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WILLIAM CHEAPE OF THE CANONGATE, AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LINEN MANUFACTURER

VANESSA HABIB

LINEN DIAPER, DORNICK AND DAMASK were familiar fabrics in the early eighteenth century Scottish household, reflecting a family's level of comfort and social standing, and, after the Union, often expressive of national identity.¹ One of the most prominent manufacturers of figured table linen in Scotland at this time, and one of the first to advertise his linens in the press, was William Cheape – William Cheape 'of the Canongate', as he was known to contemporaries. Born the fifth son of a country landowner, James Cheape of Rossie, William was baptised at Collessie in Fife in November 1717.² He chose to set up not as a master weaver, though he was trained as one, but as a manufacturer in Edinburgh.³ During a long career he made a variety of linen fabrics including table linen, shirting, sheeting and coarse brown linens (see fig. 1). He took an active interest in the changing technology of linen weaving and was frequently consulted on matters connected with Scottish linen manufacture by the Board of Trustees for Manufactures in Scotland.

Tradition has it that Edinburgh was the centre of linen damask weaving in Scotland until the secret was stolen and taken to Dunfermline in the early eighteenth century.⁴ Indeed, a weaver named David Hastie of the Canongate was granted burgh status in February 1659, after the 'earnest supplication of the deaken and brethren of the weavers of this burgh, for his dexterity and skilfulness of the trade in Dameisis and Hollands work', conditional upon his residing within the town.⁵ He was one of three generations of Hasties who were weaver burgesses, the Incorporation of Weavers, Dyers and Cloth Dressers of the Canongate having been granted a royal charter in 1630. A demographic study of Edinburgh in the 1690s estimates that 110 weavers, including six silk weavers, resided in the inner and outer parishes, and nine of these lived in the Canongate.⁶ Moreover, at Drumsheugh, at that time outside the city but which became a centre of damask weaving, the merchant James Donaldson had more commissions from England for his table linen than he could cope with by 1736.⁷

Many writers are agreed on the range and quality of linen in the Scottish household, and the number and variety of patterns or 'knots' described in inventories of napery and household linens in the early eighteenth century certainly suggest a flourishing figured linen manufacture – starr knott, twentie loaffe knott, small Dutch knott, heart knott, my lady Montessoi's knott, koss knott, levinder knott, common knott, hundred rose knott, craig knott, Balgais knott, Rossie knott, tartan knott, were some of the names hand-loom weavers gave to their patterns.⁸ William Lindsey, merchant burgess of

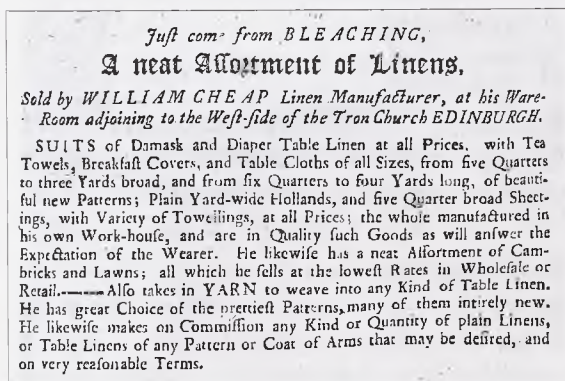


Fig. 1. An advertisement from the *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 October 1755, one of several in the Edinburgh press describing William Cheape's stock of linen. (*Edinburgh City Libraries*.)

Edinburgh, included amongst his table linen in 1719 'a fyne table Cloath and twelve servits of the Hart & Diamond knot' and 'twelve servits of the Strawberry knot and Table cloath'.⁹ In 1727 Dame Elizabeth Anderson at her lodging in Edinburgh owned napkins and table cloths of 'pictured damask' as well as dornick napery.¹⁰ Many of these would have been geometric diaper patterns, but some true damask was also woven in Scotland in imitation of the exquisite linen damask of continental Europe.¹¹ An undated eighteenth century weavers' pattern book in the National Library of Scotland shows a variety of designs that weavers could offer their customers, ranging from simple checks to elaborate figured diapers, one called 'Star and Diamond', another 'Nebuchadnezzers Dream'.¹²

Although William Cheape was trained as a figured linen weaver, he took the opportunity to work with the Dutch weaver Jacobus Librights at Bonnington Mills in Edinburgh in 1737-38.¹³ Librights was one of several Dutch master weavers retained by the Board of Trustees to instruct Scottish apprentices in the weaving of fine plain linen. After consultations with his uncle George Cheape, Collector of Customs in Prestonpans, and the noted improver Thomas Hope of Rankeillor, Cheape decided to set up in business in Edinburgh. He wrote to his uncle in December 1738:¹⁴

We agreed at last that the Place most adapted was Edinr or about it for settling in, for these Reasons that it was the best place either for Home consumpt or Customary Work and that journeymen could be got nowhere else. And as for the Trade to be carried on, that part Customary and part for Home consumpt and Export was the Surest and best trade ... I am in Terms with a Gentleman who offers to build me a house [workshop] according to my Directions at Bonnington beside Mr Stewart [the linen printer Gilbert Stewart] upon the waterside.

