

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ROBERTSON COLLECTION

By Peter Kaellgren

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The period following World War II was an interesting one for silver collecting. A select number of well-to-do members of Toronto Society developed a passion for antique silver, much of it fuelled by the exhibition *Seven Centuries of English Domestic Silver* organized at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1958. They purchased from dealers in the UK and auctions. Most of those collections were sold off by 2015. The lone exception is the silver collected by Norman S. Robertson and his wife Marian Adelaide Delahooke. They collected widely and on occasion bought from unconventional sources. Five exceptional pieces were donated to the Royal Ontario Museum after Norman died in 1988. Marian Robertson allowed me to select pieces from the broader collection in 1993. The Robertson donations significantly enhanced the range and quality of the silver collections at the ROM. My paper shares stories of some of the pieces and why they are important.

Collecting antique silver was a different matter in the period after World War II. To begin with, it was less expensive in the 1950s and 1960s. Important pieces sometimes went unrecognized and could be purchased for bargain prices. Montreal dealers John Russell at Beaver Hall Antiques and Michel Taschereau in Montreal made good profits buying antique silver from church and charity rummage sales in their area. Catholic churches in Quebec were selling off their silver and other artifacts to antique wholesalers. If you were part of the English-speaking WASP society in Toronto, you often took vacations in the British Isles where there were many knowledgeable dealers who were only too happy to talk to you. Most important of all: because pieces made 100 or more years earlier could be officially documented on the Invoice as being "Antique," there was no Customs Duty. That has since changed. You now pay at least the HST on antiques, depending on the amount you declare to Canada Customs.

Most Toronto collectors maintained a close relationship with a particular dealer. In London, Ben How of How of Edinburgh was a favourite. Mrs. How had helped to organize the 1958 exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum and may have met prominent members of the ROM Board and Toronto society at dinner parties here. Shrubsole's near the British Museum was another known dealer as well as S.J. Phillips. Bourdon Smith made regular forays from London to Toronto to sell at annual exhibitions at The Paisley Shop, a respected antique shop which started life on Yonge Street. Perhaps the one dealer who had cornered the best customer in the market was Eric Shrubsole in New York City. His brother operated a separate business in London. Eric connected with the Folger's Coffee Company and convinced them that he was uniquely equipped to help them assemble the definitive collection of early English, silver coffee pots. There is nothing like a corporate client, especially one who wants to appear as a patron of the arts! An excellent catalogue was published for the Folger Collection which for many years has been the property of the Kansas City Art Museum.

Collectors also purchased from Christie's, Sotheby's and other auction houses, often with advice from their favourite dealers or in-house specialists. This was the age when antique shows still possessed incredible cachet and glamour. In June, the Grosvenor House Antique Show, founded with the encouragement of Lord Lee of Fareham in the 1920s, was invariably opened by a member of the Royal Family. In New York City, the two key shows were the Armories Show in October and the Winter Antiques Show in January.

Marian Delahooke was Norman Robertson's second wife. She had been his secretary. Sometime after his first wife died, he proposed to Marian. She confessed that she did not cook. This meant that Rose, a feisty Englishwoman who had married an Italian, was hired to manage the kitchen and the house. Rose was a good cook. Marian became fascinated with silver because of an article in an English publication about an actor she enjoyed. He and his wife had collected silver caddy spoons from Flea Markets like Portobello Road and ordered a custom sofa with plexiglass cases built into the arms. There they displayed their caddy spoons. People in the 1950s found such celebrity collecting fascinating and novel.

Norman and Marian were both intelligent and well-read. Their collecting probably advanced because of connections with other collectors in Toronto and their interest in the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario. They also joined special overseas tours organized by

the AGO and the ROM. Some of the other silver collectors whom they would have met socially included Robert W. Gouinlock Senior and his wife Margaret, who became a close friend of Marian's, Richard Meech senior, John Langdon, the Canadian silver expert, and his wife Eustella, and Gladys and Morton Robertson. Gladys was a very astute silver collector. She coordinated the silver section of *Prized Possessions*, the ROM loan exhibition in 1968 that celebrated antique collecting in Toronto.

The Robertsons bought silver from a wider variety of sources than most collectors in Toronto society. They went to major dealers like Mrs. How in London and Shrubsole's near the British Museum. In New York, they visited a range of dealers including Goravic, whom the local silver community often shunned because he was Jewish and eastern European. They were always looking for silver and other collectibles like Japanese tsuba when they were travelling. Mrs. Robertson once told me that on one of their visits to New York, Norman went into a shop that looked so grotty that she declined to enter and stayed on the sidewalk. They also purchased silver locally from auction houses like Waddington's and Ward-Price. One of their favourite activities was to stroll up Mount Pleasant from their home on Rose Park Crescent and visit Lorenz Antiques, Bernardi's and any other likely shops right up to Eglinton. Along the way, they might stop off at Lefevre's Chocolates and buy a small selection which Norman would cut in half with an early Victorian pearl-faced silver pocketknife which is now at the ROM. This allowed each of them to test taste a chocolate. They sometimes purchased silver from members of the public who contacted them and brought the pieces to their home for inspection. Among the vendors was a police officer from Hamilton who sold them a number of 18th century pieces including a rather nice cruet set.

