

The English Glass Chandelier

BY MARTIN C. F. MORTIMER

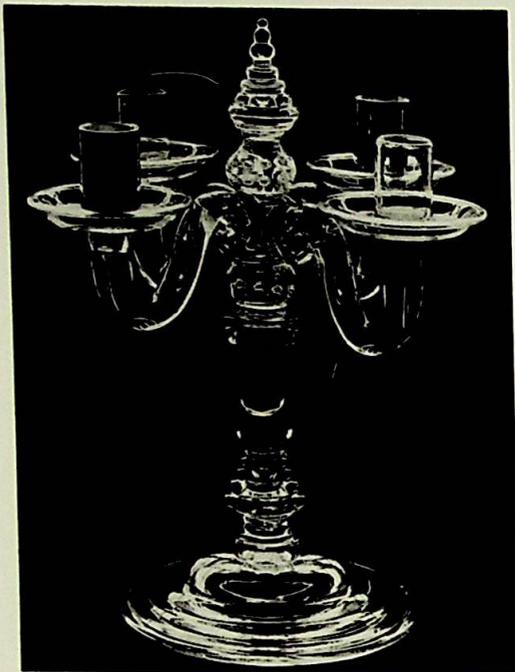
A review of English glass chandeliers might well start at Hampton Court. There are two reasons for this. Amongst the meagre survivals of the grand furnishings which it received when Dutch William commissioned Wren to extend it so magnificently are three chandeliers. All have frames of silver-plated brass embellished, not to say encrusted, with drops of rock crystal. The celebrated fitting in the Queen's Bed-chamber with its frame of pairs of cast lions and unicorns was firmly attributed many years ago to Benjamin Goodison, and made in 1736. That which hangs in the Queen's Audience Chamber is in relatively good state and resembles continental parallels in its use of continuous strings of spherical crystals which follow the curves of the arms and frame. The chandelier in the King's Audience Chamber continues to pose problems. The much-travelled Celia Fiennes noted a 'crystal branch', possibly in this room, in about 1697, but the present fitting does not give any sort of appearance of being of this date. It is heavily encrusted with diagonally intersecting rows of beads, many of which are cut. At the intersections are rosettes of radially-arranged pear-shaped crystals. The frame includes arms for 12 candles but of aimless profile, entirely lacking the vigour of Restoration design. Although these chandeliers represent an exceedingly small and rare group, it remains that very little is known about them. Present feeling is that they owe more to the Continent, perhaps more specifically even to Scandinavia, than to this country, or may have been assembled here from imported crystals. The chandelier from the King's Audience Chamber which was severely damaged in the recent fire, has perhaps been totally re-built, possibly twice.

The second reason for choosing Hampton Court as a point of departure in the story of chandeliers is that it is the home of a considerable series of bevelled looking-glasses. Many of these were fitted in the wainscot over chimney pieces and, together with surviving window panes, had bevelled borders and date from the fitting up of Wren's extensions in the early 1690s. Subsequent furnishings provided a series of elaborate pier glasses, some with bevelled borders of complicated section. The contemporary term for work of this sort was 'diamonding' or 'diamond cutting'. It was from the grinding of the borders of cast glass plates that the craft of cutting evolved, and chandeliers were amongst the earliest glass artefacts to receive cutting.

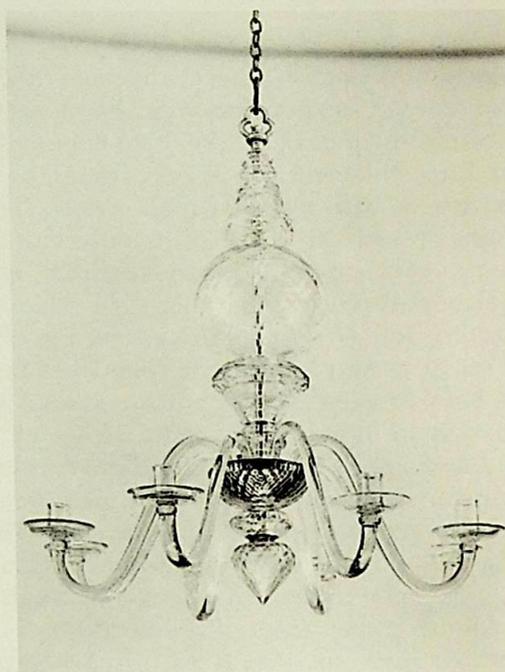
While acknowledging the early date of the crystal chandeliers at Hampton Court, they do not in any way appear to be stylistic parents of what the English glass chandelier epitomises. The real start comes with the use of load-bearing glass arms. These appeared first, there seems no doubt, on the aprons of pier glasses. James Moore, a prominent cabinet-maker who, from 1714 was in partnership with John Gumley, plate glass maker, supplied a pair of well-known gilt gesso wall mirrors with glass arms to Erthig at a time which varies with authorities between 1720 and 1724-6. There are also two pairs of these glass arms or sconces fitted with brass wall mounts and attached to wainscot at Boughton, Northamptonshire.

The most frequently illustrated example of the early use of glass arms is the candelabrum or table chandelier in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 1). Each arm was made in a single piece: the separate components of candle tube, drip pan

and supporting arm being welded into a unit. In this instance, the four arms are joined to a finely formed central turning with teared knobs above and below. The whole sockets into a heavily made candlestick or base, and the teared knobs combine with the annular moulding and terraced foot to date the piece to around 1725.



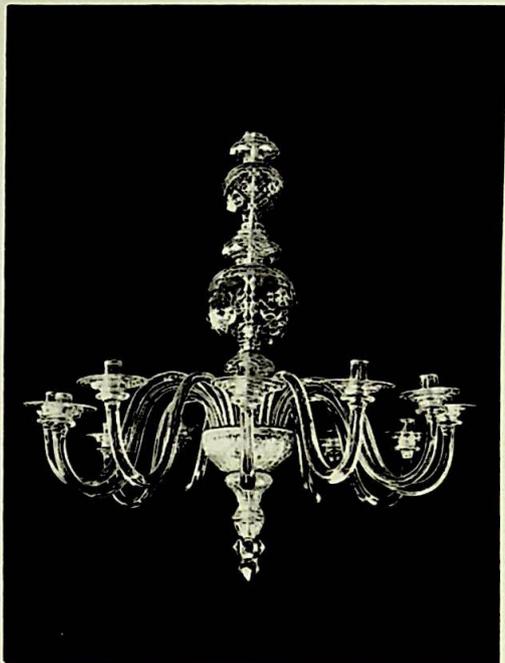
1. Four-light candelabrum. c. 1725.
Victoria and Albert Museum.