The 'Gentleman' referred to was the flax dresser James Spalding, who owned Bonnington Mills and

who later rented workshops to Cheape.¹⁵ Spalding also acted as an inspector and advisor to the Board of Trustees. In the early eighteenth century Bonnington already possessed bleach-fields, a print-field and highly skilled journeymen weavers. Cheape proposed to fund his business by subscription, as other pioneering linen merchants were beginning to do, and to find an agent in London to dispose of his cloth. A surviving account written by him in 1738 shows different kinds of linen and the amount of profit likely on each - estimated to be one third on fine table linen.¹⁶

In February 1741 Cheape petitioned the Board of Trustees for the services of a Dutch damask weaver named Henryk Bideke, who was presently working in Scotland for another Edinburgh weaver, Yaxly Davidson at Picardy. He put forward a strong case for Bideke to move to Bonnington, offering him a place to work with apprentices who would in time be able to spread the skills of diaper weaving throughout the country.¹⁷ Since Davidson did not specialise in figured work, the Board agreed to the move and, after examining a diaper web woven by Bideke, which was considered 'very exact neat work and thick and sufficient cloth', decided to employ him on the same terms as the other Dutch masters then in the country.¹⁸ Terms drawn up for the four apprentices included the award of a broad diaper loom, costing £7. 10. 0 sterling, fit for weaving all kinds of diaper, on completion of their training. Cheape also asked for, and was granted, compensation for loss of work whilst the apprentices were studying:¹⁹

The Apprentices being incapable to carry on any kind of work for themselves unless they are thorowly instructed in washing sorting and camming of Yarn they ought likewise to understand the different methods of working all kinds of figures, flowers and the severall kinds of Coats of Arms with the proper Mountings and Utensills fitt for weaving each of them: as also they ought to know how to mount Damask Looms which they cannot possibly

comprehend unless the mounting of a loom were properly cut down and remounted before them; I will likewise be a very considerable loser by their spoiling of work looms which all new beginners never fails to do and by the ill finishing of their first peices for all which Expense and trouble I may be allowed for each of them £... [The Board later decided the amount to be awarded to Cheape].

Initially Bideke's diaper found favour with the Trustees and he was credited with excellent workmanship, his table cloths being described as 'Thick and Substantial tho of fine yarn well Skin'd and free from Knotts. And the Figures and Borders very Just and Exact'.²⁰ But there was a reluctance amongst the journeyman weavers, who were accustomed to earning high wages, to spend time learning new and foreign methods for which there seemed no apparent advantage. Furthermore, they did not wish to change an established pattern of working for their noble patrons.

When Cheape began to advertise his linen in the local press in 1743 there was a storm of protest:²¹

We Subscribers, Weavers in Edinburgh and Suburbs ... require an Answer from Mr Cheape to the following Queries viz. 1st. Is there any Figure of Damask or Diaper, any Coat of Arms, etc that he can work which we cannot? 2dly, Does he propose to make better Cloth, to make his Figures of any kind more distinct that we can do? 3dly Does he propose to weave cheaper than we formerly did, or are willing to do at present? If he shall answer in the Affirmative to any of these, we are willing to stand Trial when ever asked - If in the Negative, as we have been in the long Practice of serving the Lieges, both in Weaving for our Employers, and Manufacturing for Sale, all sorts of Table-Linnen, in weaving Noblemen and gentlemens Coats of Arms and still contrive to do so, with all the Advantages of our own long Practice and Discoveries, or the Discoveries of others, and have at present considerable Quantities of Damasks to dispose of, which, we apprehend, are as good in Quality, and at as low Prices, as furnished by any others, we flatter ourselves, that our former Employers, or others, will upon Trial find themselves as well and reasonably served by us, as by any other.

The letter was signed by Archibald Howie, Deacon of the Weavers in Edinburgh, Patrick Lawson and William Thomson of Edinburgh, and David Aitken of Potterrow, Deacon of the Weavers of Portsburgh. Although they agreed that Bideke's loom was very neatly mounted, they claimed it did not make better cloth or work more speedily than those presently in use. His mounting was not so versatile and 'cannot be so easily changed from Eight to Seven or five leaves, as in the manner ordinarily used by us'.²² Cheape, meanwhile, perhaps in pursuit of greater economy and speed, had been looking at the improvements made in diaper weaving by a local weaver named Peter Brotherstone from Pencaitland in East Lothian. This prompted Bideke to claim that in fact he knew many more secrets, particularly in the 'Run and Dyced figures not known in Scotland', but was only prepared to reveal them if his future employment could be secured.²³ The Board of Trustees became embroiled in the affair because Bideke had left Cheape's workshop and they were unwilling to support apprentices for both men. The dispute was finally resolved by a test of skill held at Bonnington Mills at public expense in March 1745.

