were upstairs, so it was at least 2-storeys’: the description is consistent with the location and design of William Bradshaw’s antiques shop at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra

• ‘his *boss*’ (emphasis added): this may have been William Bradshaw

• ‘his boss thought [the piano] was the *First Fleet piano*’ (emphasis added): was the instrument the square piano by Beck that Bradshaw acquired for himself on 29 October 1973?¹⁰⁸ provenance version one—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano¹⁰⁹—or provenance version three¹¹⁰ may be relevant (provenance version three raises the questions: when and why was the First Fleet piano taken back to England)

• ‘all I have is a vague memory of a *rectangular box*’ (emphasis added): this is consistent with the shape of a square piano; the 1780/86? Beck is a square piano.

It is logical to propose that Sandy’s ‘First Fleet piano’ is Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Federick Beck square piano; Sandy’s recollections certainly seem to point in that direction. Attempts made by the author to contact Sandy have been unsuccessful. Unfortunately, as is so often the case when attempting to conclusively identify the First Fleet piano, provenance and hypothesis are largely based on hearsay.

**Varney Monk**

Within the context of the telephone conversation held between the author and Brian Barrow on Wednesday, 19 June 2013, Barrow proposed that the Beck piano may have been owned at one time by the Australian composer Varney Monk (née Peterson; 1892–1967), who had a collection of pianos. Barrow continued by informing the author that his speculation was based upon pronouncements published in Heather Clarke’s article ‘Australia’s First Piano’.¹¹¹

Clarke, in the section of her article devoted to ‘Responses to “Australia’s First Piano”’, posted a ‘response’ on Sunday, 10 February 2013. Citing Scott Carlin, currently the Manager of House Museums at the Tasmanian Museum and Art

¹⁰⁹ See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
¹¹⁰ See ‘Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan’s piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, above.
¹¹¹ Clarke, ‘Australian Colonial Dance’.

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Gallery, Hobart, as her source, Clarke wrote: ‘In the 1960s Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by a Mrs Varney Monk … This comment from Scott Carlin.’

Clarke’s/Carlin’s description of the instrument as ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano’ tends to muddy the waters a little; it is unclear whether or not the instrument is the First Fleet piano or the instrument that Elizabeth Macarthur purchased at Thomas Laycock’s estate auction on Thursday, 4 January 1810. Given that Clarke’s/Carlin’s comments appear in an article entitled ‘Australia’s First Piano’, however, it is reasonable to assume that ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano’ refers to the First Fleet piano.

Clarke’s/Carlin’s comments do not contain information pertaining either to who had reported that ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by … Varney Monk’ or why ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by … Varney Monk’.

Within the context of a telephone conversation held between the author and Scott Carlin on Tuesday, 6 August 2013, Carlin revealed that the source of information from which his comment was derived was Lesley Harwin, a curator at the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales who had been tasked with the custodianship of property in Parramatta associated with Elizabeth Macarthur.

When Brian Barrow’s second version of events (that is, Bradshaw had acquired Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Beck square piano in Australia from someone who had purchased the instrument in London) is combined with his speculation based on Clarke’s/Carlin’s comments (that is, the individual who purchased the Beck piano in London may have been Varney Monk), the following proposition ensues.

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113 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur Purchases Thomas Laycock’s Piano’, in Chapter 13, this volume. See also ‘Brian Barrow’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano: Elizabeth Macarthur’s Second Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
115 Ibid.
Varney Monk’s Piano is Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Frederick Beck

This proposition is based on two assumptions:

1. Clarke’s/Carlin’s comment that ‘[i]n the 1960s Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano was said to be owned by … Varney Monk’\(^\text{117}\) is true

2. the Beck’s provenance as communicated by Bradshaw to Stewart Symonds—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old house on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano\(^\text{118}\)—is false (thereby rendering feasible Barrow’s second version of events,\(^\text{119}\) as well as his speculation regarding Varney Monk).

If these two assumptions are embraced, a connection between the 1780/86? Beck and Varney Monk may be proposed.

