

SOHO DEPICTED: PRINTS, DRAWINGS AND
WATERCOLOURS OF MATTHEW BOULTON, HIS
MANUFACTORY AND ESTATE, 1760-1809

by

VALERIE ANN LOGGIE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways in which the industrialist Matthew Boulton (1728-1809) used images of his manufactory and of himself to help develop what would now be considered a 'brand'. The argument draws heavily on archival research into the commissioning process, authorship and reception of these depictions. Such information is rarely available when studying prints and allows consideration of these images in a new light but also contributes to a wider debate on British eighteenth-century print culture. The first chapter argues that Boulton used images to convey messages about the output of his businesses, to draw together a diverse range of products and associate them with one site. Chapter two explores the setting of the manufactory and the surrounding estate, outlining Boulton's motivation for creating the parkland and considering the ways in which it was depicted. The third chapter looks at a period of reinforcement of the identity of Soho, exploring the ways in which images were placed and altered in order to convey specific messages to particular audiences. Chapter four examines printed portraits of Boulton and argues that images of Boulton himself also came to stand for his factory and his products.

For

Chris and Derek Loggie

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Abbreviations

BAH	Birmingham Archives and Heritage
BBTI	British Book Trade Index www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/
BL	British Library
BM	British Museum
BMAG	Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery
Ktop	King's Topographical Collection, British Library
GtoP&F	Guide to Persons and Firms, Archives of Soho Catalogue
JF	John Fothergill
JWj	James Watt junior
MB	Matthew Boulton
MRB	Matthew Robinson Boulton
n.d.	no date
NPG	National Portrait Gallery
SMS	William Salt Collection, William Salt Library, Stafford
SV	Staffordshire Views Collection, William Salt Library, Stafford
WSL	William Salt Library, Stafford

INTRODUCTION

This thesis will examine works on paper depicting Matthew Boulton, his manufactory and estate, produced during his lifetime and immediately after his death.¹ Boulton (1728-1809) was an industrialist and entrepreneur, probably best known for his steam engine partnership with James Watt (1736-1819). Boulton inherited a 'toy' business from his father and built it up into a number of separate enterprises producing a wide range of goods, mostly based at the Soho Manufactory in Handsworth, near Birmingham.² The works studied are sketches, watercolours and printed material. Associated archives will be used to consider the reasons for the production of those images, their intended and other audiences, what messages they were expected to convey, their distribution and reception. The original setting of the works will be considered as many have been separated from the books or magazines in which they were situated. The thesis will argue that the production, distribution and placing of the material studied was controlled by Boulton and used to convey messages about himself and his businesses. They were used to connote a wide range of goods, to impress upon viewers that the objects produced at Soho were the output of one man's enterprise, to develop what we would now refer to as a brand identity.³

¹ Other such images were produced later but these are outside the scope of this work and many of them were derived from the earlier views. There are a number of loose pages in BMAG collections which have clearly been removed from books printed after Boulton's lifetime such as Samuel Smiles' *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, London, 1865. No attempt has been made to locate the source of these images as they are clearly derivative of others considered in the thesis.

² Toys were small metal goods such as buttons and buckles.

³ I am aware that the use of the terms brand identity and brand could be problematic but others have related them to Boulton, see for example Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-century Britain*, Oxford, 2005. Throughout this thesis I take them to refer to 'a set of attributes designed to distinguish a particular firm, product or line, with the intention of

Most of the images studied in this thesis form part of the collections of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG), a local authority museum service. For many years BMAG have had a collecting policy which has sought to acquire objects associated with Boulton which have helped with the interpretation and display of Soho House, Boulton's former home, now part of the museum service. The major source for primary documentary research has been the Archives of Soho, a vast collection of material relating to the business and private lives of Matthew Boulton and James Watt, his partner in the steam engine business. These are held by Birmingham Archives and Heritage (BAH) and housed in Birmingham Central Library.⁴ Most of the material cited for this thesis is from the Matthew Boulton papers (MS3782), but the James Watt Papers (MS3219) and Boulton and Watt Collection (MS3147) are also drawn upon.⁵ Some images from the archive have been included in the catalogue section of this thesis.⁶ Other museums and archives also hold associated material which has been considered in the discursive section of the thesis but not in the catalogue. Particularly relevant material is to be found in the British Museum and the William Salt Library at Stafford.

promoting awareness and loyalty on the part of consumers.' Oxford *OED online*, draft additions December 2004, 'brand identity'. In using this term I recognise that this was not a meaning that would be understood by Boulton, that the meaning has changed over time. I have chosen to use it as there is no appropriate eighteenth century term available.

⁴ The three collections fill about one hundred and seven metres of shelving. Fiona Tait, 'How do we know what we know? The Archives of Soho' in Mason (ed.) *Matthew Boulton: Selling what all the world desires*, New Haven and London, 2009, pp.109-115.

⁵ All three collections were the subject of a Heritage Lottery Funded project, the Archives of Soho (1998-2003) which saw the development of catalogues and the renumbering of many items. Works referring to these collections written before 2003 use old style MBP, JWP and B&W references. The MBP were occasionally referred to as the Great Tew MSS when they were still in the hands of the Boulton family at Great Tew. Later they were sometimes known as AOLB (Assay Office Library Birmingham) and AOMSS (Assay Office Manuscripts).

⁶ Catalogue 1, 2, 4, 12-14, 16-17.

Writers and scholars have conducted research using the material now in the Archives of Soho for well over a hundred years. A biography of Boulton and Watt was produced by Samuel Smiles to conclude his *Lives of the Engineers* series in 1865 which was 'principally from the original Soho Mss'.⁷ The material he worked from was then mainly in the hands of Boulton's grandson, Matthew Piers Watt Boulton, but now forms the part of the Archives of Soho known as the Matthew Boulton Papers (MS3782). The only biography of Boulton alone was written by H.W. Dickinson in 1936; he had written a biography of Watt on the bicentenary of his birth, and felt that Watt had too long overshadowed Boulton.⁸ Dickinson drew on the same papers which were by then at Birmingham Assay Office. Smiles also used material at Doldowlod, now the James Watt Papers (MS3219) and Dickinson, the Boulton and Watt Collection (MS3147). While both men used their prefaces to emphasise the validity of their archival research, neither provided full references which means it can be difficult to trace their original sources.

More recently, the breadth of Boulton's interests and the volume of archival material available has meant that he is considered too large a subject for one author. Many different researchers have worked on various aspects of his business and private life; Nicholas Goodison and Kenneth Quickenden have undertaken extensive work on his ormolu and on silver and Sheffield

⁷ Samuel Smiles, *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, London, 1865, frontispiece and preface.

⁸ H.W. Dickinson, *Matthew Boulton*, Cambridge, 1936, republished, Leamington Spa, 1999; H.W. Dickinson *James Watt, Craftsman and Engineer*, Cambridge, 1935.

Platedwares respectively.⁹ Others have focussed on various aspects of his numismatic enterprises: David Vice, Richard Doty and George Selgin have produced full length studies and there are many specialist numismatic papers and publications by other authors.¹⁰ Jennifer Tann has written widely and authoritatively with a particular interest in the development of the factory and the steam engine business.¹¹ She also contributed the *DNB* entry on Boulton. Others have worked on the technical aspects of the steam engine while Eric Roll considered the engine partnership from a business perspective.¹²

The comprehensive archival material pertaining to Boulton and his manufactory made possible a co-ordinated programme of research, exhibitions and publications, of which this thesis forms part, to celebrate the bicentenary of Boulton's death in 2009. A series of AHRC-funded workshops and an international conference brought a wide variety of scholars together allowing much discussion and debate. The present author gave papers at one of the workshop sessions and the conference.¹³ Two volumes of collected essays by various authors were published which aimed to cover many aspects of his life and work, one a catalogue to accompany a major

⁹ Nicholas Goodison, *Matthew Boulton: Ormolu*, London, 2002; Kenneth Quickenden, *Boulton and Fothergill Silver*, PhD thesis, Westfield College, 1990; Kenneth Quickenden, *Boulton Silver and Sheffield Plate: Seven essays by Kenneth Quickenden*, London, 2009. Both authors have also published numerous papers.

¹⁰ David Vice, *A Numismatic History of Soho Manufactory and Mint 1772-1850*, forthcoming; Richard Doty, *The Soho Mint & The Industrialisation of Money*, London, 1998; George Selgin, *Good Money: Birmingham button makers, the Royal Mint, and the beginnings of modern coinage, 1775-1821*, Michigan, 2008; J.G. Pollard, 'Matthew Boulton and J.P. Droz', *Numismatic Chronicle*, vol.8, 1968, pp.241-265; J.G. Pollard, 'Matthew Boulton and Conrad Heinrich Kùchler', *Numismatic Chronicle*, vol.10, 1970, pp.260-318.

¹¹ Jennifer Tann, *The Development of the Factory*, London, 1970.

¹² Eric Roll, *An Early Experiment in Industrial Organisation being a history of the firm of Boulton and Watt 1775-1805*, London, 1930. Dickinson, Farey, Jim Andrew and Laurence Ince are among those who have considered the steam engine.

¹³ The conference paper on print portraits of Boulton was based on chapter four of this thesis.

exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.¹⁴ They greatly added to the published material on Boulton, but have also highlighted the potential for continued scholarship for many years. The present author contributed catalogue entries, an essay on portraits of Boulton which informed the work on prints of Boulton in chapter four, and an essay on views of the manufactory which picked up threads from throughout this thesis.¹⁵ An exhibition of Boulton's numismatic output took place at the Barber Institute, the University of Birmingham and an uncredited catalogue entry for a view of Soho was written for this by the present author.¹⁶

Some researchers have studied more than one line of business, but looked at specific aspects, for example, George Demidowicz at the physical development of the site and the generation of power, and J.E. Cule at financial records of the businesses.¹⁷ Peter Jones has placed Soho within its West Midlands setting, focussing particularly on the knowledge economy, science and technology. His work has drawn extensively on the descriptions of Soho made by those visiting the site, both the fashionable potential customer and the industrial spy.¹⁸ The Lunar Society, an informal group of

¹⁴ Shena Mason (ed.), *Matthew Boulton: selling what all the world desires*, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery exhibition catalogue, New Haven and London, 2009; Malcolm Dick (ed.) *Matthew Boulton: A Revolutionary Player*, Studley, 2009.

¹⁵ Val Loggie 'Portraits of Matthew Boulton' in Dick, 2009 pp.63-76; Val Loggie 'Picturing Soho: Images of Matthew Boulton's Soho Manufactory' in Mason, 2009 pp.22-30.

¹⁶ This has been acknowledged in writing by the editors as a sub-editing error. Richard Clay and Sue Tungate, *Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money*, Studley, 2009, p.58.

¹⁷ George Demidowicz, *The Soho Industrial Buildings: Manufactory, Mint and Foundry*, forthcoming; George Demidowicz, 'Power at the Soho Manufactory and Mint' in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.116-131; J.E. Cule, 'Finance and Industry in the Eighteenth Century: the Firm of Boulton and Watt', *Economic History*, Vol. IV, No.15, Feb. 1940, pp.219-225.

¹⁸ Peter Jones, 'I had L[ord]ds and Ladys to wait on yesterday...' Visitors to the Soho Manufactory', in Mason (ed.) 2009; Peter Jones, 'Birmingham and the West Midlands in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' in Dick (ed.), 2009 pp.13-29; Peter Jones, *Industrial Enlightenment: Science, technology and culture in the West Midlands 1760-1820*, Manchester, 2008; Peter Jones, 'Industrial Enlightenment in Practice. Visitors to the Soho

which Boulton was an original member, was written about by Robert Schofield in the 1960s and recently has been brought to more widespread attention by Jenny Uglow.¹⁹ Boulton's marketing practice has been considered by Eric Robinson while other writers have looked at the marketing of individual aspects of the businesses.²⁰ Wider literature on consumption and marketing has also focused on Boulton.²¹ It had long been suggested that the development of a recognisable brand was a nineteenth-century phenomenon, but Koehn's work on the potter Josiah Wedgwood (1735-1795), Duguid on alcohol, and Evans and Rydén on Swedish iron have drawn attention to earlier examples.²² Styles suggests that the furniture-maker Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director* (1754) was intended as much as an advertisement for his business as a source of designs for other cabinet-makers.²³ This thesis will argue that Boulton, a contemporary and associate of Wedgwood, also sought to create a brand, albeit *avant la lettre*, for his diverse range of goods and that the use of visual images was an integral part

Manufactory, 1765-1820', *Midland History* Vol. 33, No.1, Spring 2008, pp.68-96; Peter Jones, 'Matthew Boulton's 'Enchanted Castle': Visions of Enlightenment in the English Midlands c.1765-1800 in Mortier (ed.) *Visualisation*, Bermin, 1999. Peter M. Jones 'Matthew Boulton and his Networks: the Archives of Soho in Birmingham' Paper for Twelfth International Enlightenment Congress: Knowledge, Techniques and Cultures in the Eighteenth Century (Montpellier, 8-15 July 2007).

¹⁹ R.E. Schofield, *The Lunar Society of Birmingham: A Social History of Provincial Science and Industry in Eighteenth-Century England*, Oxford 1963; R.E. Schofield, 'The Industrial Orientation of Science in the Lunar Society of Birmingham', *Isis*, vol.48, 1957 pp.408-15; Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, London, 2002.

²⁰ Eric Robinson, 'Eighteenth-Century Commerce and Fashion: Matthew Boulton's Marketing Techniques', *The Economic History Review* New Series, Vol.16, No. 1 (1963) pp.39-60; Goodison, 2002; Kenneth Quickenden and Arthur J. Krover 'Did Boulton Sell Silver Plate to the Middle Class? A Quantitative Study of Luxury Marketing in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of Macromarketing*, Vol.27 No. 1 March 2007, pp.51-64.,

²¹ For example John Styles, 'Manufacturing, consumption and design in eighteenth-century England' in Brewer and Porter (eds.) *Consumption and the World of Goods*, London and New York, 1993; Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-century Britain*, Oxford, 2005.

²² Nancy F. Koehn, *Brand New: How Entrepreneurs Earned Consumers' Trust from Wedgwood to Dell*, Boston, 2001; Paul Duguid, 'Developing the Brand: The Case of Alcohol, 1800-1880', *Enterprise & Society* Vol.4 No.3, 2003, pp.405-441; Chris Evans and Göran Rydén 'Iron marks as early brand names: Swedish iron in the Atlantic Market during the Eighteenth Century', Paper at XIV International Economic History Congress, Helsinki 2006.

²³ Styles, 1993, pp.527-54, p.542.

of this approach. The two men were friends and colleagues; they co-operated in marketing initiatives, jointly produced objects, and learnt from each other's sites, practices and products.²⁴ But there was always a certain amount of caution on Wedgwood's part. In 1767 Boulton had announced that 'I almost wish to be a potter' and Wedgwood remained wary of Boulton's exuberance and tendency to experiment, recognising that he could be a significant rival. Wedgwood was ever conscious that refusing to participate in Boulton's plans could 'affront him and set him of doing them himself, or employing his friend Garbett.'²⁵

Men like Boulton and Wedgwood had to demonstrate their understanding and adoption of taste through their products, buildings, showrooms, homes and estates. As will be shown in chapters one and three, Boulton and James Bisset also fought against preconceived ideas of Birmingham, seeking to show it as a centre of taste and high-quality products. The possession of taste and the financial means to demonstrate it had not previously been associated with manufacturers; it had been linked to landed wealth, learnt from the Grand Tour, from books and archaeology.²⁶ Growing numbers of consumer goods allowed manufacturers like Boulton to expand and retailers to 'develop definable retailing identities' by stocking particular goods.²⁷

Printed material was part of this consumption; books, magazines and prints

²⁴ Nicholas Goodison, "I almost wish to be a potter": Matthew Boulton's relationship with Josiah Wedgwood' in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.141.

²⁵ Wedgwood to Bentley, 21 November 1768, Goodison in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.136.

²⁶ Nicola J. Watson and Linda Walsh, *From Enlightenment to Romanticism c.1780-1830: The Exotic and the Oriental*, 2004, Milton Keynes p.106; David Watkin, *English Architecture*, London, 1979, p.124.

²⁷ Matthew Craske, 'Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.12, No.3, 1999, p.195; Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, 'Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century: Advertising and the Trade Card in Britain and France', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol.4, Issue 2, 2007, p.145.

were important methods of disseminating information on fashion and taste, but they also became objects of consumption themselves.²⁸ There was increasing demand to see and own works of art and print collecting became very fashionable. Portfolio collections of high quality prints were kept by serious art connoisseurs, but as prints became more readily available they were also placed on the walls of middle rank houses.²⁹ Boulton, Watt and their circle had such framed prints on their walls, and it is likely Boulton had a portfolio collection as well as using prints as source material for products.³⁰ Boulton was very much aware of this expansion of print material and this thesis demonstrates how he went about ensuring that he used such images to promote his manufactory and the whole Soho output.

At the same time patriotism, nationalism and competition with France developed as significant discourses in Britain that drove the improvement of design and the growth of factories such as Boulton's. The increase of public demand for designed luxury objects was seen as a threat to national independence which resulted in a mid eighteenth-century drive to improve design and reduce reliance on importing such goods from Europe. This would enable the use of British raw materials and improve the balance of trade. Entrepreneurs like Boulton, Wedgwood and the print publisher Boydell obtained enormous satisfaction from selling luxury goods on the continent,

²⁸ See p.142.

²⁹ Stana Nenadic, 'Print Collecting and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland, *History* Vol.82, Issue 26, 1997, p.209.

³⁰ BAH3219/4/238 Inventory of furniture and Furnishings at Heathfield, 1791-2; 'Obituary – Mr James Bisset', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Supplement to Vol.CII, Part II, 1832, p.648. BAH3782/6/192/28 Bill, Executors of Samuel Aris 1772-1775.

those which would previously have been imported. Later biographical dictionary entries particularly emphasised this achievement.³¹

Weatherill, Styles, Craske and Clifford have sought to move the debate beyond Boulton and Wedgwood, to argue that their approaches to marketing, design and production were less of a dramatic shift than has sometimes been suggested and were, in fact, built on earlier practices.³² It is true that the cases of Boulton and Wedgwood have at times been overstated; partly because of the volume of archival material they left which has been made accessible by the work of Eric Robinson and Neil McKendrick, so they have been drawn on repeatedly as examples by other authors.³³ Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Robinson, then of the University of Manchester, wrote papers on, among other areas, Boulton's role as a patron of the arts, his birthplace, Boulton and Wedgwood's roles as 'apostles of fashion', the international exchange of men and machines, the Birmingham export of

³¹ Craske, 1999, pp.196-201.

³² Weatherill's work has directly challenged McKendrick's suggestion that many of Wedgwood's practices were innovative, Lorna Weatherill, *The Pottery Trade and North Staffordshire 1660-1760*, Manchester, 1971; Lorna Weatherill, 'The Business of Middleman in the English Pottery Trade before 1780', *Business History*, Vol.28, Part II, 1986, pp.51-76. John Styles, 'Design for Large-Scale Production in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol.11, No. 2 (1988), p.14; Styles, 1993, p.542 goes as far as questioning 'historians' obsession' with Boulton and Wedgwood, John Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *Past and Present*, No.168 (August 2000) pp.166-7; Craske, 1999, p.188. Helen Clifford argues that the large-scale manufactory rather than individual craftsman goes back further than is often appreciated and that subcontracting was commonplace in the London silver trade in the seventeenth-century. She suggests Boulton developed John Taylor's technique of bringing things together under one roof, Helen Clifford, 'Concepts of Invention, Identity and Imitation in the London and Provincial Metal-working Trades, 1750-1800', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.12, No.3, 1999, see p.30 of this thesis for Taylor.