The trial was held over three days and witnessed by the respected manufacturer James Donaldson of Drumsheugh. The two weavers were Henryk Bideke and John Downie, an employee of William Cheape's. On the first day both men wrought for six hours, Bideke weaving 24 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches and Downie 45 inches. Bideke complained that his yarn was so moist that it broke frequently. Over the three days both men wrought for a total of 12 hours 10 minutes, Bideke weaving 79 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and John Downie 97 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. These small quantities are a reflection of the immense skill and arduous nature of weaving before the introduction of the flying shuttle and any mechanisation of the figuring harness on the loom. It is not known what kind of mounting was used in

Bideke's trial. Both webs were brought in for the Trustees to inspect, with a blue mark at the places where the weavers began each day and a red one where they gave over. Bideke had woven $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches less than Downie, even though he had claimed that his method was quicker, and he therefore had no choice but to ask to return home to Holland.²⁴

Later in the year William Cheape advertised new patterns in the *Caledonian Mercury*, including one described as 'flower de luce with crowns'. By 1750 he held a comprehensive stock, selling from the finest to the most common kinds of linen, suits of damask and diaper, breakfast covers, supper and side-board cloths. He took in customers' yarn to be woven to their order and kept a variety of the 'newest and most beautiful Patterns' at his wareroom near the Tron. He was also to be found at his Linen Factory at Roxburgh's Lodging, Canongate, or at his own house opposite the Canongate Church.²⁵ No piece of linen certainly made by Cheape has yet been identified, but figure 2 shows a damask napkin dated 1755 that gives an indication of the type of commissioned linen produced at the time by the Edinburgh damask weavers. Another contemporary piece with a pattern of thistles and crowns, Adam Gib's table cloth dated 1753, has survived in the collections at Huntly House Museum.²⁶

The establishment in 1755 of the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures and Agriculture in Scotland took account of the growing demand for new and elegant designs with the inclusion of annual premiums for, amongst other luxuries, carpets, damask table cloths and printed linens.²⁷ These premiums reflected the desire amongst the city's rising middle class for well designed furnishings and domestic comforts. New dining customs and the popularity of tea drinking led to the increased use of decorated linen in the home. In 1758 Cheape was awarded a prize of 5 guineas for

a damask pattern on design paper.²⁸ It is possible he may have employed Peter Laurent, who had approached the Board of Trustees in February 1755 with a project to supply designs for the damask weavers in different parts of the country.²⁹ It was agreed to commission five designs from him, subject to their approval by either William Cheape or Patrick Fairley. Laurent was paid 40 shillings for each design and Fairley was later paid £10 for preparing the new damask patterns for the loom.³⁰ From 1757 the Trustees themselves began to offer annual prizes for fine linens, stipulating that they should be both woven and bleached in Scotland. At this period it was an art to achieve a fine and consistent white without loss of thickness of the cloth and the bleaching process took several weeks to complete. Cheape himself was appointed a judge in the Trustees' competitions for the bleaching prizes.³¹ In 1758 he also gained premiums for both diaper and damask fabrics, though the prize winning damask, in two pieces each 88 inches wide and 6 yards long, was woven by Alexander Ramsay and Alexander Stewart and bleached by Hector Turnbull at the Luncarty bleach-field in Perthshire.³² In response to the continuing need for fashionable patterns, the Master of the Trustees Drawing Academy in Edinburgh. William Delacour, was commissioned to design six damask patterns for the use of manufacturers. However, his proposal for an experiment to make damask and diaper 'with the figure thrown up Blue, red or yellow' in 1763 did not find favour.³³

Apart from Cheape's work for the local market, he became involved in the 1740s in the growing trade in coarse linens in London, for export to America and the West Indies, assisted by an export bounty. Encouragement for this manufacture was also offered by the Board of Trustees in the form of premiums.³⁴ These fabrics were used on the plantations and the German 'Osnaburg' was much in demand for the



Fig. 2. Damask table napkin dated 1755 bearing the name Eleanor Hamilton, and the motto *Nemo me impune lacessit* surrounding a crowned thistle design. (National Museums of Scotland; Neg. No. 20934.)

clothing of negro slaves.³⁵ Samples of the foreign cloths were given to James Donaldson to copy and his first attempts were examined by the Board, who

thought them better wearing 'tho not so Eye sweet as the Foreign Cloaths'.³⁶ However, the potential size of this export market led to the Osnaburgs being

renamed 'Edinburgs', and to the larger weaving manufactories diverting looms and workmen from the production of finer linens to the coarser types.³⁷ In partnership with Richard Neilson and Robert Chalmers, Cheape set up a manufacture of coarse linens at Roxburgh's Lodging in the Canongate, an extensive property with gardens owned by the Duke of Roxburgh, later rebuilt as Lord Milton's House.³⁸ The preparation and spinning of yarn for these fabrics caused problems initially, partly because the weft was made from refuse flax and was very softly spun, and Cheape set about constructing a washing mill for yarn at Bonnington to assist the weavers. A water wheel twenty feet in diameter was built to drive the machinery.³⁹ Although Cheape seems to have withdrawn from this venture in 1750, when he gave up Roxburgh's Lodging, Neilson continued to work for the recently established British Linen Company as a manufacturer of coarse linens, employing 60 looms in the Canongate in 1757.⁴⁰ Neilson later helped to establish the coarse linen manufacture in Perth and Dundee and acted as an inspector for the Board of Trustees.⁴¹