Unfortunately, I was not able to access usable pictures of the 112 caddy spoons that Marian Robertson donated to the Royal Ontario Museum in 1993. Just documenting them was a huge task. They were processed as a separate donation and Certified as Cultural Property by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board. The bulk of the silver collection, 335 pieces, was listed and described chronologically by hallmark dates and places of production with the first section being London. It was also Certified as Cultural Property in 1993. Even today, it amazes me that their collection includes a chronology of pieces that document the historical and social development of English, Scottish and Irish silver from around 1700 through to the Regency period. There are also interesting examples of European silver, Chinese Export silver, Channel Islands silver, and Indian Colonial silver, categories that were all



Fig. 1

Fig. 1 Maidenhead Spoon, silver. English, indistinctly marked, about 1520-1600. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.2)



Fig. 2

Fig. 2 Seal top Spoon, silver. English, Exeter, mark of Edward Anthony (working 1612-1667). (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.176)



Fig. 2
backside

but completely ignored by most other collectors of their generation in Toronto. Essentially, the Robertsons would purchase a piece if they felt it had quality of design and workmanship, and its history spoke to them.

After many years of negotiation with the ROM management, in 1999, I was finally able to mount the exhibition “Silver: The Sterling Choice,” to honour the Robertson donation. The exhibition and the Marian and Norman Robertson Silver Vault in the European Department happened largely through the efforts of the late W.B.G. (“Bill”) Humphrey who raised money to create the climate-controlled vault. It was a miracle that Marian Robertson lived to see the opening of the show. Eric Shrubsole, who was in Toronto on business at the time, was able to attend the opening.

British silver is the great strength of the collection. Although most of the examples are from London, those from Scotland are important and might well stand up to comparison with what is found in other major museums. There are also significant Irish examples. [Fig. 1] Like most collectors, the earliest pieces the Robertsons were able to acquire were silver spoons, which were made in some quantity from the late Middle Ages

onwards. There are two Maidenhead spoons from the Tudor era in the early 1500s as well as other typical types like this [Fig. 2] seal-top spoon by Edward Anthony, an Exeter goldsmith who worked between 1612 and 1667. This is the earliest of six examples of the type with Exeter hallmarks. There are also examples of large spoons with the trifid handle typical of the late 1600s as well as spoons used as utensils and for serving. Unlike many



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig.3 Caudle Cup and Cover, silver. London, 1659, maker's mark HN with a bird with an olive branch below. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.9.1-.2)

Fig.4 Cage-work Cup and Cover, silver with partial gilding. London, c. 1675, unmarked. Attributed to Wolfgang Howser. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 988.254.2.1-.2)

collectors, the Robertsons did not fall into the trap of collecting large numbers of early spoons. Instead, they seem to have acquired a select number of representative examples.

Most collections of English silver begin about 1660 when the monarchy was restored to power and there was money in circulation to purchase new silver. This caudle cup with cover [Fig. 3] is exceptional because it is hallmarked London, 1659 and decorated with chased flowers in the most up-to-date style. High style pieces pre-dating 1665 are uncommon. The unidentified maker's mark is HN with a bird and an olive branch below. Such a special piece could only come from How of Edinburgh. A total of three Caudle Cups from the late 1600s are included in the Robertson gift.

The return of Charles II to be King of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in 1660 meant that many royalist supporters returned from the Continent with refined European taste. Along with them came a growing stream of skilled craftsmen, eager to ply their trade in London, which was at the time the largest city in Europe. Among these were German silversmiths like Wolfgang Howser. [Fig. 4] This silver cup with repoussé and chased openwork casing to the side and cover is a rare example attributed to his workshop and dated to circa 1675. Note the partial gilding which is original and has worn through the years. Such pieces were admired in the Baroque period for their craftsmanship and artifice. Only about 25 of these cups are known. Philippa Glanville the senior curator of the Metalwork Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum was thrilled to be able to handle this cup and take it apart. None of the cups seem to have been hallmarked, possibly because they were private commissions from rich aristocrats who provided old silver that had already been hallmarked to make them.



Fig.5 Three Scallop Shells, silver. London, 1675, mark of Samuel Hood. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.10.1-30)

Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Philippa Glanville was equally impressed with these three silver scallop shells hallmarked 1675 by Samuel Hood. [Fig. 5] She could recall having seen only two other sets of three of these naturalistic scallop shells. It has been suggested that they were made to hold special sauce consumed when eating oysters which were a popular food at the time.

Fig.6 Small Mug, silver. London, 1683, maker's mark GS with a fleur-de-lis above. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.31) Small tankards and vessels of this form were called mug(g)s, can(n)s or pot(t)s at this time.