³³ McKendrick wrote extensively on Wedgwood, Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood: An Eighteenth-Century Entrepreneur in Salesmanship and Marketing Techniques', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No.3,1960, pp.408-433; Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and Factory Discipline', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 4, No 1 (1961), pp.30-55; Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley: An Inventor-Entrepreneur Partnership in the Industrial Revolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series Vol. 14 (1964), pp.1-33; Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and Cost Accounting in the Industrial Revolution', *ECHR*, New Series Vol. 23, No 1, April 1970, pp.45-67.

hardware, Boulton's marketing techniques, his parliamentary lobbying, the origins and lifespan of the Lunar Society, various aspects of Watt's work, and the mechanical paintings business.³⁴ Robinson himself stated in 1987 that

though Boulton and Wedgwood have been singled out by modern commentators as the principal exponents of new techniques of salesmanship and as leaders of the fashion business in their separate fields, they were not the isolated figures that their own self-estimates tend to suggest.³⁵

It is important to be able to contextualise Boulton and Wedgwood, to acknowledge that they did build on the work of others, that networks were crucial to them, and that they were not the only people working in this way. But the wealth of information available on these men should not be dismissed as part of this reassessment. As others have noted, the preservation of records is essential for the writing of business history, and this is where the firms of Boulton and Wedgwood have fared so much better than others.³⁶ Furthermore, despite the attention paid to their marketing activities in the

³⁴ Eric Robinson, 'Matthew Boulton, Patron of the Arts', *Annals of Science* Vol. 9 No 4 Dec 1953, pp.368-376; Eric Robinson, 'Matthew Boulton's birthplace and his home at Snow Hill; a problem in detection', *Transactions Birmingham Archaeological Society*, Vol. 75, 1957 pp.85-9; Eric Robinson, 'Matthew Boulton and Josiah Wedgwood, Apostles of Fashion' in R.P.T. Davenport-Hines and Jonathan Liebenau (eds.), *Business in the Age of Reason*, London, 1987, pp.98-114; Eric Robinson, 'The international exchange of men and machines, 1750-1800: As seen in the business records of Matthew Boulton', *Business History* I, 1, 1958, pp.3-15; Eric Robinson, 'Boulton and Fothergill, 1762-1782, and the Birmingham Export of Hardware', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, VII No 1 (1959-60), pp.61-79; Eric Robinson, 'Eighteenth-Century Commerce and Fashion: Matthew Boulton's Marketing Techniques', *The Economic History Review* New Series, Vol.16, No. 1 (1963) pp.39-60; Eric Robinson, 'Matthew Boulton and the Art of Parliamentary Lobbying', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 7 No 2 (1964) pp.209-229, Eric Robinson, 'The Origins and Life Span of the Lunar Society', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, XI No 1 (1967), pp.5-16; Eric Robinson, 'James Watt, Engineer and Man of Science' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 24, No 2 (Apr 1970) pp.221-232; Eric Robinson, 'An English Jacobin: James Watt, Junior, 1769-1848', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1955), pp.349-355; Eric Robinson and Keith R. Thompson, 'Matthew Boulton's Mechanical Paintings', *The Burlington Magazine* Vol. 12, No 809 Aug 1970 pp.497-507.

³⁵ Robinson, 1987, p.99.

³⁶ David Cannadine, 'Joseph Gillott and his Family Firm: The Many Faces of Entrepreneurship' in Bruland and O'Brien (eds.), *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism*, Oxford, 1998, p.262.

emerging historical literature on branding, the role of printed images in such activities involving Boulton has not hitherto been studied.

Much of the existing literature on Boulton and Soho has, unsurprisingly, given the volume of written material available, focussed on textual sources. Maps, plans and diagrams have been analysed, as have the designs in the Soho pattern books, considered by Goodison, Quickenden and Snodin.³⁷ However, the predominant source for much of the material outlined above has been the written word or the physical objects which formed the output of Soho. Images of Soho Manufactory have generally been used as illustrations, a quick demonstration of the scale and grandeur of the enterprise without recognition that images are not merely illustrations; that they communicate complex meanings.³⁸ The exception is George Demidowicz who has analysed them in great architectural detail to provide information on the buildings, the way the site developed and was powered. He is the only author to have considered them in any depth, and has noted that the depictions of a manufactory as commissioned by its proud owner cannot entirely be relied upon to provide a totally accurate representation of the site.³⁹ While Demidowicz has used the illustrations as primary source material, he has not considered in any depth the original context and function of these images as this is outside the scope

³⁷ Goodison, 2002; Quickenden, 2009; Michael Snodin, 'Matthew Boulton's Sheffield Plate Catalogues', *Apollo*, July 1987, pp.25-32.

³⁸ Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford, 2005, p.1.

³⁹ George Demidowicz, *The Soho Foundry, Smethwick, West Midlands: A Documentary and Archaeological Study*, Report for Sandwell Borough Council and HLF, 2002; George Demidowicz, 'Soho House and Soho Foundry' in Foster, A., *Pevsner Architectural Guides: Birmingham*, New Haven and London, 2005, pp.282-8; George Demidowicz, 'Power at the Soho Manufactory and Mint' in Dick (ed.) 2009; George Demidowicz, 'A Walking Tour of the Three Sohos', in Mason (ed.), 2009; George Demidowicz, *The Soho Industrial Buildings: Manufactory, Mint and Foundry*, forthcoming.

of his work. Illustrative material has also been used as a primary source in the study of the park in which Boulton set his house and manufactory. Work by Phillada Ballard, Shena Mason and the present author has used the sketches and watercolours of John Phillip alongside maps and archival evidence to produce detailed information on the development of the estate.⁴⁰

While an impressive range of scholarship on Boulton is extant, significant aspects of his work remain to be explored. This thesis considers some of those areas, drawing upon the illustrative material to a greater extent than has been done previously, and analysing its production, reception and dissemination. Consideration is given to the role of images in Boulton's marketing of his products and I argue that he was aware that his enterprise was so large people had difficulty grasping it; so he set out to find a way of drawing the various businesses and products together. In putting forth its argument, this thesis draws on letters, notebooks, contemporary magazines, directories, visitors' descriptions and journals, some of which were written for publication, for public consumption, although most were not. It uncovers new material on the early development of the aquatint process in Britain and the practicalities behind the commissioning, production, pricing and distribution of prints which is of wider interest to art historians.

The theoretical approaches which underpin this thesis apply in similar ways to most of the images and are outlined here in order to avoid repetition within the main text. The work considers images of Soho and of Boulton, some of which

⁴⁰ This began with reports commissioned from Dr Ballard and was developed into Phillada Ballard, Val Loggie and Shena Mason, *A Lost Landscape: Matthew Boulton's Gardens at Soho*, Chichester, 2009.

initially appear to be very similar, but as Janet Wolff has argued, images are not self-contained entities, they are the result of specific practices by particular groups of people, undertaken in particular conditions. The resulting images 'bear the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions of existence of those groups.'⁴¹ They are dependent on the people who constructed them, the context in which that was undertaken and in which they were expected to be received, so there are subtle differences, even where images were produced by the same artist.⁴² This work explores the messages which Boulton and the others involved in the production of these images meant to convey to their audiences and how they did this. However, images have meanings beyond those considered and intended by the authors. Meaning is not inherent in images; it is the product of social interaction between image, viewers and context. It is not fixed, but produced as an image is consumed by audiences, actively created by each viewer who will bring their own experiences to each reading. Images are polysemic, often making available more meanings than are at first apparent to any given viewer. They have layers of meaning, they reference those that preceded and surround them, and the context in which they are viewed.⁴³ Interpretation often happens automatically, we apply learned aesthetic codes and representational conventions.⁴⁴ These are not fixed, but shaped by networks; different people have different bodies of knowledge, influencing the way they interpret visual signs, so there are

⁴¹ Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1981, p.49.

⁴² I have continued to use the term context but note the concerns expressed in Meike Bal and Norman Bryson, 'Semiotics and Art History', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 73, No.2 (Jun. 1991) p.175. Sturken and Cartwright, p.47. See for example catalogue 8 and 10.

⁴³ Sturken and Cartwright, p.42.

⁴⁴ Bal termed these semiotic ground. Richard Clay, 'Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV; iconoclasm and the transformation of signs' in Boldrick and Clays (eds.), *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, Aldershot, 2007; Sturken and Cartwright, p.25.

different meanings for different people at any given time. Yet, there are likely to be dominant or shared meanings among particular groups; viewers with a shared cultural background will tend to interpret the text in similar ways and Boulton used this when planning images and their accompanying text.⁴⁵

Learned codes and conventions change over time so that, even for an individual an image or an object does not have a fixed meaning.⁴⁶ In 1789 John Byng had written of Richard Arkwright's three magnificent cotton mills which supported the local cottagers.⁴⁷ In 1792 he recognised that there were different ways of considering the site, noting he wrote as a tourist, that 'as a policeman, a citizen, or a statesman, I enter not the field'. He complained of the destruction of the prospect, the quiet, the 'beauty of Nature' and every rural thought but did go on to admit that the mills brought wealth to Arkwright's family and the country, as well as employment which reduced social problems.⁴⁸ The understanding of a modern audience, with greater consumption of visual culture and a knowledge of how factories developed post-Soho will be very different to those of an eighteenth-century viewer.

As this thesis demonstrates, the hermeneutic problem, the fact that the intended meanings of an image specific to a particular culture and time may not be understood by someone outside that setting, is a recurring issue. Modern viewers bring their own associations, experiences and preconceptions to an image and are unable to replicate those of an eighteenth-century

⁴⁵ Roy Porter, 'Review article: Seeing the past', *Past and Present*, No.118 (Feb. 1988), p.196, Sturken and Cartwright, p.45.

⁴⁶ Sturken and Cartwright, p.4

⁴⁷ C.B. Andrews, *The Torrington Diaries*, London, 1934, Vol i, p.xix.

⁴⁸ C.B. Andrews, 1934, Vol iii, p.92.

viewer.⁴⁹ For example, at least some eighteenth-century viewers would have a shared understanding that the building in the background of the von Breda portrait (figure 37) was actually a factory, for all its use of domestic architectural features, simply because they knew about the manufactory and its role in Boulton's life. As noted in chapter four, modern viewers do not necessarily bring this knowledge with them; the image has been catalogued as showing Soho House in the background.⁵⁰ Similarly, eighteenth-century viewers would have been aware of Boulton's minting achievements and interpreted the disc illustrated in both the von Breda and Beechey (figure 40) portraits using that information, but modern writers have read it differently.⁵¹ Recovering eighteenth-century meanings is a challenge; it is often only possible for us to speculate about the meanings senders hoped would be decoded. Sometimes very little evidence is available. However, the Archives of Soho provide remarkable depth of information to help scholars rise to the complex challenge of interpretation.

The eighteenth-century audience cannot be homogenised; viewers come to a text as individuals, shaped by their own experiences, values, historical and cultural knowledge. The images studied here were consciously prepared for consumption among different groups of viewers, and to convey particular meanings. This is not to suggest that the images had an unusually wide circulation. With the exception of the poster for the *Soho Insurance Society*

⁴⁹ Sturken and Cartwright, p.2.

⁵⁰ Stephen Deuchar, *Painting, Politics & Porter: Samuel Whitbread II (1764-1815) and British Art*, London, 1984, pp.43-4.

⁵¹ Celina Fox, *The Arts of Industry in the Age of Enlightenment*, New Haven and London, 2009, p.326 suggests it is a cameo in the von Breda and a polished sample of blue john in the Beechey, relating it to the mineral specimen in the dome.

(1792) considered in chapter one, these images would not generally have been seen by audiences beyond those who collected prints or read books or magazines. The staff who made Boulton's products would not have seen these images. Rather I argue that Boulton used very similar views to suggest the scope of the businesses or his status as a gentleman by carefully considering the audience for each image. This was achieved through the adjustment of details such as the inclusion of inscribed viewers, changes in title, or placement in a particular magazine or book with accompanying text. Some images conveyed more than one message to more than one group of viewers, the insurance poster (figure 12), was superficially designed simply to be seen by members of the society, to make the rules available. It was also used to portray a more subtle message of Boulton as benevolent employer and Soho as a seminary of the arts.

The context in which a viewer considers an image also affects the way they will read that image.⁵² This includes the physical surroundings at the time of viewing, which for the images discussed in this thesis could vary from looking at a poster while on a factory tour, to a leisurely viewing of a print collection in a library or reading a radical magazine in a coffee house. Images can move across social arenas, producing a change in meaning, the image associated with the insurance society poster could be viewed by factory workers or by print collectors who would read it differently.⁵³ Associated and surrounding material also affect interpretation: the other illustrations in a book, their subject

⁵² Wolfgang Kemp, 'The Work of Art and Its Beholder: the Methodology of the Aesthetics of Reception' in Cheetham, Holley and Moxey, *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Subjects in Contemporary Perspective* Cambridge, 1998; Sturken and Cartwright, p.28

⁵³ Sturken and Cartwright, p.24, see catalogue 3.

and method of depiction, the accompanying text, and the prominence given to a particular image, (for example, where it sits within the hierarchy of the volume and whether it is mentioned on the title page, as some images of Soho were).⁵⁴ Such variables needed to be taken into account by all those involved in the production of the images that I argue shared a branding function.

Chapter three will argue that what the images do not show, (the silences or absences, the things that were deliberately excluded), are as significant to meaning as that which is visually connoted more directly.⁵⁵ Factory workers were shown in the earliest views, but completely missing in later examples. The images cannot convey the noise and smell which must surely have been a large part of a visit to such a site; Jabez Maud Fisher wrote 'The very air buzzes with the variety of noises.'⁵⁶ Patty Fothergill, 'went to Clay's manufactory and I was very much delighted with it, but the smell of pasting the Paper together and the Polishing is beyond anything I ever smelt in my life.'⁵⁷ The smoke and dirt associated with factories are also largely missing from the views of Soho. Other things are implied rather than actually depicted in the images, most notably the Mint which is mentioned in accompanying text but is never clearly visible, hidden behind the stables or trees.

⁵⁴ For example catalogue 2 and 8.

⁵⁵ Wolff, 1981, p.124.

⁵⁶ Kenneth Morgan (ed.), *An American Quaker in the British Isles: The Travel Journals of Jabez Maud Fisher, 1775-1779*, Oxford, 1992, p.253.

⁵⁷ Patty Fothergill's diary, 14 Aug 1793, private collection. She was the daughter of Boulton's business partner, John Fothergill and was referring to Henry Clay's papier-mâché works.

The thesis will argue that the images considered were collectively authored by various people exercising direct and indirect control over production. Like the products of the manufactory, the images cannot be attributed to a single designer or maker, many hands were involved, some credited, others not.⁵⁸

The thesis will draw on the theories of Barthes and Foucault regarding authors, readers and collective production, seeking to move beyond using apparent authorship of a work as a means of classification or as the focal point for analysis.⁵⁹ It will look to situate the authors in the 'specific historical circumstances' under which the works were produced, in order to explore the authors' possible motivations and intentions.⁶⁰

Some of the images were signed, which at first glance simplifies the question of authorship. These signatures can lead to the images being categorised in a particular way; catalogues, including the one attached to this thesis tend to organise works by artists. However, this is an overly simplistic view, some images are unsigned, others are signed by the engraver while the artist of the drawing from which it is taken is not identified; yet others credit the original artist, the engraver and the publisher, the creative credit was shared.⁶¹ Those names carried associations and claims to distinction; for example, the naming of artists such as Beechey conveyed some of his status on a print, the engraver John Walker traded on the standing of his uncle.⁶² Even the

⁵⁸ Clifford, 1999, p.244.

⁵⁹ Roland Barthes, trans. Stephen Heath, *Death of the Author in Image, Music, Text*, London, 1977, pp.142-8; Michel Foucault, 'What is an author?' in J.V. Harari, *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post Structural Criticism*, Ithaca, 1980, Wolff, pp.117-136.

⁶⁰ Wolff, 1981.

⁶¹ B.E. Maidment, *Reading popular prints 1790-1870*, Manchester, 1990, p.3. For instance catalogue 6 is unsigned, 7, 8 and 9 are signed by the engraver only, 5 and 15 identify original artist, engraver and publisher.

⁶² Catalogue 16 and chapter four, catalogue 7 and chapter three.

apparently straightforward works by John Phillip, considered in chapter two, are not the product of a single author. Sometimes he copied the work of other artists, Amos Green physically drew part of one of the images and Phillip's tuition from Hollins and Barber influenced his choice of subjects and methods of depiction.⁶³

Boulton and others at Soho would also have exercised control over the images and the way the factory was portrayed. This would have varied; for some images a large degree of control was possible as Boulton arranged for their production, paid for them and was sent proofs of the accompanying text, for others he had less practical input.⁶⁴ It has not always been possible to determine the extent to which Boulton was able to influence these images, but the combination of the image with archival research has shed new light on these relationships. There are other, even more hidden, authors. The printer and his assistant are rarely named, but the way in which a plate is inked and wiped has a dramatic effect on the appearance of the print, hence Sharp's concern over supervising the printer, revealed in chapter four.⁶⁵ If colour was to be added, the colours used, the quality and method of application affected the look of the finished plate. Other, far more distant authors exerted influence, changes in print technology and fashions in styles of depiction influenced the way Boulton and Soho were portrayed.⁶⁶

⁶³ BMAG2003.32.98 is copied from one of the plates in William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye [...]*, [1782], London, 2005, see catalogue 24 for the work with Green.

⁶⁴ Catalogue 10 and 11 clearly indicate the degree of control Boulton sometimes achieved.

⁶⁵ Tom Gretton, 'Signs for Labour-Value in Printed Pictures After the Photomechanical Revolution: Mainstream Changes and Extreme Cases around 1900', *Oxford Art Journal*, 28.3, 2005, p.374. I am grateful to Deb Walker who gave me the opportunity to undertake printmaking and to understand the impact that inking and wiping can have.

⁶⁶ See for example p.82 for changing fashions in viewpoints.

Some of the images considered in this thesis were placed within books or magazines. Their publishers, editors and patrons also had messages they wished to convey and audiences they wished to reach which would have influenced the image, its production, layout and accompanying text. The way a binder organised a book, whether he placed plates in the correct orientation and in a position where they could easily be found affected the way they were read. Each of the publications was produced for different audiences; it would be expected to be received by people with varying understandings, priorities and ideologies.⁶⁷ All of the images are the result of varying degrees of discussion, influence and work by a number of people. Each of these 'authors' will have had slightly different 'intentions' for the work. The artist may have wanted to highlight his understanding of fashionable theories, the engraver to showcase his technical skill, the printer to work quickly and the publisher to emphasise that his publication had access to the latest technical research.⁶⁸ These intentions overlapped and combined with Boulton's own to different extents. The anticipated audience also influenced the method of depiction, the production method and cost. The layout of the publication, the quantity required and the available budget impacted on the final appearance of the image. Francis Eginton produced an aquatint of Soho Manufactory (figure 9), considered in chapter one, but when an image was required in large quantities for inclusion in a directory a new view, an etching which drew on elements of Eginton's image was produced (figure 10). This was cheaper to

⁶⁷ For instance the *Monthly Magazine* audience would be expected to be interested in science with radical sympathies while purchasers of the *Copper Plate Magazine* would be expected to be interested in aesthetics.

⁶⁸ Tom Gretton 'Clastic icons: prints taken from broken or reassembled blocks in some 'popular prints' of the Western tradition', Boldrick and Clay (eds.), 2007.

print in the quantities required. The medium in which an image was produced was also part of its message; an aquatint carried different connotations from a line engraving.⁶⁹ The medium also shaped the content of an image; a line engraving required more definition of details than an aquatint which could replicate the wash effects of watercolour.

Most images have meanings preferred by their producer, although if there is more than one producer there are likely to be different preferred meanings. The thesis argues that the main messages that Boulton wished to convey remained relatively consistent, but incorporated nuances to accommodate the audiences discussed above. He did not depict a dirty, noisy, smoky manufactory but a large, neoclassical building set within a landscaped park enjoyed by visitors. He wanted the viewer to understand that business was beneficial, that it produced beautiful aesthetic products in civilised surroundings. He sought to emphasise the scale of his enterprise by using the large scale building and by highlighting the size of the site through showing the buildings behind. Boulton needed to impress potential clients and to show his understanding of fashionable taste and aesthetic conventions so used the 'beautiful' Principal Building and its setting to do this. As his understanding of how to use such images developed, changes occurred in the depictions; for instance, staff undertaking manual work were removed.

The thesis seeks not just to consider the visual evidence, but also to recover the relationship between text and image that was intended at the time of

⁶⁹ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message*, New York, 1967; Hal Foster, 'Medium is the Market', *London Review of Books*. 9 Oct 2008.

production.⁷⁰ Saussure argued that text has to be read linearly, that it can be controlled, while an image can be read in different orders.⁷¹ There has long been a link between word and image, text appears in the compositions of objects that are generally considered 'visual', e.g. prints and tokens contain lettering in the form of titles and captions.⁷² Barthes argued that text and image stand in a complimentary relationship, but that we tend to prioritise text; he began his analysis with the linguistic message stating that this is the first one that spectators look for in decoding meaning.⁷³ This assertion is debatable, even for viewers at the time Barthes was writing, but again the hermeneutic problem arises; we cannot be certain what individual eighteenth-century viewers would have privileged. The juxtaposition of text and image is a powerful combination; it can dictate the meaning of an image or encourage viewers to look at it differently. Barthes theorised that this relationship can work in different ways, text can anchor the meaning of an image, selecting and fixing a specific reading, removing the terror of uncertain signs.⁷⁴ He went on to suggest that text can also relay; it can set out additional meanings not found in an image. This can be more discursive and invite different interpretations. Anchorage can be ideological; indeed, this can be its principal function, steering the viewer towards a particular reading.⁷⁵ Information can also appear in images which is neither anchored nor relayed by text.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ The text associated with the images considered in this thesis is given in full as appendices.