Varney Monk lived near Sirius Cove, Mosman, ‘overlooking Sydney Harbour’.,\(^\text{120}\) She died, aged 75, on Tuesday, 7 February 1967.\(^\text{121}\) Bradshaw’s stock book (Plate 133) reveals that he acquired the Beck piano on Monday, 29 October 1973, six years after Monk’s death. Within the context of the telephone conversation held between the author and Brian Barrow on Wednesday, 19 June 2013, Barrow conjectured that the reason six years had elapsed between Monk’s death in 1967 and Bradshaw’s acquisition of the Beck piano in 1973 from Adam Barber may have been the protracted winding up of Monk’s estate. No evidence can be found, however, pertaining to an extended time frame for the granting of probate in relation to Monk’s estate.

On Saturday, 7 March 1970, three years after Varney Monk’s death, her husband, the violinist Cyril Farnsworth Monk (1882–1970), died, aged 88.\(^\text{122}\) Probate on his estate was granted to Ian Maxim Monk (1915–78), Cyril and Varney’s son, on Monday, 6 April 1970.\(^\text{123}\)

It is reasonable to propose that if Varney Monk was the individual who had purchased the Beck piano in London, the instrument may eventually, upon her

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\(^\text{117}\) ‘Heather Says: February 10, 2013 at 1:35 am’, in Clarke, 'Australian Colonial Dance'.

\(^\text{118}\) See 'Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan's piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.

\(^\text{119}\) See 'Provenance Version Three: William Bradshaw purchases George Bouchier Worgan's piano from a vendor who had purchased the instrument in London’, above.

\(^\text{120}\) The Argus, 14 December 1933, No. 27247, p. 4, Trove, National Library of Australia.

\(^\text{121}\) ‘Biographical Note’, in Papers of Varney Monk (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2002; last modified 13 November 2003), MS 2294.


death in 1967, have passed into the custodianship of her husband, Cyril. Upon Cyril’s death in 1970, the instrument may subsequently have passed into the hands of Varney and Cyril’s son, Ian.

Note that if the provenance of the Beck piano as communicated by Bradshaw to Stewart Symonds—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and was the First Fleet piano—is true, the instrument cannot have been owned by Varney Monk. This is because that particular history of the 1780/86? Beck piano’s ownership presents an unbroken line of progress from: 1) an unnamed family living in an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor; through 2) William Bradshaw; to 3) Stewart Symonds.

If Varney Monk was the individual who purchased the Beck piano in London, and if the 1780/86? Beck square piano is the First Fleet piano, several significant questions emerge:

1. *When* was the instrument taken from Australia back to England—an event necessary in order for Bradshaw to purchase the Beck in Australia from someone (Adam Barber?) who had purchased the instrument in London?

2. *Why* was the instrument taken from Australia back to England?

3. *When* did the piano pass into the hands of Adam Barber?

4. *Why* did the piano pass into the hands of Adam Barber?

No evidence has yet been found that supports the notion that the First Fleet piano was ever taken from Australia back to England.

**Varney Monk in Windsor**

Evidence suggests that in late 1934? or early 1935? Varney Monk spent several days in Windsor. On Friday, 4 January 1935, the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* published an article dealing with Windsor’s influence on Varney Monk in relation to the genesis of her second opera, ‘The Cedar Tree’. The newspaper article reveals that Monk ‘spent many happy days at Windsor browsing round’.125

If at any time Varney Monk owned the 1780/86? Beck square piano, there may (or may not) be a connection between her visit to Windsor and her (supposed) ownership of the instrument. Furthermore, if Varney Monk acquired the Beck as a result of her Windsor sojourn then perhaps certain elements of the Beck’s provenance as recounted by Bradshaw to Symonds in late 1986—that is, the Beck was purchased at an old farmhouse on the outskirts of Windsor, and

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124 See ‘Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”’, above.
was the First Fleet piano\textsuperscript{126}—may be true. Given that symptoms of Bradshaw’s encroaching dementia only began to appear during the last three years of his life—that is, from 2006\textsuperscript{127}—that he should confuse provenance details in late 1986 seems unlikely. Had Varney Monk purchased the Beck square piano at an old house on the outskirts of Windsor\textsuperscript{128} it seems odd, however, that no mention is made in the \textit{Windsor and Richmond Gazette} regarding her new acquisition.