Small drinking vessels with a spherical body were commonly used in England in the period c. 1670-1700. Most of them were ceramic and the form was even produced in Chinese Export Porcelain after 1681. Small silver versions seem to have been popular novelties. Both these examples date from the 1680s. [Fig. 6] The one on the left has flat-chased decoration in the Chinoiserie manner. It is London, 1683, maker's mark GS with a fleur-de-lis above. The Robertsons do not seem to have been able to purchase any larger pieces of English silver with Chinoiserie decoration. The market for pieces with such decoration was highly competitive during their collecting period. The little mug weighs one ounce and may possibly have been used as a dram cup when new. Dram cups were the equivalent of our present-day shot glass.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Fig.7 Tankard, silver. London, c. 1698 (indistinct hallmarks), mark of Humphrey Payne. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.35)

Fig.8 Charger (serving tray), silver with remains of original gilding. English, London, 1683, mark of Thomas Issod. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 988.254.4)

Tankards were very popular with the Robertsons. They acquired five from the late 1600s. The most imposing is this one by Humphrey Payne, c. 1698 [Fig. 7] It is every bit as sturdy as it looks, weighing an incredible 758 grams or 24 oz. Troy.

Norman Robertson invariably bought silver or jewelry as a gift for Marian on her birthday. What he chose depended on what was available. For one birthday, he called Richard Flensted Holder in for a quick consultation. Did Richard have anything worthwhile from the 1600s? Richard just happened to have purchased this silver-gilt charger from N. Bloom in London. [Fig. 8] Norman was delighted with the piece. It is historically important because originally it was part of a large silver service made for an established English family. The maker is Thomas Issod, a prominent London silversmith, and the hallmark is 1680. Many of the related pieces from that family silver were acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum in the late 1800s.

For another birthday, Norman Robertson was able to buy this pair of covered bowls. [Fig. 9] They were made by William Fawdry, another prominent London silversmith and hallmarked 1703. Originally, they were likely part of a large silver



Fig. 9

Fig 9 Pair of Broth Bowls with Covers, Britannia Standard silver. English, London, 1703, mark of William Fawdry. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.14.1-.2.1-.2)



Fig. 10

Fig.10 Snuff Box, silver, engraved and mounted with fossilized coral. English, London, 1690s, mark of William Fawdry. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.40)



Fig. 11

Fig. 11 Sugar Caster, silver. English, London, 1690, maker's mark IF with a dot above and a crescent below. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.11.1-.2)

dressing table set. Such bowls were used to serve nourishing broth to the lady of the house, especially at the time of childbirth.

A small snuff box a little over an inch long bearing a mark attributed to William Fawdry was also part of the Robertson Gift. [Fig. 10] The cover is mounted with a polished piece of fossilized coral. Take a good look at the quality of the engraving. Only a major London workshop would have had access to an engraver with that skill. Also, look at the hinge: the precision and finish of the hinge on a small piece like a box is often an indicator of its quality. Interestingly, the ROM already owned a small oval silver snuff box with similar engraving bearing the mark of William Fawdry. Both boxes have a steel strap spring inside the cover which allows them to open when you pinch the box at both ends. An established silversmith like William Fawdry would have had the skilled craftsmen and connections to be able to make small specially commissioned pieces like this for wealthy clients.

The last decades of the 1600s were ones when major changes were happening in Britain. One of them was the expanding range of food and beverages including tea, coffee, and chocolate. Sugar was still a luxury but was more readily available as a condiment and as an ingredient. Often these changes are documented by silver artifacts which would have been commissioned by the wealthiest members of society. [Fig. 11] This large Caster for Sugar, sometimes referred to as a muffineer, bears London hallmarks for 1690 and a maker's mark IF with a dot above and a crescent below. Collectors often refer to this form as a lighthouse caster. Interestingly, it was one of the pieces that the Robertsons loaned to the *Prized Possessions* exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1968 (See page 140,

no. 685). This suggests that the quality of their collecting was already at a high level in the 1960s.

Another of the new beverages was punch, a recipe imported from India which required five ingredients: citrus juice, alcohol, spices, water and sugar. This strainer for lemon juice [Fig. 12] was acquired from Mrs. How with a possible attribution to Scotland. It is struck four times with the maker's initials IC. Today we know more about punch strainers, and this can safely be considered one of the earliest types that came into use c. 1685-1700. Although the strainer is likely to be English or Scottish, some silver enthusiasts have optimistically suggested that the IC mark may be that of John Coney, a celebrated Boston silversmith working in that period.

Other silver items suggest the growing range of foods and beverages being consumed around 1700. [Fig 13] This brazier with an alcohol lamp was produced in the workshop of David Willaume I, one of the Huguenot silversmiths working in London after the revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes guaranteeing religious freedom in France. Willaume was born in Metz, France, in 1658 and active in London after 1693. His son succeeded him in the business. Small red pottery braziers placed on a table with food and utensils were a common feature of well-off households in the 1600s. They were used for warming up and cooking food and are documented in Spanish and Dutch still life paintings. Willaume mounted nine different panels of Chinese silver with relief decora-



Fig. 12 Strainer for citrus juice used in punch, silver. English or Scottish, circa 1680-1700, maker's mark IC. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.15)



Fig. 13

Fig. 13 Brazier with alcohol lamp for warming food or water, Britannia Standard silver. London, 1698, mark on the stand and brazier David Willaume I. Mounted with chased panels of Chinese silver. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 988.254.3.1.1-.3)



Fig. 14



Fig. 14, hallmarks

Fig. 14 Coffee Pot, Britannia Standard silver with original wood handle. English, London ,1702, mark of Benjamin Pyne. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.13)

tion into the side of this brazier which is Britannia Standard silver and hallmarked in 1698.