⁷¹ Mary Klages, *Literary Theory*, London, 2006, p.37.

⁷² Porter, 1988, pp.188-9; Stephen Connolly, 'Unseeing the Past: Vision and Modern British History', *Visual Resources*, Vol.24, No.2, June 2008, p.112.

⁷³ Barthes, 1977, p.39.

⁷⁴ Barthes, 1977, p.39.

⁷⁵ Barthes, 1977, pp.40-1.

⁷⁶ For instance the clock above the worker's entrance, see p.38.

Many visual images of the eighteenth century survive separated from their original purpose and setting as the books and magazines that contained them were broken up and integrated into collections or sold.⁷⁷ This thesis seeks to re-establish the link with the text that was originally intended to be read alongside the images, the accounts of Soho and Boulton which are included in the appendix, but are now rarely considered.⁷⁸ It will explore the ways in which that text anchors and relays meanings in relation to the image. The relationship between text and its associated images was influenced by the practicalities of printing methods available at the time. If text is included on an intaglio copper plate it has to be cut into that plate in reverse. So, most of the printed images considered here were single sheets, printed separately from their text and bound into the volume later, often at some distance from the relevant text. Placing a plate at the front of a volume was easier for the binder and was useful in promoting that volume but separated it from its text. We cannot tell how eighteenth-century viewers reacted to separation of text and image. They may have been more excited at the possibilities of illustration than frustrated by the separation. These separations did, however, make it difficult to predict the extent to which images and text would anchor and relay as the producer could not be sure that they will be read together. Neither could the producer be sure if text or image would be considered first, either from preference of the viewer, or the order they were found in the volume.

⁷⁷ Some material was designed to be broken up in this way, the accompanying text or titles provided classification, see for instance catalogue 6 which includes the title of the publication on the print and catalogue 7 which includes the county of the subject for easy geographical classification.

⁷⁸ Sometimes it has not been possible to rediscover that original setting. Catalogue 1 survives as only one known copy, cut out of its source and pasted into a scrapbook.

The relationship had to work both ways, as well as each element working in isolation.

This thesis also explores the titles and captions, the text which is actually on, or immediately adjacent to, the images. This has generally maintained its connection with the visual material. Slightly different titles were given to images, dependent on the messages the authors wished to convey. Archival evidence shows that the title of the print of Boulton after Beechey was carefully considered, as discussed in chapter four. Some material was not titled, for example that used privately or as a transitional stage in the preparation of prints. John Phillip used captions in various ways; some were on the front, others on the back, sometimes there was no form of caption. Those on the back were lost when the work was pasted into an album in the nineteenth century, and only recovered when conservation concerns lead to the removal of material from the album. Some printed images carry considerably more text, figure 29 lists the businesses to be found on the site while figure 8 gives background information in both French and German. The language in which the images were titled carries connotations, the obvious one of being aimed at a continental audience, but another seeks to draw on the association of French with sophistication, taste and the aquatint process (figure 9).⁷⁹

Many of the images considered were multiplied; they were reproduced in their original and different formats. This is an important aspect of the way they

⁷⁹ See p.85.

were used, massification of images meant they could be placed in situations inaccessible to the originals, and were available to much wider audiences.⁸⁰

Some were reproduced in hundreds or thousands, others on a much smaller scale, just one or two copies and yet others not at all. The number of copies available affected the status of the image; traditionally prints have been viewed as lower status, to an extent because of the numbers that still exist, fine art objects are valued partly because they are perceived as unique.⁸¹

Boulton was aware of the impact of massification of images, his coins, tokens and medals made iconography available to huge audiences and he experimented with reproducing paintings through a 'mechanical' process.⁸²

Different methods were used for multiplying the images of Boulton and Soho; some were copied by hand in the studio, others reproduced mechanically through printing. The printed reproductions added considerable further labour through the work of the engraver and the printer who had to be paid, moving towards the image being seen as commodities rather than works of art.⁸³

This implied commercial exchange with an audience was not always as straightforward as might be expected; private plates were not intended to

⁸⁰ Massification is a term borrowed from Tom Gretton, 2007, p.153.

⁸¹ Maidment, p.3; Sturken and Cartwright, p. 34.

⁸² Richard Clay, 'How Matthew Boulton helped make Birmingham 'the art capital of the world' in Clay and Tungate, *Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money*, Studley, 2009; Although known at the time as mechanical paintings recent research has suggested that a very high level of hand finishing was involved, Barbara Fogarty, *Matthew Boulton and Francis Eginton's Mechanical Paintings: Production and Consumption 1777 to 1781*, MPhil thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010; David Saunders and Antony Griffiths, Two 'mechanical' oil paintings after de Louthembourg: history and technique, paper presented at conference Studying Old Master Paintings: Technology and Practice, National Gallery, London, 16-18 September 2009, forthcoming.

⁸³ Tom Gretton, 'Signs for Labour-Value in Printed Pictures After the Photomechanical Revolution: Mainstream Changes and Extreme Cases around 1900', *Oxford Art Journal*, 28.3, 2005, p.374.

make money but were produced to enhance status.⁸⁴ The distribution of the images also affected their meaning, who received them and how effectively they were disseminated influenced the impact of their intended message. Distribution methods for these images ranged from reliance on the circulation of existing magazines, as seen in chapter three, to actively drawing up lists of who was to receive copies of a print of Boulton, shown in chapter four.

The relationship between original and copy is complex, reproduction can separate an object from its initial intended audience so it is received in a different way. Some of the images considered here were produced to be multiplied, the original was created for the purpose of its own reproduction.⁸⁵ Others were produced for their own sakes like many of Phillip's sketches, yet others, like von Breda's portrait of Boulton, considered in chapter four, were initially produced as works in their own right, the decision to produce other versions came later. Each original and copy has then followed different paths of ownership and physical condition, and some originals are no longer available.⁸⁶ Multiplication meant relatively socially diverse groups of consumers could more easily see and own a version of an image, making it an item of popular culture.⁸⁷ Such items, representing the Principal Building or Boulton himself made Soho familiar and understandable to a far larger audience than those who could physically visit the factory.

⁸⁴ For example the Sharp print of Boulton after Beechey considered in chapter four.

⁸⁵ Benjamin, pp.4-5. For example the works of Eginton junior which were to be engraved, considered in chapter three.

⁸⁶ Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 1935-6, accessed via <http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html>, p.4.

⁸⁷ Sturken and Cartwright, p.35, p.39.

A multi-disciplinary approach and collaboration between academics, archivists and curators is necessary to make the most of the considerable, diverse and complex body of visual evidence pertaining to Boulton and Soho.⁸⁸ Such links between different sources and disciplines have been at the heart of the production of this thesis. It seeks to consider visual representations of Boulton and Soho in new ways, exploring, as far as is possible, the motivation behind their production and their communication of intended messages. This is complex, it is not possible to determine a definite intention, particularly not of image makers operating over two hundred years ago; it is only possible to look for evidence to suggest possible motives. Tom Gretton has questioned the whole notion of intentions, arguing that they are 'retrodictive fictions' constructed after the event or shaped by the answer expected by whoever is asking about them.⁸⁹ Even if it was possible to identify the intention and proposed audience it could not be guaranteed that the audience interpreted it as the producer(s) hoped they would.⁹⁰ As I have argued above, the received meanings of the images, the ones the viewers actually took away are complex and wide-ranging, and often difficult to consider as there is even less evidence available.⁹¹ This thesis therefore seeks to offer plausible, informed arguments about intention and reception and in doing so, has the enormous benefit of the vast Archives of Soho.

⁸⁸ Katy Layton-Jones, 'Visual Collections as Historical Evidence', *Visual Resources*, Vol.24, No.2, June 2008, pp.105-7; Katy Layton-Jones, 'The synthesis of town and trade: visualizing provincial urban identity, 1800-1858', *Urban History*, 35, 1(2008), pp.73-4.

⁸⁹ Gretton in Boldrick and Clay (eds.), p.149.

⁹⁰ Maidment, p.2.

⁹¹ Sturken and Cartwright, p.47.

Drawing the chapters of the thesis together into a cogent whole is its focus on one man and one place. As will be shown in chapter one, Boulton placed his manufacturing processes in one place to develop a large manufactory, noted and commented upon for its size. He created a tasteful and impressive building as a frontage for that site and used its image to stand for the whole factory and its output. He encouraged people to visit the manufactory and to experience that place for themselves. He then constructed an elaborate parkland setting for that factory, considered in chapter two, and ensured that depictions of the site showed visitors enjoying it, as demonstrated in chapter three. The 1792 von Breda portrait of Boulton, (figure 37) firmly linked him to that place by showing the manufactory building in the background. Once he had established the location and image of Soho as connoting himself and his goods he no longer needed to reinforce them as actively, the Beechey portrait (figure 40) did not include the manufactory and access to the site for visitors was withdrawn. Viewers were expected to be sufficiently aware of Soho to be able to picture it without assistance. Over his lifetime Boulton built up a link between the names and images of Boulton and Soho, and the products made there, he created a brand identity.

CHAPTER ONE

DEVELOPING A BRAND IDENTITY 1760 - 1792

This chapter considers Boulton's businesses, the creation of the manufactory at Soho, the shifts in the manufacture of goods and the expansion of the range of products. It shows how Boulton created a significant building to front the manufactory and goes on to look at the early visual representations of that building, to consider the increasing sophistication with which it was portrayed, and to argue that those images were used to begin to build what would now be called a 'brand'. Such activity was intended to tackle the difficulties of marketing the diverse output of the businesses based at Soho by representing the varied output under one identity which would stand for quality and value for money. This chapter will show that these images were shaped by many people; they were the result of multiple authorship. It will also consider some of the other marketing methods used to anchor and reinforce Soho's identity, aiming to build customers' trust in the manufactory's products.

The early business

Matthew Boulton went to work for his father in 1745 aged seventeen, was made a partner at twenty-one and inherited the business aged thirty-one, on the death of his father in 1759.⁹² Boulton senior's toy business was well-established at Snow Hill in Birmingham by 1745, with a water-powered mill for

⁹² Dickinson, 1937, pp.28-30.

rolling metals at Sarehole by 1756.⁹³ The firm were exporting; in 1760 Boulton gave evidence before a House of Commons Select Committee which suggested he was used to trading with Spain, Portugal and Germany.⁹⁴ This was not unusual; in 1759 Birmingham manufacturers John Taylor and Samuel Garbett gave evidence that the toy trade employed 20,000 people in Birmingham and neighbouring towns, and produced about £600,000 worth of goods a year, £500,000 worth of which were exported.⁹⁵ National and international networks were crucial and operated in both directions, goods were sent out from Birmingham, but ideas, designs and skills were brought to Birmingham from across Britain and Europe.⁹⁶ Wishing to expand the business and further develop foreign markets, Boulton leased a mill at Soho, outside Birmingham, in 1761, and took on John Fothergill, with a range of foreign contacts, as a business partner in 1762.⁹⁷

Although Birmingham's toy trade at that time was mostly made up of small manufacturers, there were larger-scale businesses. Alcock and Kempson had 300 to 400 workers in the 1740s and 50s. John Taylor claimed to be employing 600 people in 1759, and by 1766 was considered the most

⁹³ Demidowicz, forthcoming; R.A. Pelham, 'The water-power crisis in Birmingham in the eighteenth century', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, Vol. IX, No.1, 1963, pp.79-81; Eric Robinson, 'Boulton and Fothergill, 1762-1782, and the Birmingham Export of Hardware', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, Vol. VII, no.1 1959, p.61; Shena Mason, 'A new species of gentleman' in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.32.

⁹⁴ Robinson, 1959, pp.61-2.

⁹⁵ Robinson, 1959, p.63. However Hopkins suggests that Taylor and Garbett's export figures were exaggerated, and that the domestic market was more important to Birmingham's manufacturing sector as a whole, Eric Hopkins, *Birmingham: The First Manufacturing Town in the World, 1760-1840*, London, 1989, p.16. Jones, 2008, p. 44 agrees that the export figures are excessive.

⁹⁶ Berg, 2005, p.189, Smiles, pp.172-5.

⁹⁷ Smiles, p.169; Dickinson, p.45; BAH3782/12/60/12 JF to MB 8 Feb 1764. Josiah Wedgwood took on his partner, Thomas Bentley for very similar reasons, Robin Reilly, 'Josiah Wedgwood, A Lifetime of Achievement' in Hilary Young (ed.) *The Genius of Wedgwood*, London, 1995, p.46.

important manufacturer in Birmingham.⁹⁸ Taylor co-founded Lloyds Bank with Sampson Lloyd and when he died in 1775 was reputed to be worth £200,000.⁹⁹ He made gilt buttons, japanned and gilt snuff boxes, and various enamelled articles.¹⁰⁰ Resta Patching visited his factory in 1755, when he noted the division of labour and scale of the business: 'We were assured that he employs 500 Persons in those two Branches [gilt buttons and enamel snuff boxes]' while each button passed through the hands of seventy workmen.¹⁰¹ It is likely that Taylor and his production methods were a major influence on Boulton and the way he organised his business.¹⁰² Wedgwood referred to 'the Great Taylor' while Boulton called him 'our great manufacturer' in 1767 but, in 1769, accused him of attempting to lure staff from Soho.¹⁰³ Samuel Garbett (1717-1803), the other manufacturer who gave evidence to the House of Commons Committee, had a variety of interests. He refined metals, produced buttons and hardware in Birmingham, iron at Carron in Stirlingshire, and had a chemical works in Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, the latter two enterprises with Dr. John Roebuck (1718-1794).¹⁰⁴ Garbett told Lord Lansdowne in 1787 that 'our object is to excell in pretty appearances for little money – And in that respect we are wonderfully eminent.'¹⁰⁵ Taylor and

⁹⁸ Robinson 1959, p.63; Maxine Berg, 'Inventors in the World of Goods' in Bruland and O'Brien (eds.), *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism*, Oxford, 1998, pp.21-50. pp.23-8.

⁹⁹ Robinson 1959, pp.62-3.

¹⁰⁰ William Hutton, *History of Birmingham*, fourth edition, Birmingham, 1809, p.85.

¹⁰¹ Resta Patching, *Four topographical letters, written in July 1755, upon a journey thro' Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire, &c. From a gentleman of London, to his brother and sister in town [..]* Newcastle upon Tyne, 1757, pp.62-3.

¹⁰² Clifford, 1999, p.246.

¹⁰³ Jones, 2008, p.53; Hopkins, 1989, p.84; Berg, 2005 p.172.

¹⁰⁴ G to P&F Samuel Garbett; Goodison, 2002, p.366 n.28.

¹⁰⁵ Jones, 2008, p.39. Lansdowne was formerly the Earl of Shelburne, referred to elsewhere.

Garbett suggested that Birmingham's success was due to the wide range of goods and greater mechanisation, which meant lower production costs.¹⁰⁶

In order to rise above the average small workshop, as Taylor had done, it was necessary to export. Most foreign orders were taken by factors who would send out samples or engraved drawings showing designs.¹⁰⁷ They would then assemble an order for the customer, generally from a variety of manufacturers, and provide credit.¹⁰⁸ Credit was essential, and small-scale manufacturers did not generally have sufficient cashflow to be able to provide this.¹⁰⁹ Boulton and Fothergill dealt directly with continental customers, so factors refused them orders. Boulton's answer was to 'secure as many foreign friends as possible', but he recognised that customers did not want to have to place lots of small orders with different manufacturers which would increase shipping charges and create more administrative work.¹¹⁰ He also realised that by dealing direct with Boulton and Fothergill, foreign customers would alienate the factors. He wrote that if they were to keep a staff of six or seven hundred they 'must not let such orders as these escape us, but must, in order to obtain a part [of an order], supply the whole; and as the rest furnishes a tolerable business to our factors, why will it not afford the same advantages to us?'¹¹¹ In order to act as factors, Boulton and Fothergill needed to increase

¹⁰⁶ Robinson, 1959, p.63.

¹⁰⁷ Robinson, 1959, pp.72-3.

¹⁰⁸ Eric Robinson, 'Eighteenth-Century Commerce and Fashion: Matthew Boulton's Marketing Techniques', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol.16, No. 1 (1963), p.40.

¹⁰⁹ As Berg notes, 2005, p.183 major international merchants became bankers for their clients.

¹¹⁰ BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766.

¹¹¹ BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766. The mercantile business is frequently overlooked;

their own range of goods and to sell those of other manufacturers on commission.¹¹² To achieve this they needed a warehouse in Birmingham and a partner who spoke French and German. Boulton argued that those who did not have time to come to Soho could visit the warehouse, that the firm would be more aware of visitors to Birmingham, and that it would be easier to organise small orders from Birmingham suppliers. Dealers from the north of England and Dublin who passed through Birmingham on their way to London could visit the warehouse.¹¹³

Retailers placed emphasis on variety which was frequently considered more important than price. Their drive to provide novelty for their customers forced producers to generate new products.¹¹⁴ Boulton deliberately expanded the range of goods to include a large number of different articles in a variety of metals.¹¹⁵ This diversification also meant that the firm were less vulnerable to the collapse of the market for a single product, such as when shoe buckles fell out of favour, to be replaced by shoe-strings.¹¹⁶ Those around Boulton complained about the practicalities of such a range of products, Fothergill wrote that if Boulton had confined himself 'to one common branch of the articles of this place', their financial difficulties could have been avoided.¹¹⁷

John Scale, general manager, suggested that there 'shoud be no new trades,

Quickenden, 1990, pp.21-2 suggests that the merchant business was part of the early partnership, was abandoned around 1763, but was again part of the business by 1766.

¹¹² Robinson, 1963, p. 40.

¹¹³ BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766.

¹¹⁴ Craske 1999, pp.189-194.

¹¹⁵ Quickenden, 1990, p.23; Goodison, 2002, p.19-30; Hopkins, 1984, p.44;

BAH3782/12/108/6 List of Articles of Soho Manufactory, 1771; Robinson, 1963, pp.44-5.

¹¹⁶ Christine Wiskin, *Women, Finance and Credit in England, c.1780-1826*, PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2000, p.182; Z.A.A. Scott, *The Inquiring Sort: Ideas and Learning in Late Eighteenth-Century Birmingham*, PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, pp.158-160.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, 1963, p.48 n.8, dates it to c.1773.

nor any expensive alterations or schemes until the profits would admit of them.¹¹⁸

Boulton was also concerned with producing high volumes of particular items in order to fulfil big orders and ensure cost-effective production.¹¹⁹ Quickenden argues that Boulton's general philosophy was to make large quantities of goods at reasonable prices through organisation, efficiency and technical innovation.¹²⁰ However, he was not prepared to do this at the expense of quality; he wrote in 1757 of the danger of price dropping until both the goods and the business 'become rubbish and so answer nobody's purpose.'¹²¹ Birmingham goods had a reputation for being cheap and low quality.¹²²

Boulton told Fothergill that

The prejudice which Birmingham hath so justly established against itself makes every fault conspicuous in all articles that have the least pretension to taste. How can I expect the public to countenance rubbish from Soho, when they can procure sound and perfect work from any other quarter?¹²³

His plan was to 'merit Orders by superior work'.¹²⁴ The mechanisation of some processes would help with this search for quality, ensuring that items such as pearl buttons were exactly circular and uniform in size.¹²⁵ Many of the tasks undertaken at Soho could have been carried out at smaller operations, in back street workshops, and by outsourcing.¹²⁶ Gathering them

¹¹⁸ G to P&F, John Scale; BAH3782/12/72/118 Memorandum by John Scale, c. Feb 1773.

¹¹⁹ Robinson, 1963, pp.43-4; BAH3782/1/10 B&F to Valentine Green, 6 August 1774.

¹²⁰ Quickenden, 1990, p.101.

¹²¹ BAH3782/1/40 MB to Timothy Hollis 15 Jan 1757.

¹²² Smiles, p.166.

¹²³ Smiles, p.170.

¹²⁴ Robinson, 1963 p. 44.

¹²⁵ Robinson, 1963 p. 44.

¹²⁶ Barrie Trinder, *The Making of the Industrial Landscape*, Gloucester, 1987, p.53; Berg, 1998, p.26. This is not to suggest that Boulton did not outsource work as well, Berg, 2005, p.171.

together in one place meant discipline and more consistent quality could be ensured. It involved the employment of a group of trusted foremen who enforced Boulton's standards as the enterprise became too large for him to oversee himself.¹²⁷ In order to expand the range of goods, increase mechanisation and establish the factoring business, Boulton had to reorganise the way the firm used its sites and undertake a major building project; a project that would prove key to building his businesses' identity, not least through the production of printed images of the premises.