### Far from the Public Eye

The 1780/86? Beck square piano now sits in the entrance hallway of Stewart Symonds’ single-storey sandstone Georgian home in Ermington, Sydney, where it nestles against the bent-side of a Joseph Kirckman\textsuperscript{129} grand piano dated 1809? (Plate 133b). That such a culturally significant square piano should stand next to this particular grand piano seems appropriate, for the Kirckman may be the sixth-earliest extant Joseph Kirckman grand piano.\textsuperscript{130}

Stewart Symonds’ 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano is the only extant late eighteenth-century English square piano with hinged legs whose case dimensions and fully chromatic five-octave keyboard compass reflect late eighteenth-century norms (from a late eighteenth-century perspective, the instrument’s size and compass render it a ‘piano’ in both the commonly encountered and the fullest senses). That the instrument has intricately decorated casework, cabriole legs and a unique stand designed to be quickly disassembled, packed away, transported and reassembled without using tools reinforces not only its distinctiveness and its campaign furniture aesthetic, but also its hypothetical appropriateness for participation in the First Fleet’s epic journey to Botany Bay—a journey presenting contexts within which the instrument’s portability was requisite.

By favouring this hypothesis, the author chooses not to avoid a certain amount of partisan emphasis.\textsuperscript{131} A willingness, however, to remain open-minded (especially

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{See 'Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”', above.}
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for this information.}
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{See 'Provenance Version One: George Bouchier Worgan’s piano at a farm “30 miles out of Sydney”', above.}
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{See Watson, \textit{Clinkscale Online}.}
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.}
in the absence of irrefutable evidence) reflects the author’s hope that proof will emerge at some stage in the future that enables conclusive identification of the First Fleet piano to occur.

For early twenty-first-century lovers of musical art, experiencing the sonic and visual beauty of pianos made during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may help to create fluency in practices ‘that traditions of the spirit’ value—for example, ‘scrutiny of the past, open communication across the ages, a reluctance to judge by appearances, and the recognition that the dead … speak’ to us through the voices of their musical instruments, instruments that are inherently ‘a kind of music’.

George Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano, with its unique design elements, achingly beautiful sound and multifarious history, now sits encircled by a sprawling suburban Sydney, ‘and further back still’, encircled by ‘the indifference of’ most of our ‘contemporaries … and further back still’, encircled by the care of a few individuals who seek consolation from the emptiness of mass consumerism in their private good taste.

The First Fleet piano, along with its instrumental contemporaries, is exaltation—after all, as music lovers know, there is ‘a subtler drunkenness than comes of wine’.

In relation to the First Fleet piano, observations pertaining to Australian history published in 1897 by the American author and adventurer Mark Twain (1835–1910) are appropriate: the history of the First Fleet piano is ‘always picturesque; indeed, it is … curious and strange. It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies. And all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises, and adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities.’

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133 West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, p. 27. See also A. West, Australia Now: Inside the Lifestyles of the Rich & Tasteful (North Melbourne: Pluto Press Australia, 2006), p. 15.
134 West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, p. 776.
Plate 133b George Worgan’s Beck square piano nestling against the bent-side of a grand piano by Joseph Kirckman, dated 1809?.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.
Chapter 16

The History of George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano: A speculative summary

• Between 1780? and 1786?, perhaps before Wednesday, 1 November 1786, George Bouchier Worgan purchased his square piano, either new or second-hand, from Frederick Beck (at Beck’s workshop, 10 Broad Street, Soho, London).

• On Sunday, 13 May 1787, at three in the morning, the instrument departed from England for Botany Bay on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*.

• Eight and a half months later, at approximately seven in the evening of Saturday, 26 January 1788, the instrument arrived at Sydney Cove. It is not known exactly when the instrument was offloaded from the *Sirius*, but Worgan’s square piano had been taken off by Saturday, 6 March 1790. Nor is it known where the instrument was housed for the three years between its arrival at Sydney Cove and early 1791.