Mrs. How advised the Robertsons on this piece and provided a staff member to help with the bidding at Christie's. Marian Robertson confessed that at the auction, Norman got carried away and bid beyond his limit to acquire the brazier. This is one of the few pieces in the Robertson Collection that required an official Export Permit to be taken out of the UK. Looking at the brazier, one can envision how the idea of having a kettle on stand evolved in the 1700s. Because of its size, it is also possible that it was used to cook or warm up other foods like artichokes.

The tapering, cylindrical lighthouse form was popular for the earliest coffee pots made by London silversmiths. [Fig. 14] This example, which may well be the earliest silver coffee pot in Canada, bears the marks of the prominent maker Benjamin Pyne, the Britannia Standard mark and London hallmarks for 1702. It is in great condition and appears to retain its original handle.

Some of the earliest silver teapots made in London are spherical or "bullet-shaped," a reference to the musket balls then in use. These bullet teapots were scarce when the Robertsons were collecting. Fortunately, they were able to acquire an early Scottish example of



Fig. 15

Fig. 15 Teapot, silver with wood handle. Scottish, Edinburgh, 1716, mark of Assay Master Edward Penman. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.213)



Fig. 16

inverted pear shape made in Edinburgh, 1716 [Fig. 15]. Mrs. How also sold them these silver tongs as "sugar tongs." [Fig. 16] They are Scottish, Edinburgh, c.1700-1710, and struck twice with the mark



Fig. 16, crest

of Colin McKenzie. The engraved family crest has the motto above which is typical of heraldry in Scotland.

Other forms in the Robertson Collection document how dining and menus were changing in Britain in the early 1700s. This cruet stand is engraved with a ship and a name. [Fig. 17] It suggests how commodious the captain's quarters could be on a sailing ship. It is struck with hallmarks for London, 1721, and the mark Charles Alchorne. The cut glass bottles appear to be contemporary with the silver. The cruet

Fig. 16 Sugar Tongs, silver. Scottish, Edinburgh, c.1700-1710, mark of Colin McKenzie. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.212)



Fig. 17

Fig. 17 Cruet Stand, silver with cut lead glass bottles. London, 1721, mark of Charles Alchorne. (© ROM, Robertson Collection, 993.53.55.1-11)

supplied the dining table with a convenient quantity of sugar in the large caster, ground pepper, other ground spices, and oil and vinegar.

French cuisine was having an influence on the British diet. Gravies and sauces were an essential part of this cuisine. To serve these, the French developed a double-spouted sauceboat. [Fig. 18] This pair was made in the workshop of Paul Crespin, another Huguenot silversmith working in London, and hallmarked in 1723. Most English sauceboats had only one spout. This pair is particularly heavy and elegantly designed.

The Robertson Collection includes an impressive range of pieces which make it possible to trace the stylistic evolution of British silver.



Fig. 18

Fig. 18 Pair of double-spouted Sauceboats, silver. English, London, 1723, mark of Paul Crespin. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.56.1-2)

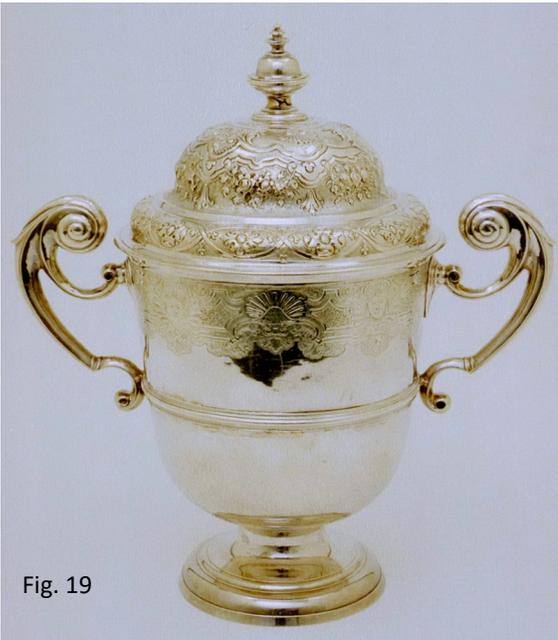


Fig. 19



Fig. 20

Fig. 19 Cup and Cover, silver with chased decoration. Irish, Dublin, 1736, mark of John Hamilton. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.237.1-.2)

Fig. 20 Basket, silver. English, London, 1739, mark of Peter Archambo I. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.61)

The evolution from the stiffer, more symmetrical and formal Baroque designs can be traced using examples of silver made in London and Dublin, then the second largest city in the British Isles. Many of the prominent families had estates or houses in Ireland. This cup and cover were produced in the Dublin workshop of John Hamilton. [Fig. 19] The cup is hallmarked Dublin, 1736 and has a beautifully chased Baroque border below the rim. The cover, also struck with the mark of John Hamilton, was apparently added several years later. Irish silver cups like this made in the first third of the 1700s normally did not have covers. When Hamilton was asked to add the cover, he apparently no longer had access to the original chaser. You can easily see that the quality of the low-relief designs is different from those below the rim. I was surprised to discover that there is a second identical cup to this at Colonial Williamsburg. They wrote to me about it. Apparently, they were made as a pair to display on the sideboard of a formal dining room.