The site at Soho and the Principal Building

When Boulton inherited the business from his father in 1759 it operated mainly from premises at Snow Hill in Birmingham (figure 1).¹²⁸ In 1761 he took over the tenancy of a mill at Soho, Handsworth, hoping for a reliable source of water power which he had been unable to find in Birmingham.¹²⁹ In June 1762, John Fothergill became a partner and operations were moved to Soho. Snow Hill was retained as a warehouse and dwelling, Boulton and his second wife living there until they moved to Soho House in 1766.¹³⁰ Some building work took place in the early years, including a warehouse, workshops, housing, and a new water mill built with the help of the inventor

¹²⁷ Smiles, pp.481-2; Quickenden, 1990, p.102.

¹²⁸ There was a rolling mill at Sarehole but Snow Hill was where most of the work took place.

¹²⁹ Pelham, p.79.

¹³⁰ Dickinson, p.45-6; Robinson, 1957; BAH3782/6/190/175 Joseph Hunt to MB 27 June 1765.

John Wyatt (1700-1766).¹³¹ For a while the business operated across the two sites but this became increasingly troublesome, clerks threatened to leave, it was difficult to oversee workmen and Boulton complained of the loss of materials and goods through having 'our patterns, goods, and materials scatter'd about in so many different street[s] and places.'¹³² The construction of new buildings at Soho would bring the business together on one site and accommodate the development of a platedware manufactory.¹³³ The decision to consolidate at Soho may also have been connected to the death of Boulton's brother-in-law in 1764, and Boulton's expectation of his estates which could be sold or mortgaged to provide capital.¹³⁴

In 1765-7 the Principal Building was built, designed by John Wyatt's nephew, architect William Wyatt (1734-1780), whom Boulton and Fothergill had already used at the manufactory site, possibly assisted by his brother Samuel (1737-1807).¹³⁵ Many early eighteenth-century industrial buildings were not purpose-built, but were converted sheds or houses with little opportunity for architectural expression.¹³⁶ Boulton's new building created space for the plated business, but also provided the opportunity to make a statement, a large and fashionable building which gave the impression of a country

¹³¹ Demidowicz, in Dick (ed.), 2009, p118, J.M. Robinson, *The Wyatts: An Architectural Dynasty*, Oxford, 1979, pp.5-9.

¹³² BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766.

¹³³ Demidowicz, forthcoming.

¹³⁴ Goodison, 2002, p.367 note 73; Luke Robinson died in 1764 but his will was not proved until 1767 with Boulton as his sole executor, Mason, 2005, pp.9-12.

¹³⁵ Quickenden, 1990, p.19. J.M. Robinson suggests that a third brother, Benjamin (1744-1818), was also involved. The Wyatts were a large Staffordshire family with a long association with Boulton. Various members of the family later designed and built parts of the Manufactory, Soho House, the Livery Street warehouse and the Albion Mill. Other cousins worked as managers or agents for Boulton. Demidowicz, forthcoming; Demidowicz in Foster, 2005, p.286; J.M. Robinson, pp.9-21, 45-52.

¹³⁶ Tann, 1970, p.149.

mansion (figure 2). For anyone approaching from the turnpike it hid the earlier buildings, including the Dutch-gabled mill constructed in 1761.¹³⁷ The three-storey front façade had a four-storey central pavilion topped with a cupola and two projecting gable ends with pediments. It formed a shallow u-shape around two courtyards with smaller buildings beyond (figure 3).

The use of an architect for an industrial building at this date was unusual. More often engineers or millwrights created practical buildings, determined by the size of the machinery, source of power, and local traditional building methods, without the influence of architectural theory. These were not men who would have been seen the buildings of the Grand Tour, although they would have had access to builder's manuals and pattern books showing designs and details.¹³⁸ Most industrial developments were of a considerably smaller scale, often the result of lack of capital. Boulton, the magnificent self-publicist, described his as 'the largest Hardware manufactory in the World.'¹³⁹ In fact, Boulton and Fothergill also had limited funds and the cost of the principal building far overran its estimates of £2,000 to cost £10,000 causing financial problems which were to plague the firm for years to come.¹⁴⁰

It seems likely that the construction of such an impressive building was related to Boulton's desire to challenge the poor reputation of Birmingham goods. He wanted to improve the standards of design and workmanship and it was important that the building also conveyed this. He needed to demonstrate his

¹³⁷ Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.118.

¹³⁸ Edgar Jones, *Industrial Architecture in Britain 1750-1939*, London, 1985, pp.14-23; Tann, 1970, p.161.

¹³⁹ BAH3782/12/1/43 MB to J.H. Ebbinghaus 2 March 1768.

¹⁴⁰ Demidowicz, forthcoming; Quickenden, 1990, p.33.

understanding of classical taste, order, reason and the fashionable market.¹⁴¹ While operating within the section of society that needed to undertake practical work, he had to be able to mix with, understand and impress that section which did not have to undertake manual labour.¹⁴² The building could also be read as symbolising his social aspirations; manufacturers could seldom afford grand houses, so grand manufactories came to be a substitute.¹⁴³ It is, however, debatable whether he would have gone ahead had he had a realistic idea of the total cost at the outset.¹⁴⁴

No powered machinery was to be placed in the Principal Building which freed it from the constraints this created. The workshops for the plated business were at the rear with large windows for light. Housing for senior managers was in the wings, with a counting house and offices in the centre and warehouses occupying the main front.¹⁴⁵ The entrances to the site signposted the hierarchy of people arriving there, like an aristocratic house there was a large-scale, high-status entrance at the front, and a separate staff entrance to the side. The control over the workers was emphasised by the clock and the bell in the cupola which summoned them to work, showing the importance of timekeeping and the extent to which they had lost management of their own time by selling their labour.¹⁴⁶ Many staff were on day rates so

¹⁴¹ Jones, 1985 p.35; Demidowicz, p.6.

¹⁴² Wolff, 1981, p.51.

¹⁴³ Demidowicz, forthcoming; Tann, 1970, pp.151-7.

¹⁴⁴ It may seem naïve to have expected so much building for so little outlay, but the potter Josiah Wedgwood suffered from exactly the same problem, see p.44.

¹⁴⁵ Demidowicz, forthcoming.

¹⁴⁶ Either there were two clocks or it was moved; figure 8 shows it in the internal courtyard but not above the worker's entrance while figures 9, 10, 19 and 54 show it above the worker's entrance which suggests it was in this position by 1773. For the bell see Goodison, 2002, p.23.

the clock would have been important to ensure timekeeping.¹⁴⁷ It would have suggested to visitors that Boulton delivered on time, was orderly and in command of his workforce.

In 1771 some of the warehousing was converted to a showroom which allowed the nobility and other important visitors to see Soho products, particularly the ormolu, 'in a genteel room & to shew them a proper assortment of things'.¹⁴⁸ This provided an opportunity for visitors to purchase small pieces immediately and to place orders for bespoke goods.¹⁴⁹

Positioning the showroom in such an imposing building reinforced messages about taste and quality that Boulton wished to convey.¹⁵⁰ He also used his home as a showroom, literally selling off the walls. John Hodges told him that a visitor had ordered over £85 worth of mechanical paintings, 'he chose them chiefly from those at your house, and as he wanted them sooner than it was possible to get them up, (by Mrs Boulton's permission) we purpose taking two pieces out of your room.'¹⁵¹

Even before they were complete, the buildings 'begin to look so very sumptuous as to engage the attention of all ranks of people' and in the summer of 1767 Boulton wrote of foreigners or strangers every day 'who are

¹⁴⁷ BAH3782/12/72/118 Memorandum by John Scale, c. Feb 1773. Quickenden, 1990, p.127; Hopkins 1984, p.51.

¹⁴⁸ Goodison, 2002, p.163; BAH3782/12/23/258 MB to John Scale, dated in the catalogue as c.1772 but as the showroom was opened in 1771 it is likely that this letter is earlier.

¹⁴⁹ Goodison, 2002, pp.163-4; Quickenden, 1990, p.59.

¹⁵⁰ As Quickenden notes, control of the showroom was handed over to others from 1775, perhaps because of Boulton and Fothergill's cashflow problems. The fact that it was subcontracted rather than closed indicates its importance. Quickenden, 1990, p.60.

¹⁵¹ BAH3782/12/63/19 John Hodges to MB 31 Oct 1780.

all much delighted by the extension and regularity of our Manufactory'.¹⁵²

Jabez Fisher described it in 1776:

The front of this house [the manufactory] is like the stately Palace of some Duke. Within it is divided into hundreds of little apartments, all of which like Bee hives are crowded with the Sons of Industry. The whole scene is a Theatre of Business, all conducted like one piece of Mechanism, Men, Women and Children full of employment according to their Strength and Docility. The very Air buzzes with the Variety of Noises. All seems like one vast machine.¹⁵³

Industrial buildings were considered very low in the architectural hierarchy.

Even Vitruvius had said that practicality was more important than ornament in

some kinds of building; a building's social position was displayed in its

architecture.¹⁵⁴ Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of*

our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757) had considered the Sublime

and the Beautiful in terms of buildings.¹⁵⁵ Burke's text was still highly

influential when Soho was developed and the sheer scale of the Principal

Building could have been considered sublime. That size is emphasized in

many of the illustrations with scaling devices such as people and the use of

low viewpoints. The noise, smoke, soot and machinery could have added to

the sublime experience for the visitor, but were not represented in images.

Soho was not involved in the development of an emerging set of pictorial

conventions used in depicting what Klingender later called the industrial

sublime, dramatic sites like forges, mines, and quarries which were illustrated

¹⁵² BAH3782/12/60/34 MB to J Fothergill 14 Dec 1765; Boulton to J.H. Ebbinghaus, 28 Oct 1767, quoted in Demidowicz, p.6. For more on the visitors to Soho see the work of Peter Jones, particularly Jones, 2008 and in Mason (ed.), 2009.

¹⁵³ Kenneth Morgan (ed.), *An American Quaker in the British Isles: The Travel Journals of Jabez Maud Fisher, 1775-1779*, Oxford, 1992, p.253.

¹⁵⁴ Jones, 1985, pp.22-3.

¹⁵⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* [1757], Oxford, 1990, pp.69-70.

by artists like Wright and de Louthembourg.¹⁵⁶ Such an impression would have jarred with Boulton's wish to promote his site and its output as tasteful and elegant. Aspects of the Principal Building, like its smoothness and regularity, would have meant it could be considered Beautiful and it is those elements that Boulton wished to emphasise in his depictions of the building. This thesis will go on to consider how he controlled the production and dissemination of images in order to achieve these ends.

Boulton would have been aware of other large-scale industrial complexes, among them the Carron ironworks established near Falkirk in 1759 by the Birmingham manufacturer Samuel Garbett with John Roebuck. This was a major enterprise from the beginning, described as 'the most extensive manufactory in Europe'.¹⁵⁷ Boulton wrote of it '[...] there are already established in the Neighbourhood the whole apparatus for Iron & smelting forging rolling sheet & slitting rod iron. There are grinding mills & Iron Foundrys [...]'.¹⁵⁸ King-Hele suggests that Garbett was bold and enterprising, promoting new projects with loans, and was highly influential in forming Boulton's own business methods.¹⁵⁹ Boulton would have known of Coalbrookdale; a description and two engravings were produced in 1758, the

¹⁵⁶ Francis D. Klingender, revised Elton, *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, St. Albans, 1975, pp.72-90.

¹⁵⁷ The description of Carron as the most extensive manufactory in Europe appears unreferenced in Asa Briggs, *Iron Bridge to Crystal Palace: Impact and Images of the Industrial Revolution*, London, 1979, p.85. Roebuck went bankrupt in 1773 and his share of James Watt's steam engine patent passed to Matthew Boulton.

¹⁵⁸ BAH3782/13/53/19 draft MB to [Joshua Steele c.8 Dec 1762]. This draft is incomplete and not addressed to anyone. MRB annotated it as possibly to John Roebuck but it is a reply to BAH3782/13/53/18 Joshua Steele to MB 2 Dec 1762.

¹⁵⁹ Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement*, London, 1999, pp.38-9.

prospectus possibly printed by Boulton's friend John Baskerville.¹⁶⁰ He may have been aware of the works of the Wilkinson family at Bradley, Bersham and Broseley, although he and John Wilkinson (1728-1808) did not meet until December 1766.¹⁶¹ He would also probably have known of the manufacturing complex for iron goods on the Tyne, established by the uncle of Sampson Lloyd, Ambrose Crowley (1658-1713) in the seventeenth century.¹⁶² However, Soho's size was unusual because it was engaged in secondary metal trade. Boulton was not producing or refining the raw material by mining or smelting, he was taking those refined materials and producing goods, something more often done in much smaller establishments. Klingender argues that for this reason Boulton and Crowley's works were exceptional.¹⁶³

These other examples were large, sprawling industrial complexes, but without the single 'focus' building that Boulton created at Soho. The Principal Building's scale was not unique - large industrial buildings had been constructed before but the big industrial buildings which are now considered iconic, such as Arkwright's Mill at Cromford (1771), Samuel Gregg's Quarry Bank Mill (1784) and Arkwright and Dale's New Lanark (1784), were constructed after Soho's Principal Building. Boulton is likely to have known of the Derby Silk Mills, the first erected by the engineer George Sorocold (c.1668-1738?) in 1702. He built another next to it from 1715 which was run

¹⁶⁰ Trinder, 2005, p.30.

¹⁶¹ J.R. Harris, 'John Wilkinson' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 10 August 2009; BAH3782/12/23/81 John Florry to MB c.7 Dec 1766; Selgin, p.51.

¹⁶² Sampson Lloyd was a Birmingham iron-dealer who owned a slitting mill in the town, Jacob M. Price, 'Sir Ambrose Crowley', *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 10 August 2009. Ambrose Crowley also produced steel at Stourbridge. The Crowleys had warehouses at Wolverhampton, Walsall and Stourbridge and outworkers in the Midlands, Evans and Rydén, *Baltic Iron in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden and Boston, 2007, pp. 69, 110, 131, 197.

¹⁶³ Klingender, p.11.

by John and Thomas Lombe (figure 4).¹⁶⁴ This mill was visited by many tourists, among them Daniel Defoe who saw it as unique in England and a 'Curiosity of a very extraordinary nature' adding that whether it answered its expense or not was none of his business.¹⁶⁵ The building was of timber construction; five storeys high with a basement, had machinery powered by a waterwheel and was probably the first mechanised factory in the world.¹⁶⁶ Inspired by Italian silk manufacture, there was an interval of almost fifty years between the establishment of this mill and the beginning of wider-scale mechanised industrial activity which has not been satisfactorily explained.¹⁶⁷ Boulton would also have been aware of the mill in Upper Priory, Birmingham. This was the first powered cotton mill, opened in 1741, but was not a financial success and closed by 1745. It had been operated by a partnership which included John Wyatt who had helped with the initial building works at Soho.¹⁶⁸

Boulton's was not the first large-scale industrial building, what was new was the way he used his as a frontage to offer a first impression with significant impact that communicated messages to viewers and which, to a degree, masked the workings of the factory behind. He created an elegant building which came to stand as a symbol for the varied output of the site. That building did not contain the manufacturing processes, but the warehousing,

¹⁶⁴ K.R. Fairclough, 'George Sorocold' on *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 7 August 2009; R.B. Prosser, 'Sir Thomas Lombe' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 7 August 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Trevor Brighton, *The Discovery of the Peak District*, Chichester, 2004, p.94; Pat Rogers (ed.) *Daniel Defoe: A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, Exeter, 1989, p.162.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas A. Markus, *Buildings & Power*, London and New York, 1993, pp. 263-4.

¹⁶⁷ Gillian Darley, *Factory*, London, 2003, pp.104-5. Markus similarly states that 'how an apparently fully developed factory appeared more than half a century before the great cotton mills remains a mystery', p.264.

¹⁶⁸ J.M. Robinson, pp.7-8; R.B. Prosser, 'Lewis Paul' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 10 August 2009; R.E. Schofield, 'The Lunar Society and the Industrial Revolution', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, Vol. XI No.1, 1967, p.104.

showroom, offices and housing. Markus misunderstood the development of the Soho site, not appreciating that there were many other buildings from the start. Nevertheless, his 1993 description of ‘the burgeoning and revolutionary plant bursting its polite envelope’ is evocative.¹⁶⁹ He also overplayed the motive of secrecy for the construction of the Principal Building, arguing that this was why the side wings projected backwards, forming rear courtyards ‘instead of receiving its visitors with open arms’ and suggesting that the Principal Building began as ‘camouflage’ which ‘presages a period of secrecy and industrial spying’.¹⁷⁰

The model developed at Soho was quickly imitated by Josiah Wedgwood who built a factory and houses at Etruria, near Burslem, which opened in June 1769 (figure 5).¹⁷¹ Wedgwood visited Soho on 14 May 1767 on his way to London, specifically to view the layout.¹⁷² He intended to build his factory parallel to the planned Trent and Mersey Canal, recognising the opportunities for the safe transportation of fragile pottery and the aesthetic possibilities of the waterway. The architect was Joseph Pickford of Derby (1734-82) who was also known to Boulton.¹⁷³ Wedgwood and his business partner Bentley were involved in the selection of decorative features for Etruria, considering the possibility of decorating the kilns, and rejecting Gothic battlements on buildings ‘otherwise in the modern taste’. Costs for this building were

¹⁶⁹ Markus, p.256.

¹⁷⁰ Markus, p.256.

¹⁷¹ Unless otherwise stated the source for this paragraph is Gaye Blake Roberts, ‘The Architecture of Etruria and Barlaston’ in *Wedgwood of Etruria & Barlaston*, City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke on Trent, 1980, pp.35-8.

¹⁷² Goodison, 2002 p.367 n.50 and Goodison in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.133; B. and H. Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle 1730-1897*, London, 1980, pp.30-31.

¹⁷³ BAH3782/12/23/7 J. Pickford to MB 1 Dec 1760.

estimated at £10,000, but it too overran. Tann suggests that Wedgwood's response to this was to tell Bentley not to alter the building, but to create new vases to pay for the architects, an indication of how important he considered it was to get the building right.¹⁷⁴ Power concerned Wedgwood as it had Boulton; he planned to include a windmill to grind colours. Like Soho, the main building was three storeys high with a Diocletian window under a pediment, and a cupola housing the bell, but Soho's central section appeared more imposing as it had a fourth storey.¹⁷⁵ The plan of Etruria was carefully considered with dishes and flatware made at one end of the factory and decoration taking place at the other. Yards were attached to each area to store coal and clays. While Etruria was in many ways similar to Soho, it was never on the same scale, but did follow Boulton's model of an impressive façade which could be used to represent the factory behind although Wedgwood never exploited this to the extent that Boulton did.¹⁷⁶

Boulton learnt from the construction of the Principal Building, and its expense did not put him off creating other innovative buildings which made a statement. The Albion Mill (1786), a flour mill in Blackfriars, was a partnership between Boulton, Watt, the architect Samuel Wyatt and others, designed to apply the steam engine to the milling process (figure 6). It occupied a commanding position in the centre of London, visible across Blackfriars Bridge, and brought the potential of the steam engine to the notice of a new

¹⁷⁴ Jennifer Tann, *Matthew Boulton: Creative Pragmatist*, keynote lecture given at 'Where Genius and Arts Preside': Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory 1809-2009, University of Birmingham, 4 July 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Edward Saunders, *Joseph Pickford of Derby: A Georgian Architect*, Stroud, 1993, p.97. For the bell at Soho see Goodison, 2002, p.23.

¹⁷⁶ Jones, 2008 p.52.

audience, including traditional millers who felt it threatened their livelihood. The building was designed by Wyatt with innovative features including a foundation raft, high timber framing and a large floor area without internal supporting walls.¹⁷⁷ This new technology was placed behind a classical façade with a rusticated base on the river front and ashlar above.¹⁷⁸ A grand opening was held in March 1786, attended by Cavendish, Wedgwood and Banks.¹⁷⁹ Boulton's flair for publicity meant that it became a fashionable location for events, masques and balls as well as visiting dignitaries, an early example of corporate hospitality and making maximum possible use of a building.¹⁸⁰ The mill burnt down in 1791 but, although Boulton lost £6,000, it had increased public awareness of Boulton and Watt's engines as well as of Boulton himself.¹⁸¹ The Albion Mill building did not have the chance of becoming established as a recognisable symbol, although it had become Europe's most renowned industrial building as a result of its technology.¹⁸² It was depicted in magazines (figure 6), so perhaps Boulton hoped to use images of the building to promote the venture. However, in contrast to the images of Soho, it was as a sublime spectacle, a blazing inferno or a dramatic ruin that the building was most illustrated.¹⁸³

When he needed a new warehouse, Boulton took the opportunity to create another imposing building. He was forced to vacate his Newhall Street

¹⁷⁷ A.W. Skempton, 'Samuel Wyatt and the Albion Mill', *Architectural History*, Vol 14 (1971) pp.53-73; J.M. Robinson, p.45.