2. Eight-light chandelier. c. 1725.
Private Collection.

This piece, then, is the real point of departure for the English glass chandelier. It is extremely rare: there is another at Corning, and a fragment was seen last year in a London saleroom, but at present no others are known. But then, hanging chandeliers of this type are rare too. Fig. 2 illustrates a complete example, the arms of which are scarcely graceful. It will be seen that all the stem pieces are cut. For long enough it has been considered that lack of cutting on the arms of early glass chandeliers, all other parts of which were cut, suggests that their makers feared that the delicate arms would not survive cutting. However, as has been said, cutting developed from bevelling of mirror plates and, although patents were taken out for various machines in the late 17th century to assist the laborious process, plates and their simpler borders were still ground and decorated horizontally, any machinery or grinding equipment being applied to them rather than they being offered to the wheels. This is not to say that wheel cutting was not used on mirror plates at this time. Very soon after the turn of the century many examples of elaborate pier glasses are seen, with cyphers of twined initials in their crests, to say nothing of the shaped link pieces which were used, often in sapphire blue to cover the joints between sections of border. Nevertheless, a study of early cutting on articles other than mirrors shows that a great deal of it was in flat planes, and an arm with an integral drip pan would have been an awkward component to cut. Was most early cutting in the hands of those whose principal work was the grinding or diamonding of plate glass? It is, perhaps, no accident that the first recorded appearance of the word

'chandelier' is in an advertisement of John Gumley in the London Gazette of 1714, 'Looking glasses, coach glasses and schandeliers'. This maker had an extensive and profitable business supplying looking glasses of various types. Signed examples occur at Hampton Court and Chatsworth. Payment was made in 1720 to Gumley and Moore, already mentioned, on behalf of Lord Burlington for brackets and sconces supplied to Chiswick. Ralph Edwards has suggested the brackets might have been



3. Twelve-light chandelier. 1730-35.

The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

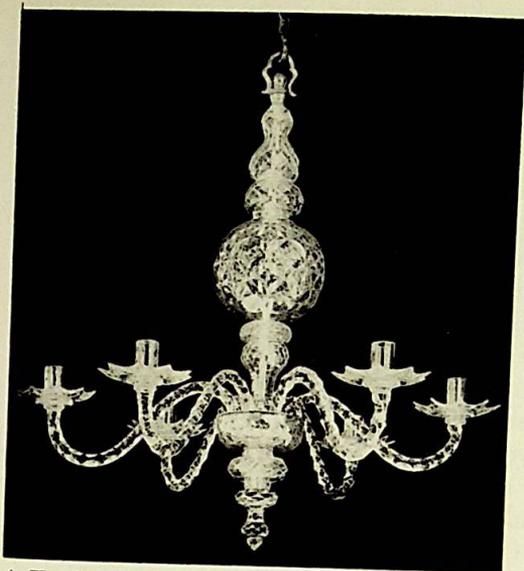
chandeliers. Certainly, the nomenclature for chandeliers had scarcely settled down at that time. The terms 'branch' and 'lustre' are freely exchanged. A contemporary dictionary lists 'Sconce' as a branched candlestick. Most contemporary descriptions reserve this term for a pier glass when fitted with candle arms. 'Four glass chanderleres', together with 'two pairs of glass sconces' which might have been looking glasses with arms not necessarily of glass, appear in a 1725 inventory of the contents of Cannons, the palace of the Duke of Chandos. Lady Burlington writes to the architect Earl, 'I hope you will remember about my branch, to have it hung up, and the poize to be covered with green silk, of the same colour as the room and like-wise cord, and the weight to be in the form of a tassell'. Whether she was furnishing Chiswick or Burlington House at the time is not stated.

In the case of the chandelier in Fig. 2 large areas of the cutting are in flat planes; these pieces could well have been ground and polished on the bench. there are, however, some stem pieces which could only have been cut on the wheel. The one-piece arm was soon found to be impractical. Spilled grease could not be removed without taking down a whole arm. Fig 3 shows an improvement with detachable drip pans. This much photographed chandelier, formerly at Thornham Hall, Suffolk, now hangs in the Charleston Dining Room at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. The stem shows a combination of annular moulding and flat cutting, the drip pans are ringed to match. So far, this early family of chandeliers has had to rely on dating by style. However, the well-known chandelier which hangs

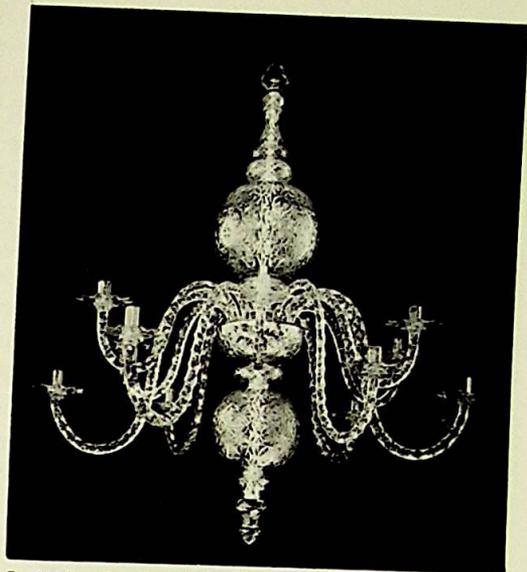
in the Chapel of Emanuel College, Cambridge, was given to the College in 1732. It is the only one of the group whose arms are arranged in two tiers from two receivers, but here again are the plain arms with slip-over drip pans and the same combination of flat cutting and annular moulding. While the date of the gift is not necessarily the date of manufacture, this is the closest we can come to a documented example of these first English chandeliers. Before leaving the family, there is food for thought in the consideration of a pair of small fittings at Grimsthorpe Castle. They hang in galleries which flank the Vanburgh Hall. The Hall was designed in 1722 and completed in 1726. The chandeliers have un-cut glass arms and slip-over annular pans. The shafts comprise large glass balls cut with broad diamonds in low relief, and elaborate finials and receivers in gilt gesso. The glass details accord exactly with those of the other chandeliers so far described. The gilt finials match those of five other chandeliers hanging in the main body of the hall, which are certainly of gilt gesso, thus suggesting a common maker. Here, then, is an example to reinforce the suggestion that these first chandeliers were the product of the looking-glass workshops such as that of Messrs. Gumley and Moore.