The Robertson Collection includes a fine representative range of silver baskets that document the evolution of the form from the Baroque period of the early 1700s to the Regency period c. 1800-1825. The quality is so good that I was able to write an article for *The Magazine Antiques* on the evolution of English silver baskets. The Baroque style baskets tend to be round and simpler. [Fig.20] This one has silver with pierced work that was meticulously cut out by



Fig. 21

Fig. 21 Basket, silver. English, London, 1755, mark of Charles Frederick Kandler. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.95)

hand using a saw similar to a small coping saw. The rim and handle are cast work. It is struck with London hallmarks for 1739 and the mark of Peter Archambo I.

Documentation in contemporary paintings suggests that large silver baskets with a handle were used to serve fruit or bread. By 1750, the Rococo models were usually of an oval or more or less oval form with decorative motifs and feet cast in naturalistic relief. The motifs around the rim of this basket include a small fly. [Fig 21] This

basket bears the mark of a German-born silversmith Charles Frederick Kandler and was hallmarked in London, 1755. He was possibly born in 1695 in Fischbach, Saxony, and was active in London beginning about 1727 and continuing to 1776. It has been suggested that Charles Frederick Kandler may have been related to Johann Joachim Kaendler, the celebrated porcelain modeller and sculptor who created many major pieces and figurines for the Meissen Factory in Saxony. Certainly, the quality of his sculpted decoration lends support this theory.



Fig. 22

Fig. 22 Three-branch Candelabrum, silver. English, London, 1745, mark of John Cafe. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.98.1-.2)

The Robertson Collection includes a wonderful range of silver candlesticks ranging from a pair of 8-inch dressing table candlesticks that are displayed in the Queen Anne Room of the Samuel European Galleries to a set of four Corinthian column candlesticks from the 1770s. This three-branch candelabrum is possibly the most exceptional example. [Fig. 22] Mrs. Robertson saw it in the window of Shrubsole's in London, England, and fell in love with it. It was produced in the workshop of John Cafe, a specialist in candlesticks and hallmarked in 1745-46. The three branches are



Fig. 23 Pair of Harlequin Tapersticks, silver. English, London, 1749, mark of John Cafe. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.99.1-.2)

formed as Baroque caryatids. They are all mounted as one piece and can be removed from the main candlestick, if only one candle is required.

John Cafe produced a select range of candlestick models. One of their novelty items was the Harlequin taper stick. [Fig. 23] Taper sticks were used to hold a small candle that might be used to light other candles in the room or to melt sealing wax. The Italian Comedy or “Commedia del’ Arte” was very popular in the mid 1700s. With its series of stock characters including Harlequin who was the male star, wealthy Brits would have encountered it while travelling in France or Italy. Both Chelsea and Bow made porcelain figurines of Italian Comedy characters. This pair bears the mark of John Cafe and London hallmarks for 1749. John Cafe died

in 1757, but his brother William continued to specialize in candlesticks until the 1770s. This pair is particularly interesting because it documents the Robertsons approach to collecting. They had managed to acquire a pair of Harlequin candlesticks. Richard Flensted-Holder found a pair that was better quality and offered them to the Robertsons. They bought the ones you are seeing from him and sold off the pair of lesser quality.

The fancy, decorated pieces of silver are what usually illustrate books on 18th century British silver. However, most customers in those days were very conscious of the cost of “fashioning” or making the silver and opted for plainer pieces or silver in forms that were preferred in their region. A good example is this tea set produced in Edinburgh in 1739. [Fig. 24] It is struck with the marks of James Ker and the Assay Master Archibald Ure. The Rococo



Fig. 24 Tea Set (teapot, salver, cream jug and open sugar bowl), silver. Scottish, Edinburgh, 1739, marks of James Kerr and the Assay Master Archibald Ure. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.214.1-4)



Fig. 25

Fig. 25 Urn (possibly for coffee or hot water), silver with wooden handles. Scottish, Edinburgh, 1746, the marks of John Kincaid and the Assay Master Hugh Gordon. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.215)

borders are competently chased but not as detailed as those found on silver produced in London. This is likely to be one of the few intact 18th century British tea services in any Canadian collection. A similar tea service is illustrated in Michael Clayton's *Dictionary*, but it does not include a waiter or tray.

One of the most distinctive regional forms in Scottish silver is the egg-shaped urn with a tap. Only about twenty-five examples of this form are known. This example bears Edinburgh hallmarks for 1746-47 and the marks of John Kincaid and Assay Master Hugh Gordon. [Fig. 25] Such urns are variously labelled as hot water urns or coffee urns. It does not seem likely that they dispensed hot water because there is no heat source. The coffee urn designation appears to be more likely as coffee beans are more or less oval and the urn adopts an egg shape. The true use of these urns may only be verified if an original invoice for one of them survives where the form is named.