¹⁷⁸ Darley, p.17; Markus, p.270.

¹⁷⁹ Darley, p.17.

¹⁸⁰ Darley, p.18; Smiles, p.357.

¹⁸¹ Dickinson, p.123.

¹⁸² Markus, p.270.

¹⁸³ Maidment, 1990, pp.47-9 identifies eleven images of the mill during or after the fire.

warehouse, New Hall, the Jacobean former home of the Colmore family, which was to be pulled down in 1787.¹⁸⁴ Boulton selected a site on Livery Street, close to the canal, 'amongst a number of poor houses, in poor streets'.¹⁸⁵ He initially planned to build in six weeks and move everything into it in another six weeks, but instead used an interim warehouse on Upper Priory while a more tasteful and ambitious building designed by Samuel Wyatt was built 1787-8 (figure 7).¹⁸⁶ Boulton continued to emphasise the importance of frontages, of the new Royal Mint he wrote 'The buildings in general should be plain simple and strong [...] the front which may be simply elegant in the Wyattistic style [...] Mr Wyatt may design the ornamental part but I must sketch the useful.'¹⁸⁷ He also planned to put an imposing front on Soho House which would have made it seem much larger on approach than it actually was.¹⁸⁸ Tann has suggested that architecture was an area of the arts where Boulton did not need to make a profit, and that he recognised a handsome building was far more likely to form part of a tour, to attract visitors who were potential customers.¹⁸⁹

For many years visitors were welcomed to Soho, including businessmen looking for contacts like Jabez Maud Fisher, potential customers and

¹⁸⁴ BAH3782/12/6/83 Matthew Boulton to —. 12 May 1787. The warehouse had been relocated from 38 Snow Hill in 1777, Quickenden, 1990, pp.21-2.

¹⁸⁵ BAH3782/12/6/83 Matthew Boulton to —. 12 May 1787.

¹⁸⁶ Pye's *New Directory for [...] Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1785 lists the warehouse at Newhall, 1787 and 1788 editions at Upper Priory and 1791 at Livery Street. J.M. Robinson, p.256. BAH3782/13/36/14 MB to MRB 1 Dec 1787.

¹⁸⁷ Tann, 1970, p.161.

¹⁸⁸ Richard K. Morriss, *Soho House Handsworth Birmingham: The Home of Matthew Boulton*, Hereford Archaeology Unit Report 90, November 1990, pp.41-7. See p.321.

¹⁸⁹ Jennifer Tann, *Matthew Boulton: Creative Pragmatist*, keynote lecture given at 'Where Genius and Arts Preside': Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory 1809-2009, University of Birmingham, 4 July 2009.

tourists.¹⁹⁰ James Keir wrote that visiting became 'a fashion among the higher and opulent ranks, foreigners of distinction and all who could gain access to it.'¹⁹¹ Towards the end of the eighteenth century, when war with France made the continent inaccessible, people began to travel more within Britain. A patriotic interest in British manufacturing and engineering helped to fuel the awareness of industrial sites where visitors could view modern processes and practices such as the division of labour, the application of technology and machinery, as well as novel products.¹⁹² The porcelain factory at Worcester, Soho, and the Derby silk mills were 'almost obligatory points of call'.¹⁹³ The fashion for the picturesque made areas like Wales, Scotland, the Lakes and Derbyshire popular with travellers, some of whom visited industrial sites such as Soho on their way.¹⁹⁴ Many of these visitors left descriptions in journals and letters, some published or privately circulated. This material resulted in wider dissemination and understanding of the link between sites like Soho, their products and owner. So it was essential for Boulton to ensure that visitors reported it favourably by managing their experience as much as possible through guided tours and by controlling the behaviour of the staff.¹⁹⁵ In spite of the large number of visitors, many of whom took the opportunity to explore the grounds, no known visual representations of the Principal Building or the grounds can be firmly identified as being by any of those visitors. Drawings of machinery and techniques

¹⁹⁰ For more on the visitors to Soho see the work of Peter Jones.

¹⁹¹ *Memoir of Matthew Boulton by James Keir [December 3, 1809]*, Birmingham, 1947, p.7.

¹⁹² Esther Moir, *The Discovery of Britain: The English Tourists 1540-1840*, London, 1964, p.91; Berg, 2005, p.173; Rosemary Sweet, *The Writing of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England*, Oxford, 1997, p.112.

¹⁹³ Sweet, 1997, p.124.

¹⁹⁴ Moir, p.91. See p.131 for the Boulton and the picturesque.

¹⁹⁵ V.E. Whitfield, *Industry and Identity in late eighteenth-century English portraiture*, PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2003, p.181. See p.97 for management of the visitors' experience.

were made, generally taken in secret in order to pass details on to rivals.¹⁹⁶

Having carefully created the Principal Building and its setting, and raised awareness of it by allowing visitors to see it, Boulton and those around him also used the images considered in this thesis to draw it to even greater attention. In order to fully exploit the potential of such images, Boulton sought to use high-calibre artists, some of whom also designed products made at the manufactory.

‘A seminary of artists’: drawing and design at Soho¹⁹⁷

Design was a key element of Boulton’s approach to improving the standard and reputation of his products. The strengthening of the link between high-quality design and high-volume manufacture has often been particularly attributed to Boulton and Wedgwood, but Craske has demonstrated that London manufacturers of the 1730s were aware of the importance of design, and that it was important to consumers as well as producers.¹⁹⁸

Manufacturers did not have to carry out design themselves, but they did need to have taste that was well enough developed to influence, and to respond to,

¹⁹⁶ Jones, 2008, p.156; Jones in Mason, 2009, pp.75-9. It is possible that some are yet to be found in private collections as any such views would have been taken home by the artists. WSL SV-VII.21 may be or be related to such a view but without further information it is not possible to tell.

¹⁹⁷ The terms seminary of artists, arts and taste appear in many descriptions of Soho. While seminary is now generally used to mean a college for training priests its first use was as a piece of ground in which plants are sown or raised from cuttings or where animals are bred. From this it came to mean ‘a place of origin and early development; a place or thing in which something (e.g. an art or science, a virtue or vice) is developed or cultivated, or from which it is propagated abundantly’, a place of education or institution for training those destined for a particular profession, “seminary, n¹”, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, *OED online*, accessed 20 Nov, 2009.

¹⁹⁸ Eric Robinson, McKendrick and Forty have asserted this connection to Boulton and Wedgwood, Craske, 1999, p.188.

the market. They needed a constant supply of new designs as rivals could simply copy them once they were released.¹⁹⁹ When appointing Bentley as a partner, Josiah Wedgwood noted that he had taste, 'the best foundation for our intended concerns'.²⁰⁰ Improved quality of design was seen as nationally important, as a way of competing with the French who had long been considered the leaders in design. It was perceived as a way to create a society that was economically and culturally independent. Craske links the improvement of design to other cultural concerns of ordering and planning, and their application to trade and economy as well as aesthetics.²⁰¹

By the mid-eighteenth century, sections of the public who had disposable income were increasingly conscious of design; purchasers of luxury products were expected to understand that design lay behind the goods they were buying. The ability to determine which objects were tasteful gradually passed from an elite group of connoisseurs to those of the public who were able to study the prints and books which were now widely available, such as Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* (1753) which provided a detailed aesthetic discussion of design.²⁰² Following the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768, the idea and practice of design was increasingly dominated by academic theory which separated 'art', the conception and design of an object from 'craft', its execution. Design and drawing were promoted as essential skills for anyone who wanted to raise themselves above the labouring

¹⁹⁹ Craske, 1999, p.209; Clifford, 1999, p.251.

²⁰⁰ Jules Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste: The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain 1550-1960*, New Haven and London, 1995, p.223.

²⁰¹ Craske, 1999, pp.189-90.

²⁰² Boulton bought two copies, see p.130.

masses.²⁰³ The ability to draw was at the heart of the desire to improve design.²⁰⁴ The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, founded in 1754 to encourage economic regeneration and reduce dependence on imports, funded drawing competitions to encourage its practice.²⁰⁵ Drawing was separate from design; it was a mechanical process which could be taught to 'any Person of moderate Talents' if they applied themselves sufficiently, it was a way of enabling craftsmen to understand and execute the designs of others. Design was 'the Child of Genius' and could not be taught, 'the Principle of it must exist in the Soul, and be called forth only by Education, and improv'd by practice.'²⁰⁶

Boulton told James Adam that he was training 'young plain Country Lads' and any 'that betray any genius are taught to draw'.²⁰⁷ In a draft letter of 1786 about establishing a button factory in France Boulton recommended that

The best way to have good artists is to train up young men of abilities & to have them under contract for 7 years at least – If these young men are of the lower Class provided they are of decent families they will do better than those who may aspire to be Gentlemen. A common Workman has no need of Education except in his business, nor those of the next Class any more than to read & write [...] it requires much good sense to restrain ambition in a man of knowledge.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Craske, 1999, pp.190-3; Anne Puetz, 'Design Instruction for Artisans in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.12 No.3, 1999, pp.218-20.

²⁰⁴ See for example R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 1747 cited in Craske, p.208.

²⁰⁵ RSA Manuscript Guard Book I, 28 January 1756, quoted in Puetz, p.219. The Society is now called the Royal Society of Arts and was also known as the Society of Arts. Some bills for Boulton's membership from 1782 survive but he was likely to have been involved with the society much earlier, BAH3782/6/194/17 Receipts for contributions 1782-1790, BAH3782/6/194/54 receipts for contributions 1792-4.

²⁰⁶ Puetz, p.233 quoting J. Gwynn, *An Essay on Design [...]*, 1749.

²⁰⁷ BAH3782/12/2/23 MB to James Adam 1 Oct 1770.

²⁰⁸ BAH3782/12/98 Papers relating to Paris journey, 1786. I am grateful to Shena Mason for this reference.

Boulton had been taught drawing as a young man by Worledge.²⁰⁹ His friend, Joseph Priestley, had depicted time as a line to assist his students at Warrington Academy, an important contribution to the graphic display of information.²¹⁰ Boulton too thought graphically, as the large number of sketches and diagrams in his notebooks show.²¹¹ He used drawing as a means of recording source material for designs, sent designers, painters and modellers to the theatre at his expense 'in order to improve them in those arts by which they are to live and gain reputation', ensured that his son practised drawing, and paid for staff to be trained in drawing.²¹²

This recognition of the role of drawing was not unusual in Birmingham; Fawcett has noted that drawing schools were established particularly early there, 'forced into existence by the demands of local industry'.²¹³ A letter to *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* in 1754 acknowledged skill in the town in manufacture, but its absence in drawing and designing. The writer proposed a subscription academy 'for teaching some Young Persons, under proper Restrictions, in the Art of Drawing and Designing, and in some parts of

²⁰⁹ 'Memoirs of M. Boulton Esq. F.R.S.', *Caledonian Mercury*, 4 Sept 1809. There is no indication as to who Worledge was, the article merely states 'He learned drawing under Worledge, and mathematics under Cooper, &c.' There is currently no reason to link him to Thomas Worlidge (1700-1766) a portrait painter and etcher, Susan Sloman, 'Thomas Worlidge' on *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 14 Sept 2009.

²¹⁰ Michael Twyman, 'The emergence of the graphic book in the 19th century', in Myers and Harris (eds.) *A Millennium of the Book*, Winchester, 1994, p.142. Joseph Priestley, *Description of a chart of biography*, 1778; Robert E Schofield, 'Joseph Priestley' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 25 April 2006.

²¹¹ BAH3782/12/108 MB Notebooks.

²¹² Smiles, p.171; Quickenden, 1990, p.160. BAH3782/12/23/172 John Ash to MB, 30 Dec 1769 Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770*, Oxford, 1989, p.260; Jones, 2008, p.67; BAH3782/12/65/44 James Keir to MB 11 Dec 1779; Quickenden, 1990, pp.160, 321-2. See also p.112 for John Phillip's training.

²¹³ Trevor Fawcett, *The Rise of English Provincial Art: Artist, Patrons, and Institutions outside London, 1800-1830*, Oxford, 1974, p.43.

mathematical learning [...]'.²¹⁴ Taylor and Garbett told the House of Commons in 1760 that there were 'Two or Three Drawing Schools established in Birmingham, for the Instruction of Youth in the Arts of Designing and Drawing, and some 30 or 40 Frenchmen or Germans are constantly employed in Drawing and Designing.'²¹⁵

Drawing was not just needed for metalwares at Soho, it was also essential to Boulton's steam-engine partnership with James Watt. Accurate technical drawings, with standard symbols and conventions, were needed to manufacture parts and erect engines; such drawings were a commercial necessity.²¹⁶ Drawing could be used as a common language; it bypassed issues of translation and allowed clear communication of design and detail between client and manufacturer, particularly important for goods destined for foreign markets.²¹⁷ The Soho insurance society poster (figure 12) included '[...] Little boys busy in designing &c. showing an early application to the study of the Arts', an indication of the importance of drawing and design at Soho, and the need Boulton felt to communicate this.²¹⁸ In fact, Goodison has argued that there was no sophisticated design office for the ormolu, and that there was actually a shortage of competent draughtsmen, an issue Boulton

²¹⁴ John Alfred Langford, *A Century of Birmingham Life*, Birmingham, 1868, Vol. I, pp.82-3, citing *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 19 January 1754.

²¹⁵ Dickinson, p.63.

²¹⁶ Twyman, 1994, p.138 citing J. Richardson, 'The contribution of the firm of Boulton and Watt to engine drawing' PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1989. Boulton did not always rely on drawing, he wrote to Chippindall in 1793 suggesting the need to agree terminology 'for the forms and proportions of buckles', BAH3782/12/59/54, MB to Richard Chippindall, 4 Oct. 1793.

²¹⁷ Puetz, p.219.

²¹⁸ See p.92 and catalogue 3 for the insurance society poster.

attempted to address through the recruitment of men like Francis Eginton and John Phillip, as will be seen.²¹⁹

Like the architecture of his manufactory, the quality of design of Boulton's products was extremely important as he had to attempt to overcome Birmingham's reputation for poor quality goods. The Earl of Shelburne advised that Soho would not be considered a manufactory of the first importance until it had a variety of elegant designs.²²⁰ Boulton was in constant search of source material; he borrowed objects from friends and patrons, discussed designs with them to 'improve or correct taste' and collected prints and books.²²¹ He asked friends, family and agents for information on fashions and taste all over Europe as he was aware of the importance placed on keeping up with current trends.²²² He also subscribed to volumes such as George Richardson's *Iconology; or, a collection of emblematical figures; containing four hundred and twenty-four remarkable subjects, moral and instructive; [...] with explanations from classical authorities* (1779), which would have been used to provide source material.²²³

²¹⁹ Goodison, 2002, p.120. See p.76 for further consideration of Eginton, p.111 and p.302 for Phillip.

²²⁰ Quickenden, 1990, p.156.

²²¹ Celina Fox, 'Design', Iain McCalman (ed.) *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, Oxford, 1999, p.234; Robinson, 1953; Quickenden, 1990, pp.159, 164-5, 169. BAH3782/12/63/16 John Hodges to MB 12 Sep. 1780. Nicholas Goodison, 'The Context of Neo-classicism' in Mason, 2009; Frances Collard, 'Thomas Hope's Furniture' in Watkin and Hewat-Jaboor, *Thomas Hope: Regency Designer*, New Haven and London, 2008, p.57; David Watkin, *Thomas Hope and the Neo-Classical Idea*, London, 1968, pp.54,198.

²²² BAH3782/13/36/14 MB to MRB 1 Dec 1787; Smiles p.172; Robinson, 1953, p.369. As Styles notes, much of the attention for this kind of research followed by new designs has focussed on Boulton and Wedgwood but they were by no means unique, Styles, 1988, pp.13-14.

²²³ The list of subscribers also includes Eginton and Jee (John Eginton had worked for Boulton and Fothergill, see p.77), Birmingham printer Myles Swinney, Birmingham manufacturer Henry Clay, Boulton's architect Samuel Wyatt and the painter Joseph Barney who worked on the mechanical paintings.

Jennifer Tann has written of Boulton's declared aim 'to obtain a school of designers who should give to the products of the Soho Factory an artistic style and finish not obtainable elsewhere'.²²⁴ She has also spoken of Boulton's role as an 'encourager', one who cultivates talent in others, and of the testimony of a former apprentice of the value of being given the opportunity to learn to draw.²²⁵ Drawing and design were used to improve the standard of Boulton's products, but they were also promoted as part of the marketing of the site, particularly in relation to competition with France. Design and taste were emphasised to visitors and frequently appear in descriptions of Soho as well as being apparent in the images considered later in this thesis. Stebbing Shaw noted that a seminary of artists for drawing and modelling was established, and men of genius sought.²²⁶ Priscilla Wakefield wrote of the 'elegance of taste', the importance of drawing, design and modelling, the drawing together of 'men of genius', and 'the establishment of a seminary of arts for drawing and modelling'.²²⁷ Relatively few people carried out design work, but it was difficult to find and retain skilled designers who had to understand the practicalities of manufacture as well as aesthetics. Most of the employees simply needed to produce goods to specification, not undertake design.²²⁸ The prominence of the artists in the descriptions of Soho signifies the importance of design to Boulton.

²²⁴ Tann, 1970, p.11.

²²⁵ Tann, keynote lecture, 2009.

²²⁶ Stebbing Shaw, 1801, p.118, see appendix 1.5 for full quote.

²²⁷ She usually wrote her descriptions based on extensive research but without visiting the sites she considered, Priscilla Wakefield, *A Family Tour Through The British Empire [...]*, 6th edition, London, 1812, p.32.

²²⁸ Styles, 1988, p.15; Peutz, p.234.

‘Emerging from obscurity’: marketing Soho²²⁹

Having established such a large manufactory Boulton needed to sell enough goods to keep it going and, hopefully, pay off the debt it had incurred.²³⁰ He had to compete with rivals ranging from other Birmingham toymakers to London silversmiths and French ormolu manufacturers. He had to do this on price, quality of workmanship and design, as well as ensuring that his designs were fashionable.²³¹ His use of technology and new techniques could allow him to do this, in spite of sometimes having to pay London wages to hire skilled workmen. By applying methods used for button manufacture he was able to use less silver than traditional casting methods, reducing his material costs.²³²

However, Boulton faced an additional problem, having deliberately expanded his range of products in order to supply complete orders; he was faced with trying to market those products to extremely diverse customers. His volume of production in some areas was too large for the aristocracy, so he had to sell to the growing numbers of middle-class consumers.²³³ Over time he produced small metal goods in huge quantities for the mass market, high-quality ormolu and silver for the aristocracy and steam engines for mill and mine owners. Different promotional techniques had to be used depending on

²²⁹ BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766.

²³⁰ Quickenden, 1990, p.22.

²³¹ Quickenden and Krover, 2007, p.54.

²³² Unsurprisingly he did not make his customers aware of this, Quickenden and Krover, 2007, p.54.

²³³ Michael Snodin and John Styles, *Design and the Decorative Arts: Georgian Britain 1714-1837*, London, 2004, p.30.

the market for which they were intended. Some items, like the silver and ormolu, were generally sold direct to customers, others, like Sheffield Plate, were supplied in bulk to trade customers for resale.²³⁴ Boulton wanted to sell silver direct to the public because he felt shopkeepers were 'a race of disingenuous persons' and their premises did not have sufficient distinction for marketing such expensive goods. He wanted to ensure that the status attached to such high-quality objects came to his firm, not to retailers. Direct contact with high-rank customers was very important as Boulton hoped that they would influence others to choose Soho products.²³⁵ Quickenden has suggested that the level of Boulton's silver sales was reduced because of his attitude to shopkeepers, that prestige was his 'main priority when planning the silver business'.²³⁶ It is likely that Boulton felt this was a sacrifice worth making as he hoped it would enhance the reputation of Soho and lead to sales in other areas.

Boulton needed to be able to differentiate each of his products from those of his rivals; he needed to convince customers to buy Soho buttons or silver in preference to those from other manufacturers. One approach was to create a commonly recognisable symbol that legibly connoted the varied products, to ensure that the customers and retailers were aware that all of these various items were linked to the same place and the same man. In that way the cheaper goods could draw status from the high-end luxury goods and the quality of Soho buttons or sword hilts could be used as an introduction to the

²³⁴ Quickenden and Krover, p.52; Goodison, 'Ormolu Ornaments' in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.59.

²³⁵ Quickenden, 1990, p.58.

²³⁶ Quickenden, 1990, p.79.

whole range of products.²³⁷ The bespoke service for items such as silver and ormolu would have meant that these items could be considered higher-status than the toys, so the mass-produced items would not detract from them.