Cheape, meanwhile, began a new and much more adventurous partnership in 1760, with the leading Edinburgh upholsterers Robert Young and Thomas Trotter, to make fine Turkey carpets and Scotch carpets.⁴² He employed a French master weaver named Germain Havard, originally brought to Scotland by Sir Harry Erskine to work at the Royal Velvet Carpet Manufactory at Pittenweem and said to have been one of the principal workmen at Thomas Moore's celebrated carpet factory in London.⁴³ He also obtained the services of a woman supervisor from Moore's factory, to oversee apprentices. Cheape established his manufactory in the old Tennis Court at the Watergate at the foot of the Canongate, initially with three looms for the Axminster or Turkey carpets and seven for the Scotch kind.⁴⁴ When visited by the

Trustees in 1765, he had apparently already sold £1600 worth of carpets. There was some discussion about the provision of new carpet designs by John Baptist Jackson, an artist who was employed in Edinburgh by the Board of Trustees at this time.⁴⁵ In 1769 Cheape advertised for six girls, aged from 10 to 14, to make the carpets.⁴⁶ He also engaged an English dyer to enhance the quality of the more utilitarian Scotch carpets and took out a lease on a dye house at Canonmills.⁴⁷ This venture was encouraged by the Board of Trustees who saw an opportunity to use coarse Scottish wool in these most desirable and expensive furnishings. None of the carpets produced by Young, Trotter and Cheape have so far been identified, if indeed any have survived, but if Havard had come from France to work with Thomas Moore it is certain that their carpets were of the highest quality.

Despite the protective interest of the Trustees, the Scottish linen manufacture was periodically threatened by competition from Europe. A severe slump in the early 1770s put linen weavers out of work, including a good many based in Edinburgh. A memorial presented by the leading table linen weavers early in 1770 asked the Board's assistance in raising the duties on imported German and Silesian table linen, which had traditionally been rated very low in comparison with Dutch damask.⁴⁸ Several of the largest manufacturers were called in for discussion, including William Cheape and George Chalmers of Edinburgh and Mark Stark at Dunfermline.⁴⁹ Cheape gave evidence to the House of Commons Committee on the State of the Linen Trade, describing the reduction of his business by one third, which he attributed to the low wages of the German and Russian weavers, resulting in his table linens being much more expensive in London, though equal in quality to any of the foreign.⁵⁰ A London dealer in damasks from Silesia and Saxony, also

giving evidence, disputed this, claiming that although Scottish diapers were equal in quality to the foreign, their damasks were somewhat inferior. As few examples of damask from this period have survived, it is difficult to make a judgement, but the celebrated writer and observer of Edinburgh life, Edward Topham, certainly believed that Scottish damask was very fine and even exceeded the Irish in quality, especially in 'the strength and the beauty of the interwoven patterns'.⁵¹ However, shortly after this, William Cheape did acquire a Silesia table cloth, which was examined by a member of the Board of Trustees:⁵²

I some time ago had occasion to examine narrowly a Silesia Table Cloth produced by William Cheap, the figure of which I found much superior to any Damask pattern used in this Country. I therefore desired the Secretary to pay Mr Deas the pattern-drawer five Guineas for making a copy of this figure to Mr Cheap; and also cause John Baine Weaver, one of Mr Runciman's [Alexander Runciman, Master of the Trustees Drawing Academy] Scholars, to make another copy of it for the use of the Board: All of which I hope the Board will approve of.

Cheape had also mounted one broad and two narrow damask looms in his own workshops at the Watergate to imitate Silesia damask and approached the Board in 1775 for a grant of £100 for a proposed trip to Europe to study the foreign method of working it.⁵³ The Trustees deferred a decision on this, but in the Linen Hall premiums the following year, they were sufficiently impressed with the damask weaving of John Cochrane of Lauriston to present him with a special prize: 'This Damask is in one large figure in the manner of Saxon Damask, but so well executed as far to exceed the foreign, or any other Goods of the kind that we ever saw'.⁵⁴ Cochrane was awarded the generous sum of £20 and allowed two apprentices for the years 1777 and 1778, paid for by the Board.⁵⁵