In 1732 the great Assembly Rooms at York were opened. The architect was Lord Burlington, and he presented the organisers with 'a magnificent centre lustre'. Over the next few years a whole suite of chandeliers was provided for the Rooms. They were in various sets and sizes, with arms generally arranged in two tiers, emerging from separate receivers. The stempieces were not cut but of 'crinkled' glass (the term used in surviving records), that is to say, reticulated or diamond-moulded. In keeping with the lack of sophistication, the arms were of twisted rope pattern. There are two chandeliers in the Treasurer's House, York, much decayed, which answer the description of the Assembly Rooms chandeliers in their surviving parts, and may well be part of the series. Lord Burlington's contribution is described in 1785 as 'most curiously carved', and it may therefore have been facet-cut, a standard of quality to which the authorities may not have felt able to rise. Part of another series of chandeliers of this date and style hang at Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire. The tradition persists that they were originally supplied for use in the Lincoln Assembly Rooms (1).

By the middle of the century, cutting had spread to arms. Fig. 4 illustrates a splendid chandelier which now hangs in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, and was placed there during the bi-centenary celebrations for the Declaration of Independence, when the Hall was fully restored. The arms are cut along their length to a six-sided section and the side angles notched. The low relief diamonds on the stempieces have top cross cuts, a surface treatment which was almost universal for some 20 years. However, the cutting is, in this case, curiously coarse. The position of the smaller ball below the spring of the arms may show that the maker had the well-known brass chandelier form in mind, but the use of a ball as the main feature in the stems of early glass chandeliers seems to be the only link with traditional brass chandeliers, a considerable percentage of which were in fact designed by this date without a spherical feature at all. In the classic brass chandelier of the time which probably came over from the Continent, the ball is below the arms. It is rare indeed to find an early glass chandelier with the ball in this position, although, in the absence of contemporary illustration at this date, who can say what order the maker chose. The stems are merely nesting sections of shaped glass threaded on to a metal rod, and could be assembled in any order. Indeed, one notes that, in September 1750, the garrulous but gifted Mrs Delaney writes that she has 'pulled her old lustre to pieces, and is going to make one just like the Duchess of Portland's'. Generally



4. Twelve-light chandelier. 1750–55.
Independence Hall, Philadelphia.



5. A simple chandelier of about 1760.
Private Collection.



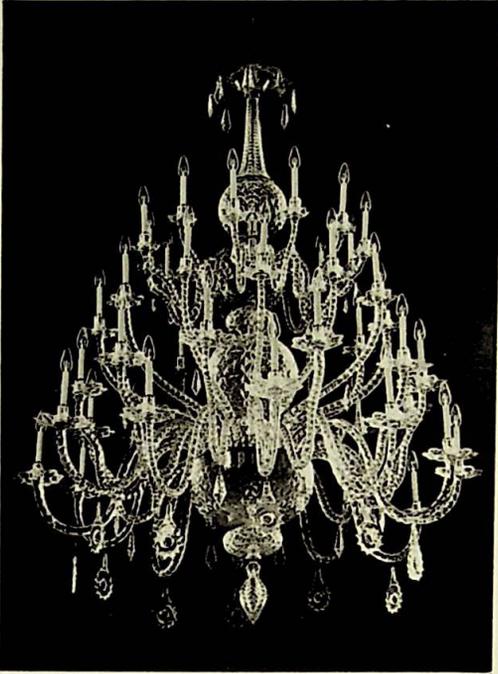
6. Trade card of Maydwell and Windle,
Glass 'Manufacturers'. 1760–65.
Private Collection.

speaking, if the chandelier has arms which sweep very low, as this one does, it is probable that they were designed to encompass the ball. The slip-over pans have a little shallow cutting within cut borders. This pattern of pan was current for some 25 or 30 years, and the zig-zag borders relate to the type of early cut sweetmeat glass with 'cornered brims', a phrase which occurs in contemporary accounts as early as the 1720s. Fig 5 shows a cut example of about 1755. Those who are familiar with the regularly illustrated Trade Cards of the better-known makers may remember something very similar on Maydwell and Windle's card, Fig. 6, although a con-

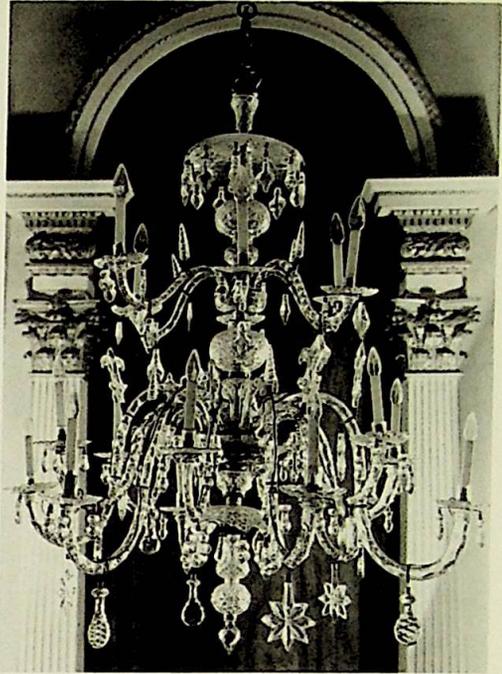
of the other things on the card, including another chandelier with pendent and standing ornaments, shows that the card must date from the late 1750s or early 1760s. The borders of the pans are now swept into points by the 'scallop'. Details such as this will be difficult to see in small illustrations. Invisible, alas, is the quality of the construction. The arms will be set in lipped square cast brass mounts, each individually fitted to a socket in the arm-plate and numbered accordingly. The arm-plate itself would be a massive casting topped by a neatly-turned faceplate. Suspension shackles were often elaborate and finely bevelled.