What Boulton needed to undertake was what we would now consider a branding exercise. Koehn defines a brand as 'a name, logo, or symbol intended to distinguish a particular seller's offerings from those of competitors. Great brands [...] command awareness and esteem from consumers around the world.'²³⁸ Having an established brand makes it easier to introduce new products, something of which Boulton was aware.

The term branding originally meant marking, initially farm animals, to identify their owners. Brands or marks came to be used as a form of quality assurance, particularly in the assaying of silver. Manufacturers of platedwares sometimes marked their goods with marks similar to assay marks to associate their wares with silver.²³⁹ Boulton had his silver goods assayed, that is marked with a maker's mark and a quality stamp, at first by sending them to Chester Assay Office, and then successfully lobbying parliament for the establishment of the Birmingham Assay Office.²⁴⁰ He also marked some of his Sheffield Plate goods with a double sun, which was not a legal requirement like assaying, but ensured purchasers were aware that it was a

²³⁷ Robinson, 1963 p.48 outlines how gifts of buttons and sword hilts were used in this way.

²³⁸ Nancy F. Koehn, *Brand New: How Entrepreneurs Earned Consumers' Trust from Wedgwood to Dell*, Boston, 2001, p.5.

²³⁹ Clifford, 1999, pp.242, 248.

²⁴⁰ Dickinson, pp.63-5; Sally Baggot, 'Real Knowledge and Occult Mysterries': Matthew Boulton and the Birmingham Assay Office' in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.201-216. However, always with an eye for an opportunity, Boulton complicated the issue by occasionally supplying goods for assaying without a maker's mark, for example the silver coffee pot and stand BMAG1996M1. This was probably intended to be sold by a dealer who could have added his own mark if he wished. Boulton did state more than once that he was not prepared to supply silver unmarked but he did sometimes make it available in this manner, Quickenden and Krover, p.60, Clifford 1999, p.248.

Soho product.²⁴¹ Clifford has identified the importance of marks as a 'means of investing objects with additional meanings by associating them with names, places, ideas or other cultural values.' She makes the point that these associations could be manipulated to enhance the value of an object to a potential purchaser, so a coffee pot made in Philadelphia or a Sheffield blade could be given a London mark to draw on London's reputation for quality.²⁴² The 1787 *Directory of Sheffield* included reproductions of each manufacturer's trademarks, ensuring that these symbols could be readily understood and firmly attributed to a particular maker.²⁴³

Branding in a marketing sense is often seen as beginning in the nineteenth century, but recent scholarship has identified the construction of earlier brands.²⁴⁴ Styles has argued that 'brand-name marketing' was unusual for goods produced for the middle and lower-classes, but did happen among those producing for the high-end, Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director* (1754) advertised his products to wealthy customers as well as providing designs for other cabinet makers.²⁴⁵ However, it can be found in other areas, Swedish iron carried *järnstämpel*, a mark that identified the forge from which it came. Evans and Rydén argue that these marks were

²⁴¹ Kenneth Quickenden, 'Silver, 'plated' and silvered products from the Soho Manufactory, 1780' in *The Silver Society Journal*, Autumn 1998, no.10, p.78. The Act establishing Birmingham and Sheffield Assay Offices forbade striking letters (which look like assay marks) on anything made to look like silver, and was modified in 1784 to allow marks which did not imitate the assay device for sterling silver, Clifford, 1999, p.248.

²⁴² Clifford, 1999, pp.247-8.

²⁴³ P.J. Corfield with Serena Kelly, ' 'Giving directions to the town': the early town directories', *Urban History Yearbook*, 1984, p.25.

²⁴⁴ Church and Godley, 'The Emergence of Modern Marketing' in Church and Godley (eds.) *Emergence of Modern Marketing*, London and Portland, 2003 argue for a nineteenth century emergence. Those who suggest an earlier adoption of branding include Koehn on Wedgwood and Paul Duguid, 'Developing the Brand: The Case of Alcohol, 1800-1880', *Enterprise & Society*, Vol.4 No.3 pp.405-441.

²⁴⁵ Styles, 1993, p.542; Susan Lambert, *Pattern and Design: Designs for the Decorative Arts 1480-1980*, London, 1993, p.24.

'legible to customers across Europe', they stood for the particular qualities of the product of each forge and the common British name for some of these brands was based on what was visible on the bar.²⁴⁶ This symbol had various meanings to different users, in the case of 'Hoop L' iron from Leufsta, it showed the Swedish government officials who should pay the toll; to the staff at the forge it was a source of pride in their work; and to customers in Birmingham and Sheffield it meant consistency, iron that would convert to good steel.²⁴⁷ Evans has further suggested that Ambrose Crowley, the ironmaster who established a large-scale works on the Tyne, built a brand that far outlived him. Blister steel was usually known by the iron from which it was made, not by the manufacturer, but Crowley steel was marketed into the nineteenth century.²⁴⁸ The use of the manufacturer's name signified reliable, quality steel and inspired trust in the purchaser, a technique that Boulton sought to emulate, perhaps inspired by Crowley of whom he would have been aware through Crowley's links with the Lloyd family.²⁴⁹

The creation of brands has been associated with the development of centralised supply to larger markets, which is exactly what Boulton, Wedgwood and others were doing, but earlier than is sometimes recognised. This centralisation meant moving away from known and trusted local suppliers

²⁴⁶ Bars from Leufsta, marked with an 'L' in a circle, were known to British users as 'Hoop L', those from Österby as 'bullet iron' because the mark was two touching circles, Evans and Rydén, 2007, p.62. Chris Evans and Göran Rydén, 'Iron marks as early brand names: Swedish iron in the Atlantic market during the eighteenth century', paper given at XIV. International Economic History Congress, Helsinki, 2006

²⁴⁷ Evans and Rydén, 2006.

²⁴⁸ Chris Evans, Paper given at "L'acier en Europe avant Bessemer" at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, Paris, December 2005. To be published in conference proceedings, Perez and Verna (ed.), *L'acier en Europe avant Bessemer*, forthcoming. I am grateful to Chris Evans for letting me have a copy of this paper.

²⁴⁹ See p. 42.

who needed repeat business, so could not be seen to be taking too much profit or supplying poor quality goods. As markets widened and suppliers competed for custom they needed to find ways to differentiate their product from that of a rival. Consumers wanted to reduce the risks of buying luxury items, so were looking for goods that would be recognised by their peers as tasteful. The successful use of a brand builds trust in its full range of products. Once consumers had confidence in a producer or retailer they recommended them to friends; successful firms were those that had managed to convince enough of polite society that their designs either conformed to or established taste.²⁵⁰

Boulton was developing national and international markets, and needed to distinguish his products from the other metalwares being made in Birmingham which had a poor reputation.²⁵¹ He employed a number of different promotional tactics; he sent travellers out with patterns and drawings, used agents, and set up a showroom at Soho. He held sales in London, admitted visitors to the factory in the hope that they would make purchases, sought patronage from the fashionable and well-known, and sent objects out speculatively.²⁵² Many of these methods were not unusual or innovative. Other manufacturers admitted visitors to their factories; the Earl of Shelburne's visit to Birmingham in May 1766 included John Taylor's workshops, a watch warehouse and gunshops as well as Soho.²⁵³ Henry Clay, the Birmingham papier-mâché maker presented a sedan chair to Queen

²⁵⁰ Craske, 1999, p.207.

²⁵¹ Soho's location outside but close to Birmingham was probably useful here, he could associate or disassociate himself with it in turn, whichever proved most advantageous.

²⁵² Robinson, 1963; Goodison, 2002, pp.158-180.

²⁵³ Jones in Mason (ed.) 2009, p.71.

Charlotte.²⁵⁴ Samuel Garbett told Lord Lansdowne in 1789 that Birmingham merchants had achieved success in export by 'resorting to every principal Town with their patterns'.²⁵⁵

Josiah Wedgwood also had global ambitions, writing to his partner Thomas Bentley that he wished to be 'Vase Maker General to the Universe'.²⁵⁶ By the time of his death in 1795 he was worth £500,000, was potter to the Queen and had sold throughout the world.²⁵⁷ His goods were more expensive than those of his rivals, generally two to three times the price as he had, unlike Boulton, made the conscious decision not to compete on price, 'it has always been my aim to improve the quality of the articles of my manufacture, rather than to lower their price'. He priced at what he thought the nobility would pay.²⁵⁸ Wedgwood sought advice on the best method of costing from Boulton in 1774, providing a detailed breakdown of expenses, but Boulton sometimes failed to consider what his products cost to make in order to ensure that those expenses were covered.²⁵⁹ He could see the value of a loss leader, an item sold at a loss to attract customers, one that brought prestige, fashionable status or encouraged other orders. However, his business's everyday

²⁵⁴ Hopkins 1984, p.46.

²⁵⁵ Jones, 2008, p.45 Lansdowne had been the Earl Of Shelburne.

²⁵⁶ Young, p.102.

²⁵⁷ Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood: An Eighteenth-Century Entrepreneur in Salesmanship and Marketing Techniques', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 12, No.3 (1960), pp.408, 433; Berg, 2005, pp.142-5. McKendrick suggests Wedgwood began work in an industry where most of the goods were sold in local markets but this has been challenged by Weatherill, 1971 and Weatherill, 1986 who makes it clear that Wedgwood was building on, and expanding, an established practice of selling beyond those local markets.

²⁵⁸ McKendrick, 1960, p.410.

²⁵⁹ V.W. Bladen, 'The Wedgwood Papers', *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, Vol. 1, No. 8. (July 1927), pp.13-14. See for example BAH3782/12/72/4 John Scale to MB 28 Jan 1773; BAH3782/12/72/58 John Scale to MB 9 Apr 1785. However John Fothergill frequently reported that customers for the toys thought the prices too high, see for example BAH3782/12/60/2 John Fothergill to MB 7 May 1762; BAH3782/12/72/3 John Fothergill to MB 8 May 1762.

costings were often chaotic.²⁶⁰ Wedgwood too, used loss leaders; Catherine the Great's Frog service was uneconomical to produce but had huge advertising potential and was displayed in London before it was sent to Russia.²⁶¹

Wedgwood applied many similar techniques to Boulton; he sought patronage, used salesmen, sent out printed illustrations, dealt direct with foreign and domestic retailers, and around 80 per cent of his output went to European markets in 1784.²⁶² He had showrooms at Etruria, in London, Bath, Liverpool and Dublin.²⁶³ He encouraged artists like Joseph Wright, Romney and Stubbs to include his wares in their paintings. Boulton approached architects to encourage them to use his goods in their buildings as well as designing for him.²⁶⁴ Architects carried prestige; architecture had a major influence on all aspects of design, particularly furniture, upholstery and interior decoration. It was an essential part of a gentleman's education, so both men worked with architects on design, Wedgwood noting that they could act as 'godparents' to manufacturer's products.²⁶⁵ Both used technical skills and the development of new materials to gain an edge over competitors.²⁶⁶ Both men kept a watchful eye on fashion, introducing new products to keep in vogue,

²⁶⁰ Goodison, 1990, p.225; Clifford, 1999, p.249; Hopkins 1984, p.51; Kenneth Quickenden, 'Boulton and Fothergill Silver: business plans and miscalculations', *Art History*, Vol.3, No.3 Sept 1980, pp.274-94. Boulton was not alone in his problems with costings, Scott notes a 'need amongst manufacturers for all kinds of published information about numerical calculations' outlining methods of calculation and bookkeeping as well as providing tables of calculations, leading to the production of titles such as *The Birmingham Ready Calculator* in 1778 which provided tables of discounts, Scott, pp.147-9.

²⁶¹ McKendrick, 1960, pp.413-4, 421.

²⁶² Berg, 2005, pp.143-5.

²⁶³ McKendrick, 1960, p.420.

²⁶⁴ McKendrick, 1960, p.416, Robinson, 1963, pp.56-7; Quickenden, 1990, pp.64-67.

²⁶⁵ Fox in McCalman (ed.), p.232; Smiles, p.171; Quickenden, 1990, pp.64-5.

²⁶⁶ McKendrick, 1960, pp.408-9.

Wedgwood commenting once that 'Fashion is infinitely superior to merit in many respects', adding that if you had a 'favourite child' you wanted the public to take notice of 'you have only to make proper choice of sponcers.'²⁶⁷

Boulton told Elizabeth Montagu that 'Fashion hath much to do in these things' so he was happy to copy Grecian style ornaments, 'making new combinations of old ornaments without presuming to invent new ones.'²⁶⁸

Boulton and Wedgwood sought patronage from the monarchy, nobility, connoisseurs and the fashionable.²⁶⁹ It was crucial that this was well reported, a court report on the Prince of Wales and his sisters wearing Soho shoe latches on his birthday concluded that a debt of gratitude was due 'from the ingenious artist to the arbiters of taste and fashion, when they are so patriotic in their patronage.'²⁷⁰ Wedgwood sent unsolicited parcels of his pottery to members of the German aristocracy in 1771, each with a letter advertising his products and an invoice. Of the one thousand parcels sent out all but three had been paid for in full two years later.²⁷¹ Boulton fared less successfully - the sidereal clock was sent to Catherine of Russia speculatively after it had failed to sell at auction, but was returned.²⁷²

²⁶⁷ McKendrick, 1960, p.412; Berg, 2005 p.43. Lubbock, pp.222-3 suggests that this was a sour remark based on commercial reality rather than something he actually believed, that the firm had not persuaded architects to promote their new jasperware so it initially sold badly.

²⁶⁸ Nicholas Goodison, 'Ormolu Ornaments' in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.32; BAH3782/12/23/215, MB to Elizabeth Montagu, 16 Jan. 1772.

²⁶⁹ McKendrick, 1960, p.412.

²⁷⁰ Langford, Vol.II, p.42.

²⁷¹ Koehn, pp.32-3, 354 n.117.

²⁷² Goodison in Mason, 2009, p.175.

Both men used catalogues and printed sheets of patterns, formal advertising and puffery, the insertion of anonymous articles in the press.²⁷³ Josiah Wedgwood told Boulton in 1767 that he sent 'engraved prints' abroad to advertise his wares.²⁷⁴ He sent out catalogues in French in 1773 and in German, Italian, Dutch and Russian the following year. Great pains were taken to ensure secrecy which suggests they were a new approach.²⁷⁵ Printed images were also used by Boulton and Fothergill, Fothergill's letters discuss the production of engraved cards or patterns which were used to show designs to potential customers without having to carry examples of all of them, or tie up capital in their production.²⁷⁶ Some of these cards were engraved by Benjamin Green (c.1739-1798); originally from Halesowen, he was Drawing Master at Christ's Hospital, but this was only for a few afternoons a week so he was obliged to take on freelance work.²⁷⁷ Boulton chose to use Green as Fothergill wrote that he had found several engravers in the neighbourhood of Aldersgate Street, but that if Boulton preferred Green, Fothergill would attempt to find him.²⁷⁸ Green worked from drawings provided by Soho and delivered to him by Fothergill. The arrangement continued until at least 1766.²⁷⁹ Later printed material would become more sophisticated,

²⁷³ McKendrick, 1960 pp.423-4, BAH3782/12/59/36 MB to Richard Chippindall 22 Feb 1792. See for example BAH3782/12/24/46 Alexander Small to MB, 22 Jul. 1775.

²⁷⁴ Snodin, 1987, n. 4, credited to Ken Quickenden.

²⁷⁵ McKendrick, 1960, p.430; Berg, 2005. One of the problems with issuing catalogues is clear from BAH3782/12/41/212 Draft agreement. Mr. Alston's plan for making merchants honest, Jun 1796. which deals with the problem of merchants selling inferior copies of designs taken from pattern cards.

²⁷⁶ Various letters mention these cards, see especially BAH3782/12/60/2 JF to MB 7 May 1762; Quickenden, 1990, p.56.

²⁷⁷ Timothy Clayton, 'Benjamin Green' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 26 June 2007; *1951 Festival Exhibition of Pictures by the Eighteenth-century Halesowen Artists James, Amos and Benjamin Green, Council House Halesowen*, Halesowen, 1951, pp.42-3.

²⁷⁸ BAH3782/12/60/3 JF to MB 8 May 1762. Boulton knew Benjamin's elder brother Amos as a young man, see catalogue 24.

²⁷⁹ BAH3782/12/60/42 JF to MB 20 Mar 1766.

Boulton wrote of giving out books of designs in Holland in 1779.²⁸⁰ In 1790 Hodges sent Boulton a book of prints, each pattern numbered and priced, and a list specifying discounts. He added the 'book is proper for abroad or a London merchant's, but should not be shown to shopkeepers, as the prices of the same, and the discounts, are different to them'.²⁸¹ At times Boulton and Wedgwood combined to undertake marketing: in 1783 and 1788 cases of earthenware samples from Wedgwood were sent to Germany via Soho where Boulton added books of drawings and hardware samples.²⁸²

Wedgwood, like Boulton, was seeking to create a brand. He had purchased the Ridgehouse estate in 1767 but did not retain the original name of the site. He renamed it Etruria because Etruscan art was at the time considered the finest in antiquity and he was experimenting with encaustic painting in what was thought to be the Etruscan style.²⁸³ In this one move Wedgwood established his classical credentials and a memorable name. Boulton probably experienced then, as now, confusion with Soho in London.²⁸⁴ Wedgwood also made sure that his name was associated with his products. In the mid-eighteenth century only a few luxury goods were known by the name of their manufacturer, like Chippendale or Meissen. Potters did not generally mark their products until the 1770s, and those who did tended to

²⁸⁰ BAH3782/12/108/17 MB Notebook 1779; Snodin, 1987, pp.25-32.

²⁸¹ BAH3782/12/63/47 John Hodges to MB in London, 19 Jun. 1790

²⁸² Berg, 2005, p.145.

²⁸³ King-Hele, p.78. The first vases thrown at Etruria displayed the statement *Artes Etruriæ Renascuntur*, the arts of Etruria are revived. In fact the vases which inspired Wedgwood were later found not to be from Etruria so the name is not as appropriate as Wedgwood believed, Geoffrey Willis, *Wedgwood*, London, 1980 p.40; Fox, in McCalman (ed.), 1999, p.233.

²⁸⁴ Soho, Handsworth has sometimes been taken for Soho, London by modern authors and collectors, Anne Clifford, *Cut Steel and Berlin Iron Jewellery*, Bath, 1971, p.23 suggests that Boulton's first factory was in London, moving to Birmingham by 1775 for unknown reasons.

use marks or symbols. Wedgwood stamped his own name into the base of his products, and by 1772 everything made at Etruria carried the name of Wedgwood.²⁸⁵ With silver, Boulton was restrained by the legal requirements of assay marks which had to be registered, but did manage to attach his name to some products.²⁸⁶

As has been suggested, another element of the development of a brand identity was the experience of those people who came to see the manufactory. Visitors were allowed to see the range of products, some of the production processes and to experience the elegant and tasteful Principal Building for themselves. Those visitors then disseminated descriptions of Soho over which Boulton had no control. It was therefore essential that everything possible was done to ensure that the visit conveyed the messages that Boulton required about Soho and its products. The Principal Building would have been the first thing that visitors saw, placed as it was facing the approach from the Birmingham to Wolverhampton road. Having spent so much money on the building it was logical to develop its use as a symbol of Soho in order to pull together the diverse output. That building signified an enterprise of taste and stood for solidity and permanence, it suggested an established firm with capital available, which was expected to remain in business for some considerable time to come. In fact the capital was

²⁸⁵ Koehn, p.33. However, as Evans has shown, Ambrose Crowley's steel was known by his name many years before Wedgwood's use of his name, Evans, 2005.

²⁸⁶ For instance, some but by no means all, shoe buckles, BMAG1934F45 is stamped Boulton and Smiths. The steam engines had plaques bearing the name Boulton and Watt. Boulton's assay marks always contained his initials so they were distinctive although they could not carry his full name.

borrowed and there were many times when the business was on the verge of collapse, but this was well hidden.²⁸⁷

The kinds of meanings for the Principal Building that have been outlined above were relatively easy for contemporaries to read, others had to be signposted and reinforced. The architecture drew on that of the country house, so the building was not immediately apparent as a factory in its early years. Viewers had to be made to understand that this was a factory where a wide range of products were made. This was undertaken through personal visits to the site, but also through the controlled dissemination of images. These were representations of the Principal Building with associated captions and descriptions which informed the viewer, anchoring specific messages and linking the names of Boulton and Soho to the symbol, the elegant classical building. Each of these images was considered in relation to the intended viewers and the messages it was hoped they would take from the image, so a variety of views and accompanying texts were produced, each tailored to a specific audience. Over time these combined to develop the Principal Building as a recognisable shorthand for Boulton and Soho. Having taken the time to create the building, Boulton ensured that he was able to depict it to its full advantage. The trained and talented designers at, and associated with, Soho not only meant he could produce elegant products, but also enabled him to portray his factory in the same manner. The increasing levels of sophistication which were applied to this will be explored by considering each

²⁸⁷ J.E. Cule, *The Financial History of Matthew Boulton 1759-1800*, Master of Commerce thesis, University of Birmingham, 1935; Hopkins, 1984.

image, its context and the motivations for its production where these can be discovered.