There is a good representative range of tea canister forms in the Robertson Collection beginning in the



Fig. 26

1690s. The term canister is more correct since the name "tea caddy" only came into use around 1800. One of the more striking sets is this one hallmarked London 1764 with an unidentified maker's mark I.B/W.B in a quatrefoil. [Fig. 26] It retains its

Fig. 26 Tea Chest, wood covered in shagreen (sharkskin) with silver canisters and teaspoons. English, London 1764, unidentified maker's mark I.B/W.B. (© ROM, Robertson Collection)

original fitted wood case with lock and silver mounts. The case is covered in sharkskin which is often called shagreen. Three of the original Rococo style tea-spoons survive along with nine replacements made by Francis Higgins in London, 1886. The canisters at either end were for green and black tea. The central canister would have held sugar. All of these ingredients were expensive and needed to be kept under lock and key.

By the 1760s, the Neoclassical or Adam style was beginning to appear in English silver. Some of the earliest pieces were inspired by French models. However, the English had skilled designers and architects of their own including Josiah Wedgwood I and his factory at Etruria, Staffordshire. Some pieces in the new style were very plain and functional. [Fig. 27] These plainer pieces may have been used in Quaker or Protestant households where less adornment was preferred. A good example is this kettle on stand with alcohol lamp hallmarked in London in 1770 by the popular silversmiths John Parker I and Edward Wakelin.

Often simple design motifs like this convex reeding contributed to elegant flow of Neoclassical designs. [Fig.28] The repeated vertical rhythms on the body and spout accentuate the profiles of this coffee pot, though its carved wood handle differs little from those on earlier Rococo models. It is struck with London hallmarks for 1769 and the mark of Charles Wright, another prolific silversmith from the period. The Robertson Collection includes a hot water jug of



Fig. 27



Fig. 28

Fig. 27 Hot Water Kettle on Stand with alcohol lamp, silver. London, 1770, mark of John Parker I and Edward Wakelin. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.130.1-5)

Fig. 28 Coffee Pot, silver with wood handle. English, London, 1769, mark of Charles Wright. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.128)



Fig. 29



Fig. 30

Fig. 29 Coffee Pot, silver with wood handle. English, London, 1774, mark of Daniel Smith and Robert Sharp. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.132)

Fig. 30 Hot Water Urn, silver with carved ivory handle. English, London, 1764, mark of Daniel Smith and Robert Sharp. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.106.1-3)

matching design. One wonders if the two pieces were acquired separately to go together.

The partnership of Daniel Smith (active in London from about 1759) and Robert Sharp (working beginning 1763) was one of the most prominent when it came to creating silver in the new Neoclassical style. Much of the silver produced to the designs of Robert Adam for important clients bears the mark of their workshop. As they were only getting going in the early 1760s, it is possible that Smith and Sharp began to work with Adam early in their careers. This coffee pot with relief husk garlands is a good representative model from the period. [Fig. 29] It is struck with London hallmarks for 1774. This coffee pot design was copied by Josiah Wedgwood I who manufactured it in his black basalt body. The popular actor David Garrick owned a silver tea and coffee service in the husk design. In the mid 1700s, Garrick had established a reputation similar to Richard Burton in the 20th century. His painted wood bedroom suite is on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Elements of Rococo design still lingered on in fashionable English silver made in the 1760s. One gets that feeling looking at this hot water urn from the Daniel Smith and Robert Sharp workshop in 1764. [Fig. 30] The rhythms of the swirling spirals emphasize and enliven the form. If you opened the top, you would discover that there is a central, vertical tube into which you inserted a red-hot iron rod to heat the water. The tap handle is carved ivory which insulates the user from the heat. This form of hot water urn only came into common use in the 1760s. Tea drinking was a very important social activity. The urn provided hot boiling



Fig. 31 Hot Water Urn, silver. English, London, 1777, mark of Andrew Fogelberg. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.135.1-3)

water for producing additional pots of tea. Tea bowls or cups were small with guests sometimes consuming many cups.

A much more severe, later version of the Neoclassical style is visible in this hot water urn made by An-

drew Fogelberg, a Swedish silversmith who worked in London from about 1773 to the 1790s. [Fig. 31] Today we often forget that London was then the largest city in Europe and a major centre for trade. Many craftsmen came there to gain experience in local workshops which in some cases were operated by craftsmen from their home countries or of their same Protestant sect. Fogelberg's hot water urn bears London hallmarks for 1777. His designs were inspired by the Swedish version of the Neoclassical style, commonly referred to today as the Gustavian style. Fogelberg's silver was often very plain and massive and usually sparingly decorated with small classical medallions resembling ancient cameos or the work of contemporary artists like the Scot James Tassie and designers at the Wedgwood Factory in Etruria. This urn is on display in the Samuel European Galleries as a prime example of the Neoclassical style and an example of how style and craftsmanship was shared within Europe.

The urn also comes with an interesting story. Although the Robertsons owned an extensive collection of silver, they suffered a burglary only once. The cover of the urn was stolen but nothing else disappeared. Bill Humphreys assisted them and took the Fogelberg urn to London on a Canadian Export Permit. There a new cover was designed and created in the workshops of C. J. Vander, an established silversmithing firm and dealer in antique silver. The ROM

was given the design drawings for the cover. So far as I know, this is the only notable silver theft that has happened in Toronto.