It is not known whether Cheape made a trip to Europe or not, but he continued to look for ways

of reducing his manufacturing costs. In 1779 he patented a figuring harness for a drawloom which dispensed with the need for a drawboy, whose wages had to be paid by the weaver.⁵⁶ The drawing preserved in the National Archives of Scotland which accompanies his patent specifications, shows a pulley in front of the weaver which he could operate himself to lift the pattern threads of the warp (fig. 3). Manufacturers all over Scotland petitioned the Board to come to an arrangement with him to use the loom, as it was alleged to save ten per cent on the costs of manufacture.⁵⁷ Cheape was reluctant to sell the licence for less than £2000. But after examining a web of damask made in the patent loom, and consulting with leading manufacturers, the Board concluded that it could not spend public money on the purchase of patents, even though Cheape had several looms already at work in Ireland and eleven going in Edinburgh.⁵⁸ The petition sent to the Town Council in Edinburgh on this matter and signed by 17 linen manufacturers, claimed that his improvement was an object of too great a consequence to the nation to be under an exclusive right. It also gave an account of the number of drawlooms estimated to be at work in Scotland at this time: ⁵⁹

In and About Edinburgh there are above 40 Draught looms and in the country around at least 10 more and in Dunfermline and in the country around for damask and their finest kinds of diaper at least 200 by their own computation: and supposing that Paisley, Glasgow, Sterling, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen and all the other towns and villages in Scotland are only rated at 100 more these will make 350 Draught looms in the Whole Kingdom.

All of these depended on the labour of the draw boys, whose annual cost to the manufacturer was estimated to be not under £4 sterling each.

During the 1780s, as luxurious large patterned damask became more fashionable, Edinburgh weavers continued to win the Linen Hall premiums.

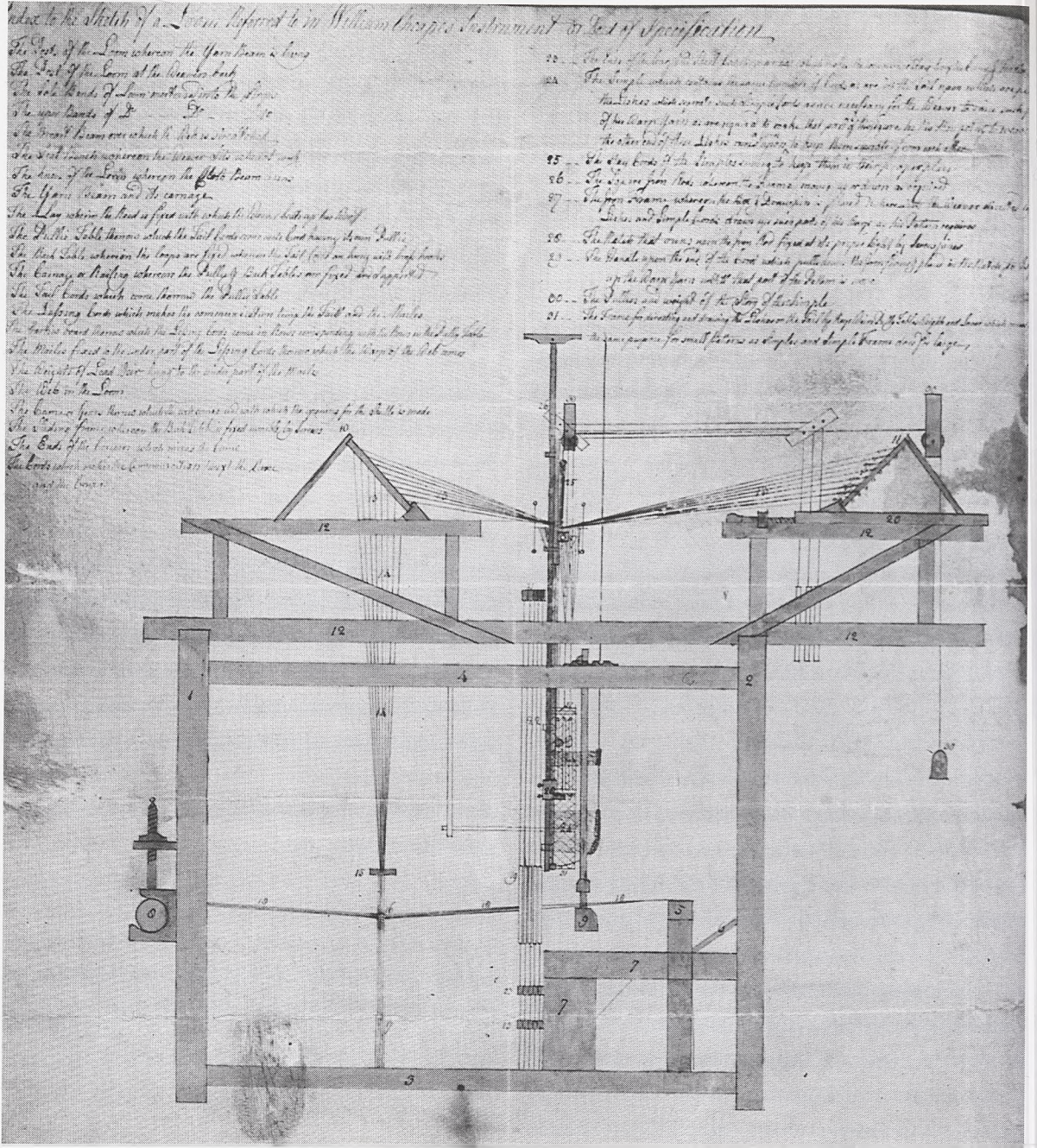


Fig. 3. Drawing of William Cheape's Patent Drawloom, 1779. (National Archives of Scotland, Chancery Records, Calendar of Scottish Patents and Specifications, 1712—1812, C20/1/14.)