The Trade Card of Messrs. Maydwell and Windle illustrates that a simple outline need not indicate an early date. Thus, elaboration was available where show was desired and money no object. It is in the more elaborate chandeliers of the 1760s that they can be said to reflect the Rococo. A magnificent and rich pair of chandeliers hang in the tribunes at the ends of the Long Gallery at Holkham, Fig. 7. They appear on an undated bill of Maydwell and cost £200 the pair. The Gallery at Holkham was glazed in 1753, but their style suggests a date for these chandeliers of 1760–65. Jerome Johnson was advertising 'brilliant drops to hang on the lustres' by 1756. The inventory of Thomas Betts (2), who died in 1765, lists 'fleurs-de-lys'. It appears from the crazy angle of their parts that these chandeliers are in unrestored state. The general enrichment which chandeliers received during the 1760s included these elaborate and varied ornaments, both standing and pendent, as well as the addition of canopies, or 'shades', above and below as additional suspension points. The pendent ornaments added movement, and the combination of flickering candles and gently swinging faceted glass must have been captivating. Several examples of rich Rococo chandeliers survive. Probably the most accessible is the Thomastown chandelier at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The squat proportions of its shaft suggest that it may have been considerably shortened. The order, too, is suspect; nevertheless, it shows the degree of richness and elaboration reached at this time with double-curved upper arms and a full house of hanging ornaments, standing spires and, again, fleurs-de-lys. It would be more correct for the spires to be notched on the angles at this date. They may have been replaced. The chandelier was originally in the Church at Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, whence it was sold in Dublin in the 1914–18 war. It was bought by a Major Mulville, who gave it to the Museum in 1931. Its emergence some 20 miles from Waterford made its attribution to this over-worked factory inescapable, but it is quite clearly of English make. It is hanging in the Primary Galleries in the corner of a passage at an enormous height and is thus virtually invisible. Various accidents to the Museum's chandeliers have dictated this prudence. Its eventual installation in the Norfolk House Museum Room, a mutually enhancing combination, is the long-held hope of the writer.

The well-known series of chandeliers in the Assembly Rooms at Bath are fully recorded (3). The story is complex: two makers were approached, William Parker and Jonathan Collet. Parker provided a set of three chandeliers for the Tea Room and Collet one large and four smaller for the Ball Room, hung in line with the larger fitting in the centre. The Rooms were opened in October 1771 and Parker was paid £330 for his chandeliers in the summer of that year. Collet charged £382 for his five fittings, but they started shedding arms on the company at once and they had to be dismantled. The same day, Parker was commissioned to 'provide five lustres for the Ball Room, the whole to contain two hundred candles, the fashion and ornaments to be left to Mr Parker, who is to deliver and put them up in ten weeks at the farthest for the sum of £500'. Parker fulfilled his contract and was paid in January 1772. Collet eventually took back his set of four chandeliers and re-built the larger one,



7. One of a pair of chandeliers hanging in the Long Gallery, Holkham Hall, c. 1765.



8. Forty-eight light chandelier by Jonathan Collet hanging in the Octagon of the Assembly Rooms, Bath, 1771.

presumably making new arms for it, correctly annealed. This fitting was retained by the Furnishing Committee for the Octagon, or large Card Room, where it still hangs (Fig. 8). It is enormous and carries 48 lights in four tiers from two receivers.

Thomas Collet was successor to the well-known Thomas Betts previously mentioned. Amongst the considerable correspondence which resulted from the fracas at Bath, Collet states that the size of the four discarded Ball Room chandeliers weighed against their sale. However, the Assembly Room in the Market House at Taunton was opened in October 1772, just a year after the Bath opening. It contained 'two elegant and large glass chandeliers', which were the gift of Colonel Richard Coxe when M.P. for the county, which he represented between 1768 and 1784. Some time in the 1930s two chandeliers of the date and style of Collet's Bath fitting appeared in London, the smashed arms of which were delivered to their new owners in a sack. There was a tale attached that they had come from the Taunton Assembly Rooms. They certainly shared many details with the Bath Octagon chandelier: the amazing double-curved arms in two profiles, the hollow-blown finial cut all over in hollow diamonds, and the unusual canopy, dished rather than of the far more usual double ogee form. Other details, such as pans and surface treatment, are common to many other chandeliers and makers, but it seems clear that these idiosyncrasies, together with a surpassing ugliness, link these fittings to one maker and probably indicate where Collet found a home for two of his four rejected chandeliers.

Collet was an old-fashioned maker, Parker fashionable. Little is known of William Parker before he appears at Bath. However, Jerome Johnson had a large and prosperous cut-glass business between 1739 and 1761. In the former year he advertised lustres and 'to be sold cheap, the most magnificent lustre that ever was made in England', and by the latter date he was advertising 'Chrystal lustres only, Jerome Johnson has now made upwards of 20 and shall sell lustres cheaper and bet-

ter than any other maker of lustres in London, at the Star in Bow Street, Covent Garden'. In 1752 he had announced 'diamond cut and scalloped lustres', perhaps indicating deeper cutting than hitherto. It is clear he is no longer using the term in the way used to describe the bevelling of plate glass, and the phrase underlines the continuing separation of the two crafts of cutting and scalloping, one that of working surfaces, the other borders. E. M. Elville has made the suggestion that William Parker took over Jerome Johnson's business and connections (4). Parker dissolved partnership with Edward Whatton, potter and glass-seller, in 1762, and set up at 69 Fleet Street. Nothing seems to be heard of Jerome Johnson after this or, indeed,



9. One of a set of three forty-light chandeliers made by William Parker for the Tea Room of the Assembly Rooms, Bath, in 1771. One of the receiver bowls is engraved with the name and address of the maker.

about Parker before, although there is plenty of scope for research here. In Parker's Tea Room chandeliers (Fig. 9) the ball stem survives, albeit with a return to the flat relief diamonds normal in the 1730s, but he has introduced vase-shaped stempieces which, although of secondary importance to the balls, are the first neoclassical details seen in chandeliers. Above all, the importance of these particular chandeliers lies in the fact that one of them is signed. One of the receiver bowls is neatly engraved PARKER FLEET STREET LONDON. For the five splendid chandeliers in the Ball Room Parker dispensed with ball stempieces and substituted larger urns. None of his chandeliers retains the surface treatment of large diamonds with cross-cuts, almost universal for the previous 20 years and still to be seen all over Collet's chandelier. Parker's work at Bath, then, shows a clear advance in development in his field and probably comprised that first bold stroke by which a brilliant man identifies, grasps and exploits a market. Certainly, Parker went from strength to strength, as we shall see. It is fortunate that these chandeliers, by far the most important 18th century survivals of their class in both number and size, are so closely documented by the existence of the signed bowl backed by contemporary correspondence.