• Between January and Monday, 7 March 1791, the piano was placed in John and Elizabeth Macarthur’s new thatched wattle-and-daub hut at Sydney Cove. This hut may have been located up the hill to the west of the fledgling colony’s parade ground (at what is now the corner of Bridge and George streets).¹

• George Worgan gave the instrument as a gift to Elizabeth Macarthur between January and ca Monday, 7 March 1791.

• In November 1793, the piano was placed in John and Elizabeth Macarthur’s new cottage, Elizabeth Farm, at Parramatta.

• Between Sunday, 4 March and Monday, 5 March 1804, Worgan’s piano escaped destruction by fire within the context of an uprising by Irish convicts.

• On Saturday, 26 January 1805, Worgan’s piano once again escaped destruction—from a fire that broke out in the kitchen of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

• On Thursday, 4 January 1810, Elizabeth Macarthur may have sold Worgan’s piano to David Bevan (auctioneer) as part-payment for the purchase of a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate. If Elizabeth Macarthur sold Worgan’s

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¹ This information is derived from a conversation between the author and Gary Crockett, Curator, Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Queens Square, Sydney, on 11 February 2010.
piano to Bevan on this date, the instrument remained in his possession until it was (presumably) sold approximately three months later, on Monday, 2 April 1810.

- On the other hand, Worgan’s piano may have remained at Elizabeth Farm cottage, becoming one of two pianos in the possession of Elizabeth Macarthur.
- It is not known what became of Worgan’s piano either during the five-year period between Thursday, 4 January 1810—when Elizabeth Macarthur bought a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate—and Saturday, 14 January 1815; or during the five-year period between Monday, 2 April 1810—when Worgan’s piano may have been sold by the auctioneer David Bevan—and Saturday, 14 January 1815.
- Worgan’s piano may have been sold at auction by David Bevan on Wednesday, 12 January 1814—within the context of this auction, the maker of the instrument and the vendor are unknown.
- On Saturday, 14 January 1815, the instrument was offered—according to the first of six advertisements—for sale by the lawyer and merchant George Chartres, at 68 George Street, Sydney.
- It is not known what became of Worgan’s piano during the two years between George Chartres’ sixth and final advertised attempt to sell the piano—on Saturday, 3 June 1815—and Thursday, 13 November 1817. The unsold piano may have remained in the possession of George Chartres.
- On Thursday, 13 November 1817—one month before George Chartres’ departure from Sydney to England—Worgan’s piano was offered for sale at auction—as part of Chartres’ trade stock—by Simeon Lord at Chartres’ residence—68 George Street, Sydney.
- It is not known whether the piano was sold at this auction. It is also not known what became of Worgan’s piano during the 21 years between Simeon Lord’s auctioning of George Chartres’ trade stock—on Thursday, 13 November 1817—and Wednesday, 6 June 1838.
- On Wednesday, 6 June 1838, Worgan’s piano was offered for sale at auction by John Blackman, at his ‘Auction Mart’ salesrooms at 5 King Street, Sydney. Hearsay suggests that the piano may have been purchased by the owners of a farm 48 kilometres from Sydney.

Provenance Continued: Alternative one

- During mid to late October? 1973, the eminent Sydney-based antiques dealer William Bradshaw was either ‘tipped off’ or saw an advertisement concerning a ‘spinet’ for sale. It transpired that the spinet was in fact a square piano made by Frederick Beck dated 1780/86?. The piano was located in an old house on the outskirts of Windsor—48 kilometres from Sydney.
The instrument had been in the owner’s family since living memory—perhaps since John Blackman’s auction held on 6 June 1838?. The owners were adamant that the instrument had come to Botany Bay with the First Fleet. Members of the family were allowed to play the instrument only under strict supervision, because ‘it came out with the First Fleet’. The piano was housed in the laundry.

- William Bradshaw believed the instrument to be surgeon Worgan’s piano, and purchased it on Monday, 29 October 1973, at 11.30 am (Plates 133 and 328e).