William Cheape, Patrick Fairley of Broughton, Ebenezer Gairdner at Portsburgh and William Mortimer at Sciennes (who also wove figured

shawls) were frequent prize winners. In 1785, Cheape's damask was considered to be finer than any before seen in Scotland, which the judges felt should

be noted in the press when the winners' names were advertised.⁶⁰ But it was Ebenezer Gairdner who carried off the ultimate commercial prize when he was appointed damask manufacturer to Queen Charlotte in 1792 after she had seen a table cloth pattern of his called 'Britannia'.⁶¹ Difficulty in obtaining elegant and new patterns persisted, however, and a report was called for on the present and future role of the Trustees Drawing Academy in Edinburgh and its relevance to the manufacturers in Scotland. Though many painters of note had been trained there, it was not known how many designers had begun their careers at the Academy. It appeared that two skilful drawers of patterns, James Thomson of Drumsheugh and John Bain, were supplying most of the manufacturers, despite the unwillingness of the manufacturers to pay for original work.⁶² It was concluded that the Academy was important for future training – James Thomson declaring that had it not been for the Academy 'he would never have drawn a single flower' – and that the Linen Hall premiums had contributed to the elegance of the manufacture. It was agreed that the Drawing Master should continue to supply original designs for the use of the manufacturers and when David Allan was appointed to the post he submitted designs for a carpet and a damask table cloth in January 1787.⁶³ A late example of the large scale linen damask patterns made in Edinburgh is the commemorative table cloth woven by John Guthrie, the son in law of James Thomson of Drumsheugh, for the visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822.⁶⁴

Unforeseen difficulties arose towards the end of the eighteenth century when the table linen weavers began to face competition from the expanding cotton manufacture and were unable to find enough apprentices for their own trade. In 1793 several Edinburgh weavers petitioned the Board of Trustees and to help them it was proposed to grant the sum

of £5 to each apprentice completing his training.⁶⁵ William Cheape's name was not amongst the petitioners and he may by then have retired from business. His patent looms were advertised for sale in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* in that year.⁶⁶ A spacious weaving house belonging to him at St John's Hill, Edinburgh, was put up for sale in 1795.⁶⁷ He continued to act as a judge for the annual Trustees' competitions until 1805, however, and died the following year in June 1806, aged 89.

William Cheape came to prominence at a time when the Board of Trustees had embarked upon a national policy to expand the linen manufacture in Scotland. At the beginning of his career suits of damask were costly and commissioned only by a small number of nobles and gentry who were able to afford the luxury of state napery, often emblazoned with the name and insignia of the mistress of the house.⁶⁸ Two suits of linen damask with two small upper table cloths ordered from Edinburgh, bleached and made up, cost Lord Glenorchy £25. 15. 0 in 1746, for example.⁶⁹ Cheape, like other weavers, was traditionally placed close to his wealthy patrons. But he was one of several pioneering manufacturers, based in or near Edinburgh, who expanded their markets beyond 'customary' work (i.e. made from the customer's own yarn and to their own requirements), aided by grants and the deregulation of the weavers' guilds in the mid eighteenth century.⁷⁰ He was a 'servant' of the British Linen Company, centred in Edinburgh, from whom he purchased flax and to whom he sold cloth, and surely frequented the Linen Hall, which was at Moray House in the 1760s (see the engraved advertisement for the Linen Hall reproduced in *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, New Series 2, 1992, p. 139).⁷¹

Favoured by birth and well connected, he had access to money for investment and the wider world of trade. Apart from his brother Harry Cheape of

Rossie, the vintner James Cheape and the Collector of Customs and proprietor of the British Linen Company George Cheape were influential relatives. This enabled him to risk new markets and to find sales for fine damask table linen beyond Edinburgh. He was also able to raise the level of skill and design in figured linen, to which later manufacturers would be indebted.⁷² His wareroom was for many years at

Hyndford's Close opposite the Netherbow and his house in Jack's Close on the north side of the Canongate, opposite St John's Street.⁷³ William Cheape's career is an example of the varied and active mercantile life of the Canongate which has now been forgotten. He is buried in the Canongate churchyard with his wife Catherine Baxter and one of his daughters, Christian.⁷⁴