Christopher Haedy, the London glass-seller and prolific advertiser in the *Bath Chronicle*, amongst other journals, announced in November 1775 new retail premises in Church Street, Bath, 'where he has opened a curious collection of Girandoles on

the most elegant plan, ornamented with festoons of entire paste, etc., etc.'. This term 'festoons of entire paste' is an intriguing one, since it is an odd way, even allowing for the vagueness of contemporary terminology, to describe festoons of graded drops. But there is a family of glass lighting fittings whose details include festoons of solid glass. There are in fact girandoles or candelabra which may be just such as Haedy advertised. Examples of chandeliers of this type hang at Uppark (Fig 10). They are original to the comprehensive refurnishing of the house by Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, who died in 1774. There are candelabra of conforming design there, too. This family of chandeliers is characterised by a central feature



10. One of two chandeliers at Uppark which date from about 1775. The National Trust.

comprising a slender flared section fluted and notched, over a hemispherical piece cut with large diamonds in very high relief. There are often small canopies of trumpet or pagoda shape, stars and crescents as finials, notched spires and, of course, one hopes for the solid festoons. The central feature seems to have developed from the rather fat, notched spires which form the centres of contemporary candelabra. Many candelabra or girandoles of the family survive and share details with the chandeliers. They are invariably hung only with pear-shaped drops, sometimes very thick, generally wired for suspension rather than drilled for pins, and always used singly, never linked in chains. This is the first appearance of pear-shaped pendent drops. Another example at Clandon, now inappropriately dressed with chains of drops, is described in an inventory of 1778 as 'a superb cut glass lustre with festoon ornaments and brass chain', again a phrase which suggests unit festoons. Another, owned by the Duke of Northumberland, and formerly at Northumberland House and Albury, now at Alnwick, is described, albeit as late as 1890-1910, as a 'chandelier with stem and arms of cut glass, festooned and ornamented with glass drops'. Others hang at Warwick Castle and Badminton. Was Haedy the maker of this series? Or is the following clue a link to Collet? The top stempiece of the great Octagon chandelier at Bath exactly resembles the upper part

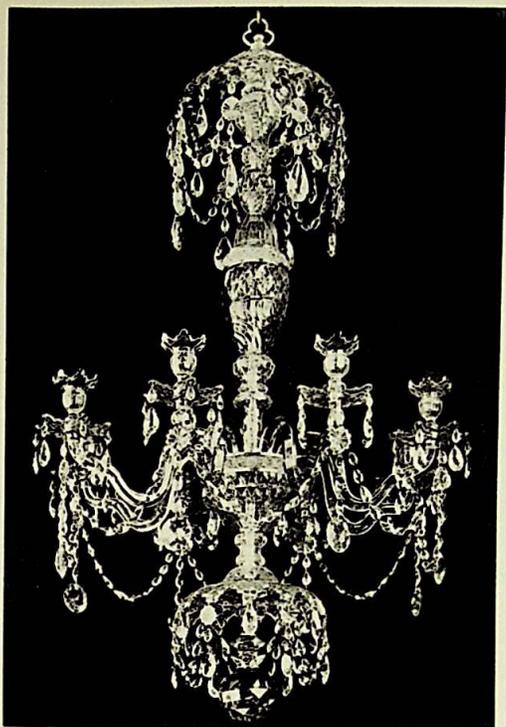
of the characteristic central feature of the Uppark-type chandeliers. However, since every other aspect of the Bath chandelier is old-fashioned and every part of an Uppark chandelier is distinctive, it is a slender lead indeed, although one which might well be explored one day. On the whole, at present, Haedy looks the best runner, with his 'festoons of entire paste'.

Before leaving the rococo period in chandeliers, it is worth stressing that the art of cutting reached one of few peaks at this time, a peak matched by the quality of the glass itself. The Uppark family of chandeliers, however bizarre their design, are of a glass whose lead tint combines with brilliance of finish to produce a richness never surpassed though sometimes equalled in later styles.

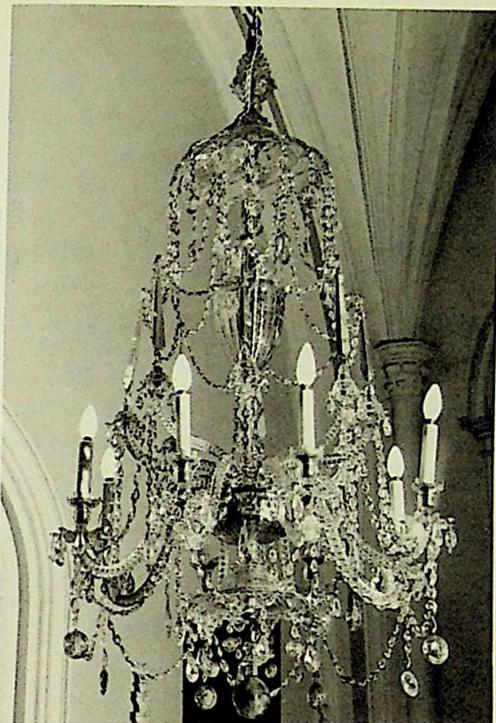
William Parker's efficiency lingered long in the minds of those in authority at Bath. When the Guildhall was rebuilt, after much controversy in 1775-8 by Thomas Baldwin, Parker was again commissioned for three chandeliers for the Banqueting Room: they still hang there. It is most interesting to see that Parker's thoughts, so innovative at the Assembly Rooms, have scarcely moved on at all in the six years that have passed. These chandeliers are richly dressed, but the chains of linked circular drops, together with the chunky drip-pans and candle sconces are 19th century additions. Beneath this froth are the same double-curved arms and simple vase stems whose combination was such a new departure at the Assembly Rooms. Parker has introduced extra canopies or shades which might indicate that these fittings may well have been more liberally enriched with ornamental pendants than those in the Assembly Rooms. Against this is the fact that they cost less per chandelier than their forebears.

By the early 1780s the neo-classical style had laid full hold on chandeliers, and we find Parker supplying a pair to the Duke of Devonshire for Chatsworth (1). Their layout is still not classic but comprises most of the elements required. There are the large central vase and cover, vase-shaped sconces with Vandyke borders, festoons of chains built up of graded and linked pear-shaped drops and, at the dividing points, oval fan-cut four-ways representing paterae. The bill shows that they were supplied in 1782 at a cost of £210. Although this is still only £100 or so a piece, they are less than half the size of the Guildhall chandeliers at Bath. In these chandeliers it can be seen that Parker, and probably other manufacturers, have discarded the tube arm, substituting a separate sconce joined to the end of the arm by a mount which itself incorporates a platform for a pan. Now a candle forgotten could cause no more harm than a broken sconce, where formerly a replacement arm would have been required.