Earliest representations of Soho

Indications of the production of an image of the manufactory are first found in a bill from the London surveyor and architect William Jupp (1734-1788).²⁸⁸

Jupp was brought in to measure some of the building work, presumably as a result of the dispute with William Wyatt over escalating costs. In October 1768 he was

Drawing the Fair Front for Mr Rooker to engrave from which he did & the whole in Perspective & Designs for the Center in Back part of the Manufactory attending on Mr Rooker with the Drawings 9 Days about at a cost of £5 5s.²⁸⁹

This may have been the engraver Edward Rooker (1724-74) who specialised in architectural and topographical views, and had provided illustrations for books by the architect James Stuart, who Boulton knew.²⁹⁰ While in London Boulton asked his wife to send him the drawings for 'Rooker y^e engraver'.²⁹¹

These drawings were probably produced for a history of Staffordshire planned by Rev. Thomas Feilde (fl.1768-1781).²⁹² Erasmus Darwin told Feilde in

²⁸⁸ Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, London, 1978.

²⁸⁹ Colvin; BAH3782/12/23/128 William Jupp to MB 25 May 1769.

²⁹⁰ It is unlikely to have been his son, Michael Angelo Rooker (1746-1801) as suggested by Yale's editor in Loggie in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.24. In 1769 he was a student at the newly founded Royal Academy, Patrick Conner, Michael Rooker in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 7 Apr 2010; Patrick Conner, Edward Rooker in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007; Patrick Conner, *Michael Angelo Rooker 1746-1801*, London, 1984, p.20.

²⁹¹ BAH3782/16/1/33 MB to Mrs Ann Boulton, 7 Oct 1768.

²⁹² Thomas Feilde, *Prospectus for A General History of Staffordshire*, 1768. www.archives.staffordshire.gov.uk, accessed 7 Apr 2010.

1768, 'I know no curiosity in this county so worthy your attention as Mr Boulton's works at Soho'.²⁹³ Feilde wrote to Boulton in 1769 to thank him for encouraging his work by making a present of a print of 'your buildings at Soho.' He proposed to print seven hundred and fifty copies of his book, so asked Boulton to order the same number of prints from Mrs Wright, a printer in Chancery Lane, London. He provided the text for the inscription at the bottom of the plate:

'To _____ this view of _____ engraved at his Expencc is dedicated by his most obliged humble servant Thos Feilde.'²⁹⁴

As Boulton was to meet the whole cost of the engraving and the printing, inclusion in the volume must have been something he felt was advantageous. He could see that it would reinforce the status of his manufactory as one of the foremost in Staffordshire and could bring his manufactory, its products and technical innovations to the notice of a new audience; it could provide valuable marketing for him. By 1770 Feilde thought there was little probability of being able to proceed with his history and sought to sell some of his research papers in order to return subscription money he had received.²⁹⁵ His papers were later acquired by Stebbing Shaw who used some of the material, including Darwin's written description but not the illustration of Soho (which had expanded considerably by then), in his *History of Staffordshire* published some thirty years later and discussed in chapter three.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Stebbing Shaw, *History of Staffordshire*, Vol.II, Part 1, London, 1801, p.117.

²⁹⁴ BAH3782/1/18/7 Thomas Feilde to MB 5 Jul 1769.

²⁹⁵ William Salt Library, Stafford, henceforth WSL SMS/439/11/3/1 Thomas Feilde to Rev. Unett 28 Apr 1770.

²⁹⁶ Stebbing Shaw, 1801, pp.117-21. See appendix 1.5 for the description of Soho.

The earliest currently known images of Soho Manufactory are a pair of small engravings with French and German captions (figure 8). One shows the Principal Building from the front with the rest of the buildings visible behind. The other shows the site from the back, including the rear of the Principal Building. Only one example is known, now in a nineteenth-century scrapbook with no clear provenance.²⁹⁷ It has been cut from a larger sheet so the original context is no longer available. Demidowicz has dated these views as between 1765 and 1775 based on the buildings shown.²⁹⁸ The languages used imply that they were produced with a continental audience in mind but the exact manner of their intended use is not clear without further information. The left hand view is captioned 'BATIMENT VÛ PAR DEVANT.' (building seen from the front) with French text below explaining that the manufactory of Boulton and Fothergill of Birmingham make watch chains of different metals buckles, buttons and all sorts of hardwares. The other view also has a French caption, 'BATIMENT VÛ PAR DERRIERE' (building seen from behind), but similar text in German text below. If the text accompanying this image was in French only it could be argued that Boulton sought to emphasise his sophistication and fashionable status. However, the presence of German in these early images makes it more likely that the language was included for the ease of an intended French or German audience, linking to Boulton's desire for someone in the warehouse who spoke French and German.

²⁹⁷ BAH82934 *Collection of original letters, newspaper cuttings, portraits, views etc. relating to Matthew Boulton, James Watt and Soho, [1760-]* made by Samuel Timmins, Vol.1 p.59.

²⁹⁸ See catalogue 1. In his essay in Dick, 2009 p.119 he dates them as c.1768 based on the combination of the evidence of the buildings and Jupp's bill considered above.

The small size of these engravings makes it unlikely that they were the print presented to Feilde for inclusion in his book on Staffordshire. This would have been a full page plate, printed by Mrs Wright, a specialist printer, separately from the text of the volume as the text was relief, the plates intaglio. It is possible that, having gone to the time and expense of having a drawing made, Boulton looked for other ways in which to use it when Feilde failed to publish. These images show the 'fair front' and 'back part' of the manufactory as detailed in Jupp's bill so it is likely that these smaller views were made after Jupp's drawings or Rooker's engravings.²⁹⁹ Multiple authors contributed to these small images of Soho, not just Jupp, Rooker and the engraver, but Boulton and those around him would have had input on how the manufactory was depicted and the accompanying text. Both images emphasise the scale of the factory and the left-hand view shows the bustle of the working day, a busy factory with orders to fulfil.³⁰⁰ Boulton and those around him were beginning to explore ways to exploit the image of the manufactory, to depict it in ways he thought would impress his intended audience.³⁰¹ Later examples would go on to make more ambitious claims for a beautiful building and high-status staffage, showing the grand visitors rather than the workers.

The continental market was not Boulton's only interest, he wrote to Lord Dundas of his wish to 'extend our sales in our own Country which can only be

²⁹⁹ See catalogue 1 for further consideration of this.

³⁰⁰ The contrast between the bustle of one view and the deserted nature of the other is marked. Richard Clay has suggested, pers comm. that they may be intended to depict different times of day.

³⁰¹ At times in this thesis 'Boulton' is used as a short-hand for Boulton and those around him. As will be made clear these images are the work of multiple authors. Soho staff, friends and business associates all exerted influence on Boulton, impacting on decisions he made about the depiction of his factory and himself.

done by the Spirit of Novelty'.³⁰² Aware of the need to ensure the fashionable London customers knew of the range and quality of his products, Boulton contemplated a showroom in the city like that set up by Josiah Wedgwood.³⁰³ He began to consider this in 1769, about the time of the first images of the manufactory and as his production of ormolu vases increased. He discussed it at some length with James Adam, brother of the architect Robert Adam, but decided instead to hold an exhibition and auction at Christie's saleroom in Pall Mall in April 1770. This was a success and another was arranged the following year.³⁰⁴ James Keir (1735-1820), a chemist, industrialist and friend of Erasmus Darwin helped with arrangements.³⁰⁵ In a letter to Boulton he advised on the wording of letters to accompany the catalogue, concluding:

I have omitted acquainting the public that such fine things are made upon a heath, because it might appear ostentatious of your own abilities, and the fertility of the soil is of no consequence in the production of or moulû. Your situation within two miles of Birmingham cannot be thought a bad one; and if it is, people will be apt to say, why did you chuse it? If you had a neat engraving of a view of your manufacture prefixed to your Catalogue, I think it would not be improper.³⁰⁶

Keir's exact meaning here is unclear; it could be read as suggesting that a picture of an object of Boulton's manufacture, a piece of ormolu, be included or it may mean a view of the manufactory. If this was the case it may be that

³⁰² MB to Dundas 4 Jan 1771 Robinson, 1963, p.44.

³⁰³ Lynn Miller, 'A Capital Venture' in McLeod, Boyle, Blake Roberts (eds.), *Josiah Wedgwood and the Potter's Arts*, Toronto, 1996, p.41. For details of Boulton's plans see Quickenden, 1990, pp.65-66, 69-70.

³⁰⁴ The plans for a London showroom predate those for the showroom at Soho which was not opened until the summer of 1771, Goodison, pp.167-9.

³⁰⁵ Barbara M D Smith, 'James Keir' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 25 April 2006. Keir managed the manufactory in 1778 while Boulton was in Cornwall. Having had the opportunity to study the accounts during this time he refused a partnership with Boulton in 1779, G to P&F, James Keir.

³⁰⁶ BAH3782/12/65/2 James Keir to MB [1 Apr 1771].

Keir was aware that a suitable drawing already existed. However, no illustrations are associated with the sale catalogue.³⁰⁷

Around the same time Boulton also began to exploit the trade directory as a marketing tool. The manufacturing towns of Sheffield and Birmingham were the first outside London to produce these lists of names, occupations and addresses which made initial communication between buyer and seller simpler. Such lists made it easier to find manufacturers and suppliers in these towns, which had a large number of small tradesmen.³⁰⁸ They found a market as handbooks among business users, travellers and visitors, but were also used to promote particular towns.³⁰⁹ The first Birmingham Directory was published by the printer and publisher James Sketchley in 1763, having advertised his intention in the *London Chronicle*. A second edition of the Directory was published in 1764 with an advertisement appearing in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, asking newcomers or those who had changed their situation to let him know. No copies of these directories are known to have survived.³¹⁰ Another edition was published in 1767 when the section on toymakers explained 'an infinite variety' of such articles was made in Birmingham and 'for cheapness, Beauty, and Elegance no Place in the World can vie with them.'³¹¹ This was a direct challenge to the common perception of Birmingham goods as poor quality. Boulton and Fothergill were listed as

³⁰⁷ James Christie, *Catalogue of the sale of the superb and elegant produce of Messrs Boulton and Fothergill's Or moulu Manufactory, at Soho, in Staffordshire*, London, 1771. This sale was not a success, making about half what Boulton had hoped, Nicholas Goodison, catalogue entry 166 in Mason (ed.), 2009.

³⁰⁸ Jane E. Norton, *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales*, London, 1950, pp.1, 7.

³⁰⁹ Corfield and Kelly, pp.22-4.

³¹⁰ Benjamin Walker, 'Birmingham Directories', *Transactions and Proceedings Birmingham Archaeological Society for the year 1934*, Vol LVIII, 1937, pp.2-3.

³¹¹ Walker, 1937, pp.3-4.

Merchants of Soho near Birmingham, but not as any of the other trades they undertook.³¹² An expanded directory was published by Sketchley and Adams in 1770 which listed Boulton and Fothergill as Merchants of Soho near Birmingham and Factors at Snow Hill.³¹³ So far, the use of directories as a marketing method had been limited to inclusion in lists, but having begun to explore the potential of print-making Boulton and those around him were soon to look to combine these media.

By 1771, Boulton's business and reputation had grown to the extent that Samuel Garbett, himself a significant Birmingham manufacturer, would refer to him as 'our principal manufacturer in Birmingham'.³¹⁴ Boulton's friend, Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), wrote after a visit to the manufactory:

The pleasure I received there was not of the idle and transient kind which arises from merely seeing beautiful objects. Noble tastes are gratified in seeing Mr. Bolton and all his admirable inventions. To behold the secrets of chymistry, and the mechanick powers, so employ'd and exerted, is very delightful. I consider the machines you have at work as so many useful working subjects to Great Britain of your own creation; the exquisite taste in the forms which you give them to work upon is another national advantage. I had rather see my country in continual contention of arts than of arms. The victories of Soho, over every other manufacture, instead of making widows and orphans, as happens even to the conquering side in war, makes marriages and christenings. [...] Go on then, sir, to triumph over the French in taste, and to embellish your country with useful inventions and elegant productions.³¹⁵

This letter identifies some of the themes which would recur in many of the later published descriptions of Soho: taste, nationalism and competition with

³¹² *Sketchley's Birmingham, Wolverhampton & Walsall Directory, Third Edition*, Birmingham, 1767.

³¹³ *Sketchley & Adam's Tradesman's True Guide: or an Universal Directory for [...]Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley & the villages in the neighbourhood [...]*, Birmingham, 1770.

³¹⁴ BAH3782/12/61/3 Samuel Garbett to Bamber Gascoyne, 22 Dec 1771.

³¹⁵ BAH3782/13/53/45 Elizabeth Montagu to MB, 31 Oct. 1771.

France. However, the next few years were to prove turbulent for Boulton. Financial difficulties brought Boulton and Fothergill to the verge of bankruptcy, he was frequently in London lobbying for the establishment of an assay office in Birmingham and James Watt's steam engine distracted him from his original business.³¹⁶ None of this stopped him exploring and encouraging new techniques and processes, including those used to produce printed imagery. Before returning to the trade directory as a marketing tool, he focussed on the production of an innovative single sheet aquatint, a technique which had been developed in France and was little used in Britain at the time.³¹⁷

Boulton & Fothergill Située a Soho près de Birmingham

This aquatint (figure 9) not only made visual claims regarding the beauty of the manufactory and the elegance of its visitors, but was also at the forefront of the technical development of the aquatint process in Britain. The artist, Francis Eginton (1736/7-1805) probably came to Soho around 1764, and by 1771 was chief designer. In 1773 Boulton sent him to London where he was to look for design ideas, visit members of the aristocracy, and the architects Robert Mylne and James Paine. Eginton undertook a variety of work at Soho,

³¹⁶ Jones, 2008, p.50; Baggot in Dick (ed.), 2009; Dickinson, pp.75-132; Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.120; Hopkins, 1989, pp.86-7.

³¹⁷ Aquatint is an intaglio form of etching which allows a tonal effect so can reproduce watercolours. Areas of the plate which are not to be etched are protected by stopping-out varnish if they are to remain white, or an aquatint ground which allows the acid to bite a fine crazed pattern of etched lines which print to give the effect of a wash. Pure aquatint cannot produce lines so is often combined with an etched line, Craig Hartley, 'Aquatint' in *Grove Art Online*, accessed 28 April, 2008; Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the history and techniques*, revised edition, London, 2004, pp.89-90.

including design, modelling, chasing, engraving, painting, calculating costs, and liaising with customers. He was taken into partnership by Boulton and Fothergill by 1776. That partnership was terminated in 1778, by which time Eginton was experimenting with the mechanical paintings process and a separate partnership was formed for this later that year.³¹⁸ It proved unprofitable and Boulton ended the partnership in 1780. Soon afterwards Eginton left, setting up as a glass painter at Prospect Hill House not far from Soho.³¹⁹ His brother John (d.1796) was also employed by Boulton and Fothergill by 1768 in a variety of fields.³²⁰ The brothers not only worked on a range of Boulton and Fothergill's metal and other wares, but were also involved in printmaking.³²¹

In 1773 Francis Eginton was working on an illustration of the Principal Building. John Scale wrote to Boulton in London 'Mr Eginton has finished the plate of the Building and has succeeded I believe as well as he expected or better.'³²² A few days later he sent the plate along with Eginton's instructions regarding printing.

[...] our Press has not power enough nor is it in good order, therefore they cannot be printed properly at home, Mr. Val Green will direct you to a proper man to print them; if he directs you to Ryley he is not the

³¹⁸ This was a method of copying oil paintings. The exact process remains unclear, David Saunders and Antony Griffiths, Two 'mechanical' oil paintings after de Louthembourg: history and technique, paper presented at conference Studying Old Master Paintings: Technology and Practice, National Gallery, London, 16-18 September 2009, forthcoming; Barbara Fogarty, *Matthew Boulton and Francis Eginton's Mechanical Paintings: Production and Consumption 1777 to 1781*, MPhil thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010.

³¹⁹ Kenneth Quickenden, 'Boulton & Fothergill's silversmiths' in Quickenden, 2009, pp.343, 352-3. At times in this thesis Francis Eginton is referred to as Francis Eginton senior in order to differentiate him from his nephew, Francis Eginton junior, for whom see p.288.

³²⁰ Kenneth Quickenden, 'Boulton and Fothergill's Silversmiths', in Quickenden, 2009, pp.352-3. Quickenden, 1990, pp.317-321.

³²¹ G to P&F, Francis Eginton, John Eginton, Jee & Eginton.

³²² This is more likely to be Francis than John because other works outlined below are signed by Francis, BAH3782/12/72/5 John Scale to MB 1 Feb 1773.

Man being an engraver himself; one Morgan a little hump back Man is the best and V Green will tell you where he lives, but unless he is watch'd he will let other engravers see it.³²³

Scale suggested that an honest man should stand by during printing and emphasised that Valentine Green (1739-1813), an engraver and publisher, should not be allowed to see the plate.³²⁴ Scale explained that Eginton was not sure of the best type of paper but the printer could advise, 'a quarter of a sheet [...] will be enough both for the plate and printing a list of our articles under it'. He warned that the plate should not be worn faint as it would be easy to repair and reiterated that Green should not be told there was anything to print, only asked how to contact Morgan 'as he would naturally expect to see the plate if he knew Eginton had done one.' If it was not possible to find Morgan, it should be printed by a mezzotint printer.³²⁵ The secrecy and the careful printing required clearly indicate that this was no ordinary plate. It is likely that it was the aquatint over etching of the Principal Building which was dated by Dickinson in 1937 as c.1781 (figure 9).³²⁶

The cartographer Peter Perez Burdett (1734/5-1793) told Wedgwood's partner Bentley in 1771 that he had discovered the aquatint technique.³²⁷ He

³²³ BAH3782/12/72/7 John Scale to MB 7 Feb 1773.

³²⁴ Timothy Clayton, 'Valentine Green' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 22 Jan 2008.

³²⁵ BAH3782/12/72/7 John Scale to MB 7 Feb 1773. Mezzotint plates also had to be printed with great care and not worn down, so the assumption seems to be that a mezzotint printer would take more care with the plate.

³²⁶ Dickinson, 1937, frontispiece. His dating was presumably based on the belief at the time that aquatint was not practised in Britain until Robert Adam published Le Prince's method in 1782. The inclusion of Fothergill's name in the caption meant that it could not be later than this as he died on 19 June 1782 and the partnership was dissolved a few days later, Boulton had given Fothergill formal notification that their partnership would cease at the end of 1781 but did not follow it through. It is now clear that aquatint was being undertaken in this country prior to 1782 so an earlier date becomes possible for this example. Antony Griffiths, 'Notes on Early Aquatint in England and France', *Print Quarterly*, IV, 1987, 3 pp.256-270; Archives of Soho Catalogue BAH3782/1 Introduction; Quickenden, 1990, pp.221, 5.

³²⁷ Paul Laxton, 'Peter Perez Burdett' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 15 Nov 2007; Martin Hopkinson, 'Printmaking and Print Collectors in the North West 1760-1800' in (ed.) Barker

exhibited aquatints in 1772 using a technique which differed from the French method, implying that he developed the process himself. He brushed acid onto an aquatint ground, only using stopping out varnish for large areas of flat tone.³²⁸ In 1773 he tried to sell his method as an 'art of printing in imitation of paintings', but left the country in 1774 and never returned.³²⁹ Burdett was known to both Boulton and Eginton, he wrote to Boulton in 1777 and in his closing remarks asked to be remembered to 'Mr Eggerton and his brother'.³³⁰ A memoir of Burdett intended for publication in *The Gentleman's Magazine* claimed that Burdett was the first practitioner of aquatint, adding that Burdett and Thomas Chubbard 'with Eginton of Birmingham began with a determination to pursue the study and occasionally to communicate & shew the different specimens they could produce &c.'³³¹ Boulton seems to have been interested in, and encouraging of, these new print techniques, recognising the potential of using them in other ways. The aquatint process appears to form an early stage in the production of mechanical paintings, copies of oil paintings produced at Soho by Francis Eginton.³³²

and Kidson, *Joseph Wright of Derby in Liverpool*, New Haven and London, 2007, p.88; Martin Hopkinson, 'Burdett, Wedgwood and Bentley', *Print Quarterly*, XXV, 2008, 2, p.132.

³²⁸ Craig Hartley, 'Aquatint' in *Grove Art Online*.