You will probably remember my comments on the Robertsons as being rather eclectic in their collecting tastes. One of the most interesting rarities that they collected is this hot water urn inspired by English models. [Fig. 32] It is constructed of silver with sheet iron parts and was made in Norway, c.1770-1800. The maker's mark is P and illegible second initial (R, L, or P). Norway only became a separate country in 1905. Before that, it was under the control of Denmark or Sweden. Although it was less developed than both of those countries, it did produce a number of products in the 1700s based on British models. That included glass.



Fig. 32

Fig. 32 Hot Water Urn, silver with sheet iron parts. Norway, c. 1770-1800, illegible maker's mark. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.282.1-.3)

The closing decades of the 1700s saw a Neoclassical style that was further simplifying and streamlined. Some of this was due to the workshop operated by Hester Bateman and her family. The Batemans were among the first to acquire a flattening machine that could produce sheets of Sterling silver of uniform thickness that could be used to create pieces of simple design. They enjoyed good sales and attracted clients in the American Colonies where Federal silver forms were influenced by their products. Oddly enough, the Robertsons never acquired anything struck with a Bateman mark. [Fig. 33] This elegant soup tureen follows an elongated boat form which often appeared in



Fig. 33

Fig 33 Soup Tureen, silver. English, London, 1785, mark of John Wakelin and William Taylor. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.114.1-.2)



Fig. 34

Fig. 34 Wine Funnel and Coaster, silver. English, London, 1813, mark of Thomas Wallis II and Jonathan Hayne. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.150.1-.2)

British silver, ceramics and glass made in the period. It bears London hallmarks for 1785 and the mark of John Wakelin and William Taylor. This soup tureen was selected as the introductory artifact for the Neoclassical section of the Samuel European Galleries which opened October 23, 1994. The Robertson Silver Collection contributed greatly to the range of artifacts demonstrating style in those galleries.

It is often a good idea to remind our selves that the designs of antique silver were frequently elegant as well as practical. Although it was hallmarked in London in 1813, this wine funnel and coaster follow a design from the late 1700s. [Fig. 34] The makers are Thomas Wallis II and Jonathan Hayne. It was useful in an age when wine, whether purchased in barrels or bottles, often contained sediment. You could pour the wine through the funnel with its strainer into a decanter and clarify it. The sediment could then be discarded. Usually, there was a convenient chamber pot stored somewhere around the large sideboard. The strainer section could be removed from the funnel for cleaning. Wine funnels seldom survive with their original coasters. This makes the funnel a more significant example.



I could not resist illustrating this silver breadbasket. [Fig 35] It bears London hallmarks for 1784 and was made by William Plummer, a silversmith who specialized in baskets and centrepieces or epergnes with pierced decoration. Again, it is an elegant, neo-

Fig. 35 Bread Basket, silver. English, London, 1784, mark of William Plummer. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.119)



Fig. 36

Fig. 36 Coffee Pot on Stand with Alcohol Lamp, silver. English, London, 1822, mark of Paul Storr. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.167.1-.4)

classical, oval shape. By the 1770s, it was possible to pierce silver using a press and steel dies. That greatly reduced the cost of creating pierced pieces, though the designs were often simpler than those of the early 1700s. This basket has a commemorative inscription engraved on the bottom. In the late 18th century and early 19th century, family members and close friends were often bequeathed rings to commemorate the death of a loved one. In this case, the recipient chose to spend his ring money on a breadbasket which he would be able to see every day at tea and recorded it with an engraved inscription.

The Regency Style which evolved in London after 1800 is a much heavier version of the Neoclassical. While the Neoclassical often reflects the elegance and simplicity of ancient Greece, the Regency Style is heavier and more ornate like that of the Roman Empire at its height. By this date, coffee was often brewed at the table with the ground beans in a mesh basket at the top of the pot and boiling water being poured in from the top. This coffee pot on stand is equipped with an alcohol lamp to keep the brew hot. [Fig 36] It bears London hallmarks for 1822 and the mark of Paul Storr (1771-1844) one of the most celebrated and prolific silversmiths of the early 1800s in London. Storr apprenticed in the workshop of Andrew Fogelberg. Storr's production was greatly multiplied by the 300 workers at the firm of Bridge and Rundell who supplied silver to the Prince Regent and other members of the aristocracy. The Robertsons donated 7 pieces marked by Paul Storr. Theirs are



Fig. 37 Table Centrepiece, silver with cut lead crystal bowl of contemporary style. English, London, 1818, mark Benjamin Smith II. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.152.1-2)

Fig. 38 Pair of Entrée or Vegetable Dishes, silver. English, London, 1836, mark of Paul Storr. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.168.1-2.1-2)

more representative of his everyday production which is just fine as these models were what inspired a wide range of other makers.

Mrs. Robertson had always wanted a silver table centrepiece. [Fig. 37] When an attractive one appeared at Simpson’s Treasure House in downtown Toronto, the Robertsons bought it. The cut glass dish is of contemporary style. This example bears London hallmarks for 1818 and the mark of Benjamin Smith II. Smith made a number of similar centrepieces. We see it here with plastic fruit as arranged by members of the Department of Museum Volunteers for a special exhibition in the European Department. “The Centre of Attention” was organized by Brian Musselwhite and proved to be very popular and informative in demonstrating how silver centrepieces were used.