By the end of the 1780s, the classic form had developed. A pair hangs in Arbury Hall, Nuneaton (Fig. 11) which was supplied by Parker in 1788. The candle-bearing arms, each with Vandyke pan and nozzle, alternate with an upper row, each with spire and canopy. Vandyke bordered canopies are set above and below, the whole is centred by a vase, and the top set off with a pineapple: a most pleasing design and one produced by various makers with little variant, despite changes in taste and minor experiments with alternatives, for some 20 years. Indeed, the period of popularity of this classic design is neatly spanned in this house, since records survive of an order placed by Sir Roger Newdigate for a further larger chandelier from the same maker in 1804. A letter exists from Parker and Perry (as the firm had now become), recommending the arms of the projected chandelier be plain fluted, since 'plain arms have succeeded those cut hollows and are more generally approved'. It is most satisfactory to note that all three of these chandeliers still hang in the house and have, so far, escaped restoration.



11. One of a pair of neo-classical chandeliers at Arbury Hall, Nuneaton, supplied by William Parker in 1788.



12. A good neo-classical chandelier with gilt 'furniture', c. 1795. It closely resembles a fitting at Clandon Park.

Alternatives to the classic form of the neo-classical chandelier included additional rows of candle-carrying arms to increase the amount of light given by larger examples. It was recorded that a grand chandelier was shipped to William Bedford in Lisbon in 1791, presumably by Parker, since the information survived in the records of Perry and Co. It was described as a '20 light lustre richly cut with gilt furniture, paste arms, scrolls, prisms and tabled drops'. The layout of 20 lights plus prisms (spires) indicates that it carried two rows of candle arms at two levels as well as a further row above for the spires. The gilt furniture mentioned will have included ormolu rings cast with running motifs, such as Vitruvian Scroll, and fitted to the upper rims of the receiver bowls and the widest part of the stem vases, enrichments reserved for the more expensive fittings, no doubt (Fig. 12).

The basic elements of chandeliers of this type were juggled extensively by their designers, the arms returning on occasion to a double-curved profile fashionable previously around 1775, and the top shades or canopies being dispensed with in favour of an arrangement of leafy fronds in gilt metal. At the same time, vertical chains were introduced, at first sparingly but later closely spaced. Soon these vertical chains were flared out to a widened row of arm sockets, forming a graceful, sketchy tent in which the still-classical glass stempieces were framed. A splendid example of this type of chandelier was presented to the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers for their Livery Hall in 1803. Although rather altered now, the original layout can be detected, and most of the original parts are still there. Highly individual creations on the theme were achieved by one Moses Lafount. There is a well-known Agreement of 1796 between this gentleman and two brothers named Cox, glassmakers at Christchurch in Surrey, to exploit Lafount's invention of a new

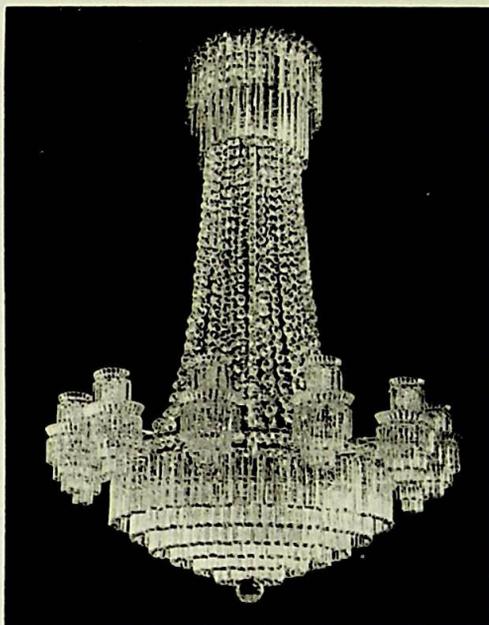
design for chandeliers, candelabra and wall lights. The essence of the design was that the arms should appear to pass vertically through the arm-plate in one continuous arc of glass. The resulting chandeliers were undeniably elegant and different. They were not infrequently stamped on the arm-plate LAFOUNT PATENT.

Between 1783 and 1786 we find William Parker supplying chandeliers to a total of nearly £2,500 to Carlton House on its completion by Henry Holland. At this period, these must have been neo-classical in style, and none seems to have survived. An idea of the size of Parker's involvement at Carlton House can be gauged by comparing the cost of the three Guildhall chandeliers at Bath, eight feet high and carrying 32 lights each, at £266 in 1778, with the sum of approximately £4,000 for work carried out and projected in the six years between 1783 and 1789.

Henry Holland died in 1806 and at that time, the Prince of Wales, who had ceaselessly tinkered with the Palace since its completion, embarked on a major re-furnishing once more. The first important commission for Parker and Perry, as the firm was now styled following amalgamation with William Perry in 1802-3, was for a 56-light chandelier for the Crimson Drawing Room at a cost of 1,000 guineas. It was made in 1808 and was 14 feet high and 6 feet 6 inches in diameter. It was accompanied by four smaller chandeliers en suite to hang in the angles of the room. Pyne, whose great work on the Royal Residences (5) gives us detailed pictures of many of the rooms, considered this great chandelier to be one of the finest in Europe. An elaborate series of lighting fittings followed, many of which can be seen in Pyne, although none, as has been said, of the chandeliers supplied in the 1780s appears. All these 19th century chandeliers were taken down on the eventual dismantling of Carlton House in 1826. Many were subsequently brought up to date by the makers and installed, in 1834, at Buckingham Palace, where they remain.