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Diaper, damask and dornick (or dornock), are terms descriptive of self-coloured figured linen fabrics, often interchangeable and sometimes used together. The principal difference seems to be one of size and complexity of pattern. They were used for many different kinds of domestic linen from towels to table cloths. A characteristic of diaper seems to have been a small diamond or lozenge shaped twilled pattern, with infinite variety as the surviving names suggest. This staple part of the hand-loom weaver's work is now lost to us. Dornick patterns were more elaborate, geometric, but often with a satin base. Rev. Peter Chalmers, *Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline* (Edinburgh and London 1844), vol. I, pp. 353–384, gives details of methods and manufacture of the different classes of figured linens. True linen damask, with large, often unrepeatable curved patterns in satin weave, sometimes with historical or mythological subjects, was produced in Flanders, Holland and other parts of continental Europe.
- 2 My thanks to Hugh Cheape at the National Museums of Scotland for information on the Cheapes of Rossie and allied families, and to Ann Pippet at the Scottish Genealogical Society for uncovering William Cheape's dates of baptism and death.
- 3 National Archives of Scotland (NAS: formerly Scottish Record Office), Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements, Minute Books, NG 1/1/6, 6 February 1741. His training is noted in the records, but where it took place is unknown.
- 4 Rev. Cornelius Hallen, *Social and Industrial Condition of Scotland in the 15th and 16th Centuries and other Lectures* (Alloa 1890), p. 71; Ebenezer Henderson, *Annals of Dunfermline* (Glasgow 1879), p. 400. However, the man usually considered to be the culprit, James Blaike working at Drumsheugh, had been given a premium by the Board of Trustees for an improvement in weaving figured linen which he had already shared with the master weavers of Edinburgh: NAS, NG 1/1/4, 20 January 1738.
- 5 Charles B. Boog Watson (ed.), *Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild-Brethren, 1406–1700*, Scottish Record Society, vol. 59 (Edinburgh 1929), p. 225. The quotation is from Adolph S. Cavallo, 'To Set a Smart Board: Fashion as the Decisive Factor in the Development of the Scottish Linen Damask Industry', *Business History Review*, 37 (1963), p. 49.
- 6 Helen M. Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth Century Edinburgh: A Demographic Study* (Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1994), appendix 4.
- 7 National Library of Scotland (NLS), Saltoun MS. 16565, f. 207: Letter from James Donaldson at Drumsheugh dated 20 July 1736. In the same year, twelve suits of Scottish table linen were presented to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Arthur Onslow. He donated £100 as a gesture of encouragement, which was used for premiums for the best manufactured damask and diaper in the years 1738–40: *Extracts from the Records of the Convention of the Royal Burghs of Scotland, 1711–1738* (Edinburgh 1885), pp. 609, 629.
- 8 Alex. O. Curle, 'Inventories of the House of Rossie, 1693–1700', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 40 (1905–06), p. 53; Margaret H. Swain, 'The Linen Supply of a Scottish Household, 1777–1810', *Textile History*, 13 (1982), p. 77.
- 9 NAS, Commissary Court Records, Register of Testaments, Edinburgh, CC 8/8/87, February 1719.
- 10 *Ibid.*, CC 8/8/91, November 1727.
- 11 See Cavallo, 'To Set a Smart Board' (note 5), where he discusses several early examples of linen damask with Scottish connections and the career of John Ochiltree; and Naomi Tarrant, 'Scottish Figured Damasks of the Eighteenth Century', *Riggisberger Berichte*, 7 (1999), p. 83, which lists the linen damask napkins in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland.
- 12 NLS, MS. 2557, handwritten weavers' pattern book, no date.