- The current owner, Stewart Symonds, purchased the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano from William Bradshaw in mid-October 1986. Symonds saw it ‘in passing’ during one of his almost weekly visits to Bradshaw’s shop at 96 Queen Street, Woollahra. The instrument was, at that time, housed in the large freestanding, uninsulated brick garage and workshop at the rear of Bradshaw’s shop/home. Like Bradshaw, Symonds is convinced that the piano belonged to George Worgan.

- The instrument sits in the entrance hallway of Stewart Symonds’ home, where it nestles against the bent-side of a Joseph Kirckman grand piano dated 1809?.

**Provenance Continued: Alternative two**

It is not known what became of Worgan’s piano during the 135 years between Wednesday, 6 June 1838—when Worgan’s piano was offered for sale at auction by John Blackman—and Monday, 29 October 1973.

- The instrument *may* have passed into the hands of the composer Varney Monk, who lived near Sirius Cove, Mosman, Sydney.

- Eventually, the instrument passed into the hands of Adam Barber, who lived at 82 Murrviverie Road, North Bondi, Sydney.

- On Monday, 29 October 1973, William Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano from Adam Barber.

- The current owner, Stewart Symonds, purchased the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano from William Bradshaw in mid-October 1986.

- The instrument sits in the entrance hallway of Stewart Symonds’ home, where it nestles against the bent-side of a Joseph Kirckman grand piano dated 1809?.

Provenance Continued: Alternative three

It is not known what became of Worgan’s piano during the 148 years between Wednesday, 6 June 1838—when Worgan’s piano was offered for sale at auction by John Blackman—and mid-October 1986.

- The instrument *may* have passed into the hands of the composer Varney Monk, who lived near Sirius Cove, Mosman, Sydney.
- At some stage, the instrument passed into the hands of Adam Barber, who lived at 82 Murriverie Road, North Bondi, Sydney.
- On Monday, 29 October 1973, William Bradshaw purchased the Beck piano from Adam Barber.
- The current owner, Stewart Symonds, purchased the 1780/86? Frederick Beck square piano from William Bradshaw in mid-October 1986.
- The instrument sits in the entrance hallway of Stewart Symonds’ home, where it nestles against the bent-side of a Joseph Kirckman grand piano dated 1809?.

From the foregoing pages, it may be conjectured that the Frederick Beck square piano of 1780/86?, currently in Stewart Symonds’ possession, was brought to Botany Bay on board the flagship of the First Fleet, the *Sirius*, by surgeon George Bouchier Worgan. Even if it is later found that this particular piano did not arrive with the First Fleet, the existence in Australia of an instrument by Frederick Beck represents a unique part of the nation’s heritage. That this particular piano may be one of only 32 extant Beck instruments, and is the only extant late eighteenth-century fully chromatic five-octave compass square piano that has cabriole legs—hinged and incorporated into a campaign-furniture-inspired stand—further enhances its significance. Either way, the heritage value of the 1780/86? Beck square piano is both nationally and internationally inestimable.

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2 See ‘Extant Pianos by Frederick Beck’, in Chapter 2, this volume.
3 If the instrument dates from 1780, it is one of only two extant Frederick Beck pianos from that year; similarly, if the instrument dates from 1786, it is one of only two extant Frederick Beck pianos from that particular year.
This bibliography combines the following types of references in one alphabetical listing:

1. sources referred to or quoted
2. sources for material of relevance
3. sources of particular value in the selection and tracing of material referred to, quoted or of relevance
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Ditto, Undoubted, by O. Rucker; A Piano Forte; A Clarichord; Several Capital
Violins; Tenors; And a Variety of Musical Instruments, by Amati, and Other
Eminent Makers; Three Remarkable Fine Busts of Milton, Shakespear, and
Handel, Exquisitely Modell’d by Roubilliac, &c. &c. &c, which will be Sold
by Auction, (by Order of the Executrix) by Mr. Christie, at His Great Room in
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Friday Preceding the Sale, which will Begin at Twelve O’Clock. Catalogues May
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