We have now come well into the period of what one usually calls 'Regency' frame chandeliers. As has been said, the essence of a frame chandelier is the elimination of a heavy brass plate drilled with sockets to take the arms. The arms now emerged from a circular frame of considerable diameter, either plain or enriched with a cast gallery according to taste or cost. To this descended the tent from a top, generally given emphasis with a series of dishes fringed with icicle drops. Below could be a basket formed of more graded chains, or a 'waterfall' frame of concentric rings decreasing in diameter, and again hung with icicle or other long drops. It will not have escaped notice that the price of chandeliers has escalated dramatically with the advent of the 19th century. This was not due to inflation, or only to a small degree. It was due to changes in design. By the 1780s, nearly all chandelier drops were lapidary-cut or 'tabled' to a degree of accuracy only equalled in jewellery. One is constantly seeing references to 'paste' drops. When, without any fall in quality, fashion began to clothe chandeliers in more and more chains of drops, the cost rose accordingly. Many circular pendent drops are cut with 48 facets on each side, each facet being ground and polished several times with increasingly fine grades of abrasive to a finish in which no polishing marks can be detected in reflected light. A cardinal feature of a Regency chandelier is often the tent. Tents developed from the first use of vertical chains noted earlier. They comprise a tapering form composed of 30 or more chains, each chain containing 30 or more drops of perhaps 6 or 7 sizes. The sizes increase as the tent falls and spreads, so that there are no voids (Fig. 13). Such a tent would require 900 drops, and the simplest circular chain drop would be cut with 16 facets on each side. Multiply 32 by 900 - and the point is made. That was why chandeliers became costly.

The amount of hand work which could be put into an elaborate Regency chandelier can be seen by close inspection of the famous 16-light example from Wroxton Abbey, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. All the metalwork is silver-plated and lacquered. The chandelier is topped by three graded diamond-cut dishes within frames, it has step-cut arms and diamond-cut nozzles. The main frame is fitted with a continuous step-cut cornice, and it and the three top frames are closely set with rows of square diamond-cut ornaments. The amount of machining in a chandelier of this type is unbelievable, since every mount is individually fitted and numbered.

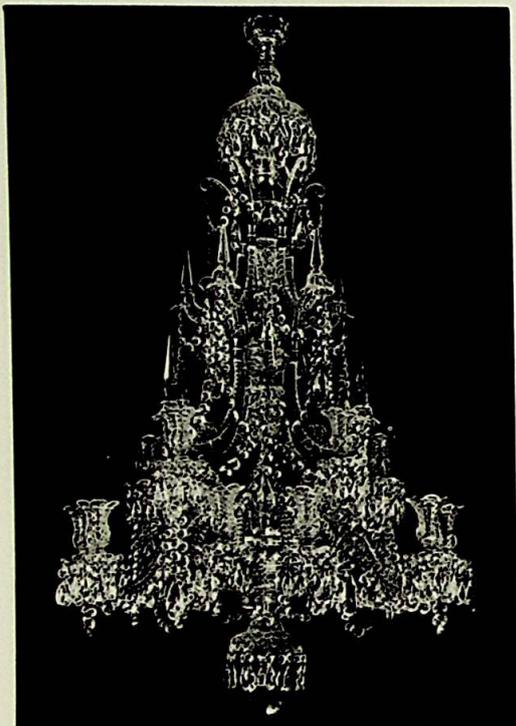


13. An elaborate chandelier by John Blades for which the drawing survives, dated 1828. Hotspur Ltd.

Among the most prolific makers of chandeliers and other things at this time was John Blades. He had showrooms on Ludgate Hill, convenient, as had been Parker's at 69 Fleet Street, for James Powell's Whitefriars Glassworks. The two firms were major clients of Whitefriars. A certain amount is known about the chandelier output of Blades although not perhaps as much as Parker's. There are, for instance, accounts for lustres supplied to the Grosvenor family at Eaton Hall between 1808 and 1810 totalling £2,600. The chandelier in Fig. 13 was made by Blades for a house in Scotland in 1828 and its working drawing has survived intact with it. Note that it is hung entirely with rule-cut drops. J. B. Papworth, the architect, was retained by Blades as designer, and is credited with the invention of these parallel-sided drops. The form of nozzle and pan, and the details of the coronet and arm castings are readily recognisable, and it is a comfort to be able to tie a whole group of lighting fittings to one maker by this means. Some of their fittings were extremely rich, and gold plating was quite usual, as opposed to the less costly gold lacquered finish. Elaborate chandeliers in the Greek taste, incorporating groups of handsome sconces hung with long rule-cut drops and set round shallow dishes of ground glass cut with polished anthemion borders, the whole structure hanging on chains whose long links incorporated glass insertions, survived at Ashburnham Place. They were dispersed at the sale of the contents of the house in the 1960s. There are constant references in Calcutta newspapers to the arrival of glass from Blades. Unless commissioned

direct, it was auctioned on arrival. Some of the chandeliers in the old Viceroy's House in Calcutta appear to be Blades types. It is said they were taken to Delhi (6), but if so, Lutyens side-stepped them in favour of his own designs.

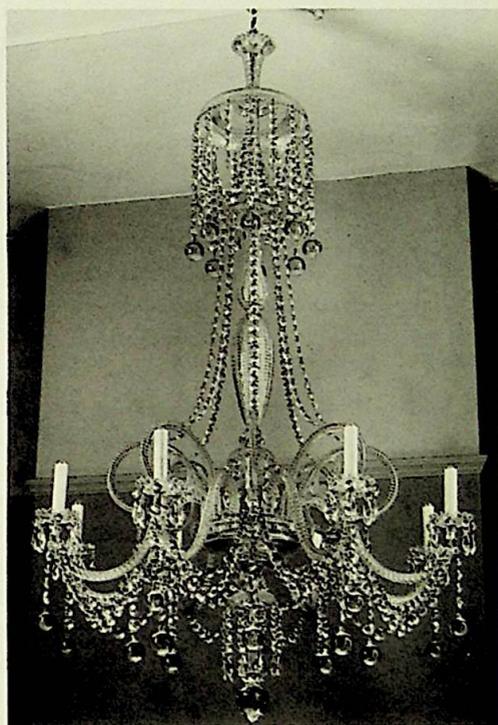
F. and C. Osler, the Birmingham makers, produced chandeliers of steadily increasing quality during the second half of the 19th century. By this time, many chandeliers were being made for gas, and complicated arrangements were made for the safe passage of the gas by way of the central shaft and out through hollow arms to fish-tail burners. Fig. 14 is a particularly good Osler chandelier with a series of Lafount-like arms bearing spires, and groups of arms for candles below. A splendid fitting, but probably by now hung with imported drops. By the 1870s, it was not uncommon to find the dressings all of soda glass, at least in Osler examples. Never, however, with Perry and Co, still busy making fine chandeliers for the top of the market and with a prestige address in Bond Street.