- 13 NAS, NG 1/1/4, 10 February 1738.
- 14 NLS, Saltoun MS. 16573, f. 45.
- 15 NLS, Saltoun MS. 17580, f. 118.
- 16 NLS, Saltoun MS. 17560, f. 59.
- 17 NAS, NG 1/1/6, 6 February 1741.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 18 December 1741.
- 19 NLS, Saltoun MS. 17560, f. 111.
- 20 NAS, NG 1/1/6, 10 December 1742.
- 21 *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 September 1743.
- 22 NAS, NG 1/1/7, 20 July 1744.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 1 August 1744.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 13 March 1745. The Board of Trustees Minute Books mention an earlier demonstration in which Bideke wove two dozen diaper napkins in the German method: NG 1/1/7, 7 December 1744. The later trial may also have been on narrow width napkins.
- 25 *Caledonian Mercury*, 18 September 1745.
- 26 My thanks to Helen Clark, Keeper of Social History, Edinburgh City Museums, for showing me the linen damask in her collections.
- 27 Resolutions for the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures and Agriculture in Scotland and the list of managers are set out in the *Scots Magazine*, 17 (1755), from p. 126.
- 28 *Scots Magazine*, 21 (1759), p. 214.
- 29 NAS, NG 1/1/13, 7 February 1755. See also Adolph S. Cavallo, 'Continental Sources of Early Damask Patterns in Scotland', *Burlington Magazine*, CVII (November 1965), p. 559, where Cavallo discusses the design of two pairs of early eighteenth century Scottish table napkins.
- 30 NAS, NG 1/1/13, 29 July 1757.
- 31 NAS, NG 1/1/15, 3 August 1759.
- 32 *Scots Magazine*, 20 (1758), p. 607.
- 33 NAS, NG 1/1/17, 4 February 1763.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 23 December 1763.
- 35 NAS, NG 1/1/9, 18 December 1747. Rules for these prizes changed over time.
- 36 NAS, NG 1/1/6, 22 August 1740.
- 37 Alastair J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh 1979), p. 122.
- 38 See William Edgar's Plans of Edinburgh of 1742 and 1765. The earlier showing the Duke of Roxburgh's Lodging, replaced by Lord Milton's House by 1765.
- 39 NLS, Saltoun MS. 17561, ff. 174, 175.
- 40 NLS, Saltoun MS. 16670, f. 64. Alastair J. Durie (ed.), *The British Linen Company, 1745-1775*, Scottish History Society, Fifth Series, vol. 9 (Edinburgh 1996), p. 84.
- 41 Durie, *British Linen Company*, p. 116.
- 42 NLS, Saltoun MS. 17565, f. 289.
- 43 NLS, Saltoun MS. 17564, f. 171.
- 44 See note 42.
- 45 NAS, NG 1/1/18, 15 February 1765.
- 46 *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 April 1769. The Tennis Court was destroyed by fire in 1776 and does not seem to have been insured: *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 14 February 1776.
- 47 See note 42.
- 48 NAS, NG 1/1/19, 21 February 1770.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 8 March 1770.
- 50 *Report from the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to Enquire into the State of the Linen Trade in Great Britain and Ireland, Parliamentary Papers*, 1773, iii, p. 104.
- 51 Edward Topham, *Letters from Edinburgh Written in the Years 1774 and 1775* (London 1776), pp. 174-175.
- 52 NAS, NG 1/1/21, 21 June 1775.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 5 July 1775.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 11 December 1776.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 12 March 1777.
- 56 NAS, Chancery Records, Calendar of Scottish Patents and Specifications, 1712-1812, C20/1/14.
- 57 NAS, NG 1/1/23, 16 January 1782.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 18 December 1782.
- 59 Edinburgh City Archives, SL 30/4/6, Petition from the Merchants and Linen Manufacturers of the City of Edinburgh, 10 July 1781.
- 60 NAS, NG 1/1/25, 13 February 1786.
- 61 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 10 March 1792.
- 62 NAS, NG 1/1/25, 21 November 1785.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 24 January 1787.
- 64 See Cavallo, 'To Set a Smart Board' (note 5), p. 58. My thanks to Helen Clark for showing me the table cloth, which is about 18 feet long and 7 feet 8 inches wide, and for her help in folding it up again.
- 65 NAS, NG 1/1/28, 20 February 1793.
- 66 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 5 October 1793.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 11 March 1795: 'His Factory House, 60 feet long, 22 broad, and 11 high within walls, with five vents, is a commodious weaving-house - but may have many other purposes. His Linen Warehouse [at Hyndford's Close] is conveniently fitted up for holding materials and manufactured goods of any kind.'
- 68 Alison Hay Dunlop, *Anent Old Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1890), p. 131, tells a revealing story of this period when a damask tea towel or napkin would be presented to a lady to protect her flowered silk petticoat from the possibility of a stain, at a time when tea cups had no handles. The texture of the napkins was meanwhile 'appraised and appreciated by the quiet touch of many a dowager's thumb and forefinger, and by the drooping side glance of many a fair spinster's eyes. For it be noted, it was

- the maiden's initials, woven or sewed, of the mistress of the house that were expected to be seen upon her state napery'. In his advertisement in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 30 October 1771, Ebenezer Gairdner also noted: 'What is more proper or genteel than having the arms or crest of the family displayed on the tables of such as are entitled to use them?'
- 69 NAS. Breadalbane Papers, GD 112/21/281.
- 70 Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry* (note 37), p. 78. An Act amending the linen laws in 1751 allowed any weaver or manufacturer to carry on his trade at any place in Scotland without hindrance and without being charged entry money by the guilds. Legal contracts were still made between manufacturer and journeyman weaver, however, but the effect of the Act was to destroy the regulatory system of the guilds and increase the number of weavers as the markets demanded.
- 71 This advertisement is also reproduced in Durie, *Scottish Linen Industry*, plate 9.
- 72 By 1815 the Board of Trustees had particularly noted 'the Table Linen and Drawings of Patterns from Dunfermline in which a most commendable Spirit for improving this beautiful manufacture had arisen of late years': NAS, NG 1/1/33, 22 November 1815. A Drawing Academy was established there in 1826, in emulation of the Trustees Drawing Academy in Edinburgh, where several sons or employees of the Edinburgh linen manufacturers were students.
- 73 Hyndford's Close and Jack's Close are shown on Ainslie's Plan of Edinburgh, c. 1780. Cheape's home address was given at Jack's Close from 1788 in the *Edinburgh Directories*.
- 74 Cheape's burial tablet is set into the back wall of a house on the west side of the Canongate Church. He married Catherine Baxter, the daughter of a Kelso parish schoolmaster, Charles Baxter. His daughter Christian married Andrew Douglas, druggist in Edinburgh. Another daughter, Elizabeth, married William Menzies, writer in Edinburgh.