On a more practical, everyday level, we have this pair of entrée or vegetable dishes, hall-marked London, 1836, bearing the mark of Paul Storr. [Fig. 38] Vegetable dishes like this were produced in quantity in the Bridge and Rundell operations. They remained a standard model which was appreciated by Canadians until the 1960s and reproduced by Birks in electroplate.



Fig. 39

Fig 39 Christening Cup, silver. English, Channel Islands, Guernsey, mark of John Barbedor, working 1677-1704. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.256)

The non-British silver in the Robertson donation includes seven pieces of silver bearing the marks of silversmiths in the Channel Islands. Three of them are caudle or christening cups, a form from the late 1600s that remained popular in the Channel Islands. The earliest is a rare one made in Guernsey bearing the mark of Robert Barbedor who worked between 1677 and 1704. [Fig. 39] The other Channel Islands pieces are spoons from the early 1800s including a diminutive teaspoon that the silver scholar John Langdon presented to Marian Robertson. With the addition of the Robertson pieces, the ROM may well have the best selection of Channel Islands silver outside of the British Isles.



Fig. 40

Fig. 40 Nautilus Shell Cup. Shell engraved in the studio of Cornelius Bellekin, Amsterdam, circa 1680-1695. Silver gilt foot with Vienna Hallmarks for 1699. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 988.254.1.1)

The most spectacular non-British piece donated by the Robertsons is this Nautilus Shell Cup. [Fig. 40] Obviously, it is a display piece for a buffet or an art object. Such rare luxury objects rarely survive outside of 17th-century still life paintings. This one is on display in the Baroque section of the Samuel European Galleries. The Nautilus Shell came from the Indian ocean or the Pacific. It was engraved with copies of 17th century fine art prints in the workshop of Cornelius Bellekin in Amsterdam. The engraved designs were rubbed with dark pigment to make them visible. It then seems to have been taken as a deluxe souvenir to Vienna where it was mounted on a silver-gilt foot with Vienna hallmarks for 1699. One needs to think of the foot as somewhat like a picture frame: a mount to help display the art. Norman and Marian Robertson purchased it from a Waddington's auction in Toronto.



Fig. 41

Fig. 41 Teapot. Chinese porcelain, reign of Emperor Kangxi, circa 1700. Silver mounts added in France around 1700. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.261.1-.2)

In the Baroque period, precious and rare imported artifacts were often mounted in silver to protect and display them to advantage. This Chinese porcelain blue and white teapot was made late in the reign of Emperor Kangxi. [Fig. 41] The original French silver mounts were likely added around 1700, close to the date when the teapot was made and imported. Note the engraved leaves around the edge of the cover and the chain attached to the finial. Both are typical features of Baroque silver mounts on teapots.

The mounts have French marks from the late 1700s indicating that the silver was repaired sometime around 1780. I think that one of the reasons Mrs. Robertson may have decided to donate her silver to the ROM is that I had requested this teapot as a loan for a travelling exhibition of mounted oriental ceramics that Sir Francis Watson was organizing in the 1980s.



Fig. 42

Fig. 42 Pair of Casters, silver. Lettered R and B, probably for red and black pepper. India, Madras, mark of George Gordon & Company used 1831-35 or 1846-48. (© ROM, Robertson Collection 993.53.292.1-2.1-.2)

My presentation of March, 2023, discussed the full range of the Chinese Export Silver that the Robertsons collected and donated to the ROM. Fortunately, they also had a taste for Indian Colonial Silver which was largely a product of the 19th century. Many of the workshops that made silver in India were set up by entrepreneurs, especially Scotsmen, who were only too happy to employ the locals and sell to the Colonial Establishment as well as by the late 1800s, export to England and Scotland. Small, urn-shaped casters like this were a Scottish form. [Fig. 42] They most often survive as examples made by workshops in India. This pair of casters was made by George Gordon & Company of Madras sometime between 1831 and 1848. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain a picture of the spectacular pair of large silver entrée dishes

made in India during the 1840s that the Robertsons acquired from a major antique show in London and donated following Norman's death in 1988.

The Robertson Silver Collection significantly enhanced the overall silver holdings of the European Department at the Royal Ontario Museum. The Robertson donation created fine representative groupings of Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassical and later silver. Seventy percent of the silver collection in the European Department has been acquired since 1981. It has grown to be the most significant collection of British silver in Canada and a leading one in North America. We should all be thankful for the taste and foresight demonstrated by many collectors in Ontario who have donated to the ROM. Their generosity has created a museum collection that provides rich displays in the galleries and is of World Class.

Dr. Peter Kaellgren served as curator in the European Department at the Royal Ontario Museum from 1972 until the end of 2009. During his career, he worked on ceramics, furniture, design graphics, metalwork, and increasingly focussed on silver from 1984 onwards.

Dr. Kaellgren received a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 1987 with a doctoral dissertation on the evolution of the console table in England from the seventeenth century to 1800. He has lectured widely and taught courses of the history of European ceramics and glass at the University of Toronto. His articles have appeared in scholarly and popular publications. He is a member of the Silver Society (England) and a founding member of the Silver Society of Canada. Upon his retirement in 2009, he was granted Curator Emeritus by the Royal Ontario Museum. Since 2013, he and his partner, the photographer John Alexander, have become increasingly involved in searching for native orchids in Canada and in documenting them.