14. Eighteen-light chandelier of complicated design by F. and C. Osler, Birmingham. 1850-60. Delomosne and Son Ltd.

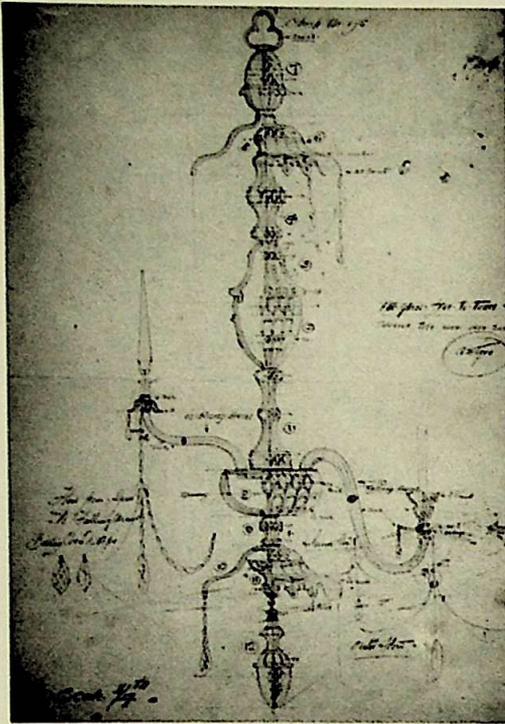
While Perry's sustained a varied output of lighting fittings, the name, in the second half of the 19th century at least, is synonymous with a particular series. Their principal components included long, slender stempieces centring on a very small urn-shaped or ovoid section, generous double-ogee canopies above, a similar-shaped dish inverted as a receiver bowl, and a distribution of two or three pans on the shafts to carry extra drops. The top normally terminated in a cup-shaped piece to contain the suspension shackle, and a long-shanked lapidary cut finial completed the layout below. All the pieces were finished with neat mitred fluting, continuous rows of oval printies or interlocking hexagons, all meticulously achieved to a very small scale. Arms were normally of twisted rope pattern, drip pans either fine fluted or moulded to a limited number of designs. There were seldom candle sconces, merely turned inch-diameter cups of silvered brass with a narrow ledge for the pan, or gas fittings. Above all, there were sumptuous dressings of graded circular double-

cut drops and finial pear-drops of the highest quality. No imported imitations for Perry and Co.! Hundreds of chandeliers were made to this broad specification. They are to be seen today in many country houses. Fig. 15 shows one of a pair of classic Perry chandeliers of about 1870 with large and prominent crooks or scrolls. A drawing survives, dated 1871, of a chandelier with similar features, in a book of such designs in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This book, filled with a series of working drawings of chandeliers of this kind, generally annotated with the names of those who had ordered each chandelier, and the dates of these orders, was given to a Mr John Wateridge by Mr Barlett, owner of Perry and Co. in the late 19th century. He appears to have bought the business from the previous owners, whose names were Willis and Miley. He had formerly been a chief draughtsman for the firm and on this, and the existence of his sketch book, we can perhaps attribute the design of the classic Perry chandelier of the 1860s and 70s to him.



15. One of a pair of chandeliers, originally for gas, by Perry & Co., hung with uncut pendent spheres. c. 1870. Delomosne & Son Ltd.

This brief review of English glass chandeliers has been dominated by William Parker and the successors to the firm he founded, Perry and Co. When, in 1938, J. B. Perret investigated the chandeliers at Bath, he followed the history of the firm to its eventual winding-up in 1935. The said John Wateridge had seen the results of Mr Perret's researches and had written to him of his intense interest. Through him, Mr Perret reached the elderly Mr Rigby Wason, penultimate owner of Perry's, who sold out to Burt, Escaré & Denell Ltd. All this effort was aimed at a sight of the design records of the firm. The first edition of Macquoid and Edwards' *DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE*, 1924, mentions 'the Perry papers' as a considerable series of drawings of important chandeliers with their buyers and dates, and actually illustrates two examples, albeit poorly drawn. Mr Perret himself had met Mr Burt in the early 1930s and had been shown some of the Perry records. But, alas, when the firm finally died with an auction sale of their effects in 1935,



16. Working drawing for a 'classic' neo-classical chandelier of about 1790–1800 by John Wateridge, designer for Perry & Co. between 1903 and 1925. Prints and Drawings Department, Victoria and Albert Museum.

the buyer of the series of plan chests full of papers appears to have scrapped the papers and used the plan chests. Lot 1128 in the catalogue makes painful reading: 'An ebonised plan chest of 16 drawers containing . . . portfolios of water colour drawings and sketches of State chandeliers etc. by Perry and Co'. However, surviving records of John Wateridge provide some tenuous contact with the archives of the company. He was designer for the firm between 1903 and 1925 and fortunately, presumably to train his eye, drew details of surviving stock parts into his sketch books. Here we can see accurate portrayals of many surviving parts, complete chandeliers and, on occasion, candelabra and other fittings of instantly recognisable patterns. Through Wateridge, therefore, we are able to attribute to the firm several things of late 18th and early 19th century date, to say nothing of the late 19th century chandeliers which were included in the Wateridge archive, since he was presented with Bartlett's own sketch book. All these things went to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1952. As an example of the sort of things which survived until John Wateridge's time in the archives of the firm, one working drawing is illustrated here (Fig. 16). It is chosen from many, partly because of its layout, half in elevation, half sectioned, and partly because it shows a classic neo-classical chandelier of about 1790–1800 in clear detail and perfect proportion; this is the point at which technique and design met in unsurpassed harmony. Although, as has been seen, the story went on, this, surely, was the peak.

There is much omitted here: the many known makers left without mention, the amazing creations at the Brighton Pavilion, the handsome fittings made for Goldsmith's Hall, and still hanging there, the place of Ireland (negligible but evocative), the use of colour; but there is no room for more.

Footnotes

1. I am grateful to Mr R. J. Charleston for information about chandeliers in the Assembly Rooms, York and at Doddington and Chatsworth.
2. 'Thomas Betts - An Eighteenth Century Glass Cutter', by Alexander Werner, *The Journal of the Glass Association*, Vol. 1, 1985.
3. 'The Eighteenth Century Chandeliers at Bath', by J. Bernard Perret, *Connoisseur*, October 1938.
4. 'The History of the Glass Chandelier', by E. M. Elville, *Country Life Annual*, 1949.
5. 'The History of the Royal Residences', by W. H. Pyne, 1819.
6. '*British Government in India*', by The Marquis Curzon of Kedleston, Cassell, 1925.