³²⁹ Griffiths, 1987, p.263.

³³⁰ BAH3782/12/24/122 PP Burdett to MB 15 Sep 1777 incorrectly catalogued as SP Burdett.

³³¹ Hopkinson, 2007, p.89 quoting Matthew Gregson, *Memoirs of P P Burdett late of Liverpool* MS letter dated 20 Feb 1822.

³³² Antony Griffiths, *The Mechanical Paintings of Boulton and Eginton*, unpublished paper given at Image Multiplied Symposium, 16 Feb 1988, British Museum, London. I am grateful to Antony Griffiths for allowing me to see this paper; Barbara Fogarty, Report on Mechanical Painting Workshop held at BMAG 27 April 2009; Saunders and Griffiths, forthcoming; Fogarty, 2010. Others who undertook early experiments with aquatint and were known to Boulton were Francis Jukes in 1775 and Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg in 1776, Craig Hartley, 'Aquatint' in *Grove Art Online*. Jukes paid interest to Boulton and Fothergill on a debt, G to P&F, Francis Jukes. He dedicated a view of the Thames to Boulton, *View of the River Thames, the Cities of London and Westminster [...]*, 1804 BM1877, 069.1870, and was given a copy of the Sharp print of Boulton after Beechey (table 1). De Loutherbourg provided oil paintings for multiplication by the mechanical paintings process, BAH3782/1/26/19 de Loutherbourg to Francis Eginton and Boulton and Fothergill, 17 Aug 1777. Benjamin Green, who had produced engravings for Boulton and Fothergill, also experimented with different techniques, having produced soft ground etchings in 1771. His brother Amos had known

The location of the aquatint reproduced by Dickinson is no longer known, though copies exist in the William Salt Collection at Stafford and in the British Museum without the intended list of products.³³³ The British Museum copy is one of the plates in a booklet of examples titled 'For Miss E.V.Fothergill Specimen of a new method of Engraving in Imitation of Washed Drawings Invented at Soho Manufactory near Birmingham'.³³⁴ This was Elizabeth Vernon Fothergill (b.1761), the eldest child of Boulton's business partner John

Boulton for many years and it is likely that he was also interested in the various reproductive processes being explored and helped source material to be copied and sought opinions on prints, John Hayes, *Gainsborough as a Printmaker*, New Haven and London, 1973, p.13, see catalogue 24.

³³³ WSL, SV.VII.23a; BM 1978,1216.3.1. The copy shown in Dickinson was with Birmingham Assay Office and was also reproduced by Delieb, p.28 but can no longer be traced. Accession records suggest there was also a copy at BMAG in the late nineteenth century but its current location is not known. There is no suggestion that either of these copies included the list of articles.

³³⁴ It was purchased from a London saleroom with no earlier provenance although the same sale two lots earlier had included a copy after de Louthembourg's Winter possibly an Eginton mechanical painting. The booklet contains

- the plate of Soho
- bridge in an Italianate landscape with antique ruins. Pure liftground aquatint with no underlying etching printed in grey/black
- the same plate printed in red
- a male figure, possibly St Francis with three maidens (possibly Chastity, Obedience and Poverty) inscribed 'Engrav'd from The Original sketch in his Majesty's Collection/ L. Carracci/ Fr. Eginton sculpt. Soho Bir.' aquatint over etched lines printed in sepia
- an unsigned coastal scene with a ship at anchor and two cows and a herdsman in the foreground printed in black. The curator's notes describe the drawing as in the manner of Gainsborough.
- the same scene printed in sepia ink.
- a bearded man in Elizabethan costume reading. Inscribed 'E. Alcock invt Fr Eginton ft. Soho Bm' printed in grey-black
- the same image in sepia/brown.

BM1978,1216.3. British Museum Collection Database, www.britishmuseum.org/collection, British Museum, accessed 5 March 2009.

A further Eginton aquatint was acquired by the British Museum in 1987. This was after a drawing by William Taverner and printed from two plates in blue and black. It is a landscape showing three figures on a road alongside a pool with two men fishing and is signed 'Fr. Eginton Sct. Soho Birm', purchased from a dealer with no prior provenance.

BM1987,1003.25, British Museum Collection Database, www.britishmuseum.org/collection, British Museum, accessed 5 March 2009. I am grateful to Antony Griffiths for discussion on these prints. Llewellynn Jewitt suggests that a colour aquatint of cups in Josiah Wedgwood's 1787 catalogue was by Eginton, he also states that Eginton helped Wedgwood with 'some improvements in the colours and in the body of wares', Llewellynn Jewitt, *The Wedgwoods: Being a Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, London, 1865, pp.335, 349. I am grateful to Alan Barnes for this reference.

Fothergill.³³⁵ Eginton was experimenting with the aquatint process, including printing the same plate in different colours and printing with multiple plates. It is possible he was inspired by transfer printing techniques used to transfer images to ceramics or the metal pieces which he had japanned.³³⁶ Griffiths describes Eginton's aquatints as of the Burdett type with layers brushed on, not stopped out so he was working on similar technical lines to Burdett.³³⁷ The audience for aquatints was one interested in watercolours, a medium which aquatint was particularly well-suited to reproduce, particularly the work of artists like Gainsborough, who was actively sought by Amos Green to provide source material and to comment on Eginton's finished prints.³³⁸ Several of Eginton's aquatints show such subjects.

The aquatint of Soho was very different, it was created for a specific and separate purpose, that of promotion of the site, made clear by Scale's plan to include a list of their articles. It is likely that it was intended to draw on the French associations of the technique, suggesting that Soho could emulate France in the aquatint process as well as the production of ormolu. The fact that it was captioned in French reinforces this message. It would also have been intended to draw on aquatint as a modern and innovative process, highlighting the position of Soho at the cutting edge of technology and

³³⁵ G to P&F Elizabeth Vernon Fothergill.

³³⁶ Transfer printing involves transferring a printed design from an engraved copper plate onto paper and from that onto ceramics or enamelled copper. The process was developed in 1750-1 by John Brooks, an Irish engraver working in Birmingham, Berg, 2005, p.136. It seems likely that this process also inspired the mechanical paintings produced by Eginton.

³³⁷ Griffiths, 1987.

³³⁸ Craig Hartley, Aquatint in *Grove Art Online*. BAH3782/1/23/7 Amos Green to Mr Egerton [Eginton], Soho 11 Feb 1774; BAH3782/1/23/6 Amos Green to John Scale, Soho endorsed 5 Feb 1774 but actually 5 March; BAH3782/1/23/10 Amos Green, Bath to Mr Scale 20 March 1774 and BAH3782/1/23/11 Amos Green, to John Scale 30 March 1774. See catalogue 24 for further information on Green and his relationship with Boulton.

fashion. The medium in which the image was produced contributed to its meaning and was part of the message it conveyed.³³⁹

The viewpoint is as if approaching the factory from the turnpike, coming down the hill with a first view of the Principal Building, the Mill Pool and the buildings of Rolling Mill Row. This was particularly impressive because it had been designed to be so; the building had been created as a piece of theatre that emphasised the scale, quality and beauty of the manufactory and, by association, of its products. Eginton's depiction was a move away from the constructed architectural prospects of the earlier *batiment vû*. Klingender argued that demand for topographical prints developed alongside the rise of topographical literature and this began with architectural 'prospects'; portraits of cities and gentlemen's country seats.³⁴⁰ The early topographers used a formulaic approach, giving detail of the main subject, often in a panorama or bird's-eye view and more generalised impressions of the landscape setting.³⁴¹ The earliest views of Soho fit this formula (figure 8).

This approach was soon abandoned for 'straightforward views based on direct observation from a single viewpoint', like Eginton's view of Soho, influenced by Paul Sandby (1731-1809), who started his career as a draughtsman attached to the military survey of the Highlands.³⁴² Klingender suggested that

³³⁹ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message*, New York, 1967; Hal Foster, 'Medium is the Market', *London Review of Books*, 9 Oct 2008.

³⁴⁰ Klingender, p.67.

³⁴¹ Klingender, p.64; Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880*, London, 1993, p.80. Raeburn similarly identifies a seventeenth century convention of a bird's-eye view for the main subject and a lower viewpoint for the surroundings which continued into the eighteenth century with series like Bucks' prospects, Michael Raeburn, 'The Frog Service and its Sources' in Young (ed.), 1995, p.138.

³⁴² Klingender, pp.68-9; Wilton and Lyles, pp.80-1.

the demand for such drawings was increased by Wedgwood and Bentley who needed well over a thousand views of country mansions and gardens for the decoration of the Frog Service for Empress Catherine of Russia, commissioned in 1773.³⁴³ Although originally intended to be made up of views of landscape gardens and 'Gothic', that is ancient, buildings, the service also included industrial sites at Coalbrookdale, Prescott glass works, and a colliery.³⁴⁴ Views of the Bridgewater Canal, based on two of Burdett's earliest aquatints and Wedgwood's home, Etruria Hall were included, but there were no images of the factory at Etruria or Soho.³⁴⁵ Presumably, Wedgwood had no wish to promote Boulton who was also supplying goods to Catherine.³⁴⁶

Eginton's print of Soho shows a busy site, but differently from the earlier view. It depicts the visitors, those who have come to view the industrial processes and products. Three carriages are on the forecourt or the approach, one with a postillion. A fashionable couple and their dog are shown strolling across the forecourt, admiring the architecture of the Principal Building. A figure stands below the clock of the workers' entrance, one leans on the wall, looking out across the Mill Pool and another approaches the main gate on horseback. These are inscribed viewers who indicate part of the intended audience for the print, the grand visitors themselves. Other viewers could seek to aspire to that status and the print would encourage them to think that they could do this

³⁴³ Klingender, p.69. He suggests it was commissioned in 1775 but Raeburn gives 1773. Raeburn, however, argues that many of the views actually used were based on existing prints as the expense and time needed to 'send draftsmen all over the Kingdom to take these views' was prohibitive, Raeburn, p.136.

³⁴⁴ Raeburn, p.136; Young (ed.), 1995, catalogue entries G82-85, G253-4, G258.

³⁴⁵ Young, catalogue entries G255-6; Raeburn, Voronikhina and Nurnberg (eds.) *The Green Frog Service*, London, 1995.

³⁴⁶ Goodison, 2002, p.408.

by purchasing goods from Soho. It would also help them to believe that they would come into contact with that elite group if they visited Soho. Working people can be seen; later images would see them removed completely as the images became more explicitly targeted towards potential customers. A young boy holds open the main gate for a carriage, a man wheels a barrow down the side of the Mill Pool, another punts a boat, a workman or a gardener rather than a leisure activity on the pool. A functional closed cart, perhaps containing finished products or raw materials is to the left of the view, contrasting with the fine carriages. The light source is to the left, light is falling on the main façade of the Principal Building, making it the focal point of the view. A low viewpoint is selected to give emphasis to the size of the Principal Building in contrast to the high viewpoint of the earlier views which emphasised the number of buildings on the site. Instead, Eginton included the buildings of Rolling Mill Row on the right to show the size of the site that extended behind the façade of the Principal Building. An idea of the surroundings is given with the forecourt, pool and foreground vegetation, some indication of trees to the left of the Principal Building, tethered grazing animals and hills in the distance on the right. The emphasis is clearly on the factory. As Boulton developed and improved the surrounding parkland this would come to be considered a vital part of the image of Soho and would be depicted in greater detail.³⁴⁷

It is not clear exactly how this print was intended to be used. John Scale wrote of printing it on a quarter sheet with a list of their articles underneath, so

³⁴⁷ The development of the park is considered in chapter two.

one of its intended uses was evidently as a piece of promotional print, but no copy with such a list is known.³⁴⁸ It seems likely that whatever the intent, relatively few copies of the image were produced as only two copies are known at present.³⁴⁹ Like the earlier image, the French title could suggest a continental audience, but the print could also be viewed by a British audience who would assign it additional meanings based on the French caption, drawing on the view of French as a cultured language. It could imply that the fashionable and tasteful French were interested in the products of Soho. A knowledge of French prints and style was assumed in forms of advertising such as the early 1760s trade card of the London chemist, Richard Siddall which was based on the painting *La Pharmacie* by Jacques de la Joue. French forms such as rocaille cartouches, made accessible through pattern books, were used in English trade cards more frequently than in French examples, so there is some evidence for advertisements drawing on the understanding and connotations of French style.³⁵⁰ At about the same as the aquatint of Soho was produced a similar image, printed in an established technique, appeared in Boulton's most sophisticated use of a trade directory so far. There were subtle differences between the content of these images, indicating that each was intended to convey particular messages to those who viewed them.

³⁴⁸ BAH3782/12/72/7 John Scale to MB 7 Feb 1773.

³⁴⁹ As indicated above, note 334, other copies would appear to have existed but their present whereabouts are unclear. Prints from Eginton's original plate should not be confused with the later reworking, catalogue 26, copies of which are at BMAG and BAH.

³⁵⁰ Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, 'Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century: Advertising and the Trade Card in Britain and France', *Cultural and Social History*, Vol.4, Issue 2, 2007, pp.159-64.

Swinney's Directory

On 15 March 1773 an advertisement was placed in *Aris' Birmingham Gazette* by Myles Swinney (1738-1812), a letter-founder, bookseller, printer, stationer and publisher who had been trained by Boulton's friend, John Baskerville.³⁵¹

Swinney sold Boulton books, carried advertisements and undertook printing for him.³⁵² He announced that

This Day was published, Price Two Shillings, Neatly bound in Red Leather, and embellished with a North-East View of the Soho, neatly engraved on Copper. The New Birmingham Directory; and Gentleman and Tradesman's Compleat Memorandum Book. Containing a brief Description of the Town of Birmingham [...] A concise Account of that celebrated Manufactory, the Soho.³⁵³

The view of Soho was placed before the frontispiece, folded into thirds (figure 10). It was specifically mentioned on the title page, as was the 'concise account'. The inclusion of a plate, the only illustration in the volume, showing one of the more famous manufactories was a new development and one which meant that Soho was the business that would stand out most to readers of the directory.³⁵⁴ The selection of Soho, actually outside Birmingham, as the illustrated business may suggest that the idea was one Boulton developed

³⁵¹ Charles Pye, *The Birmingham Directory for 1788 [...] by Charles Pye*, Birmingham; Scott, 2007, pp.87-8.

³⁵² Various bills, for example BAH3782/6/192/34 18 Apr-30 May 1776; BAH3782/6/192/41 27 Nov 1777; BAH3782/6/194/31 and 32 29 July 1791. His type foundry is illustrated in figure 31. British Book Trade Index, henceforth BBTI, University of Birmingham www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/, Miles Swinney.

³⁵³ *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 15 March 1773, quoted in Walker, 1937, p.15.

³⁵⁴ Pye's *New Directory for [...] Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1785 would have a plan of Birmingham folded into the frontispiece, a more useful inclusion in a directory than a picture of a factory. The only illustration contained within that volume was of Harts Hotel and Swan Inn drawn by Hollins and engraved by Hancock. This advertisement upset other innkeepers in the town and Pye responded in *Aris* that he had offered to insert any advertisements sent to him and this was the only one he had received, Walker, 1937, p.19. No evidence has been found of a similar response to the plate of Soho.

with Swinney who was considered a printer of 'considerable initiative'.³⁵⁵ It is possible that Boulton paid a premium for such coverage, but Soho's position within the volume highlights its importance to the local economy. The directory was also sold in London and Coventry and the cost of two shillings meant that it was accessible to a range of customers.³⁵⁶ It is likely that businesses were charged for inclusion in order to subsidise the production of the volume and that they saw it as an affordable form of advertising.

The illustration takes a similar view to the aquatint, from the approach road, with the focus on the Principal Building, showing Rolling Mill Row to emphasise the scale of the enterprise. Again, fashionable carriages were shown on the forecourt, although not as grand as those in the aquatint. The couple with their dog are no longer shown. Two figures on horseback approach the gate, one pointing towards the Principal Building. Working people still appeared in this picture, holding the gate open and another by the worker's entrance. A water trough or step is in front of the Principal Building to assist the large number of visitors and their horses. As in the aquatint the clock above the workers entrance is shown clearly, again suggesting that Boulton and his workforce were organised and delivered on time. A figure leans out of one of the windows of the central section of the building, pointing towards the carriage on the forecourt, looking out for the important visitors. The plate includes some staffage very similar to the aquatint which may suggest they are by the same artist, but the aquatint printing process would

³⁵⁵ John Money, *Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1800*, Manchester, 1977, p.59.

³⁵⁶ Myles Swinney, *The New Birmingham Directory; and Gentleman and Tradesman's Compleat Memorandum*, Birmingham, 1773, frontispiece.

have been too expensive and time-consuming to use in a trade directory, so a more established printing technique was used.³⁵⁷

Boulton and Fothergill were listed in the Birmingham section of the Directory as Manufacturers and Merchants, at Soho and Snow Hill. The preface noted: 'Soho, in a more particular manner seems to merit the public Attention' and gives a page and a half written description which drew attention to the illustration and went on to praise the thousand workmen working in 'a great variety of Branches'.³⁵⁸ The text highlighted France as a source of ideas and design, and as a rival. The 'emulation and taste' of the 'Natives' of Soho and 'parts adjacent' were noted, as were the mechanical devices which saved time and labour, and formed the link between 'taste and Elegance of Design', now 'happily united' with 'Mechanism and Chymistry'. Well-designed and well-made products were marketed to the wealthy as a mark of social distinction in the hope that this would attract those further down the social scale to the products of Soho.³⁵⁹ The technological advances of the firm were used as a further selling point, the 'ingenious mechanical contrivances' were one of the aspects of the site that particularly appealed to visitors, but also signified cost-efficient production. The combination of technology and taste were exactly the themes that Boulton wished to emphasise, they would recur for over forty years. The heath that Keir had considered unimportant reappeared to show the conquering of nature.³⁶⁰ The writer concluded that although the number

³⁵⁷ See catalogue 2 for further visual analysis and discussion regarding the artist.

³⁵⁸ The text is given in full in appendix 1.1.

³⁵⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge, M.A., 1984; Tom Gretton, 'Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste', *Oxford Art Journal*, 8.2, 1985, pp.63-7.

³⁶⁰ See p.73.

of people in the parish had doubled, the Poor Rates had reduced, 'which is a very striking instance of the good effects of Industry.'³⁶¹

Image and text combined to suggest that industry was good and poverty was expensive, but could be countered by the effects of industry. They highlighted the calibre of visitor to the site and depicted some of the working people while hinting at the 'thousand workmen' hidden inside. They expressed the taste and elegance of the Principal Building, and by association, of its output. The pool to the side and the open land behind the manufactory suggest that this is not part of an urban streetscape, the caption *A Perspective View of Soho Manufactory near Birmingham* makes this clear. Swinney's 1773 directory was the first time an image of the manufactory had been used in conjunction with such a long written description. Each had to be able to stand alone in case they were separated, but the text anchored the messages of the image and relayed others; it pointed the reader towards some specific interpretations of the image and added further information to encourage the viewer to think about other aspects of the site not visible.³⁶² It provided additional information about the Poor Rates, the technological advances, the rank of the customers and emphasised the range of goods made there. It was, for the first time, providing detailed information on the site alongside an image of the Principal Building standing as a symbol for the whole enterprise.

The main audience for Swinney's publication was businessmen who needed to make contacts within the city. For this audience the fashionable and

³⁶¹ Although it is possible that this is a very early reference to the Insurance Society (see catalogue 3) it is more likely to be related to the number of people employed.

³⁶² Barthes, trans. Heath, 1977, pp.38-41. For anchoring and relaying see p.22.

glamorous nature of the visitors has been scaled back, although it was still important to show them as they were part of the market that could be reached through the directory. Again this view had multiple authors, the artist and engraver (who may have been the same person), Boulton and his associates and Myles Swinney all shaped the way this plate looked and the way it related to its accompanying text. This was probably largest print run of an image of the manufactory to date. Not many copies survive but that does not mean that few were printed, they were made to be used and had a limited lifespan so may have been disposed of as a new version was acquired. A second edition of the directory was produced around 1776 which also included the plate of Soho.³⁶³ Swinney was made bankrupt in June 1779 but advertised a further edition of his directory in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* on 26 May 1783.³⁶⁴ No copy is known to have survived.

Boulton's businesses continued to appear in listings and descriptions. Pearson and Rollason's directory of 1777 featured an East View of Birmingham folded into its frontispiece and a four page description of Soho but no image.³⁶⁵ Once again this text drew together the range of products, emphasised taste and the happy combination of the mechanical and liberal arts. It highlighted the ingenious workmen, technological advances, the export of Soho goods and the 'greatly diminished [...] importation from France' which resulted from Soho's ability to compete with French manufacturers. In

³⁶³ Norton suggests the date of 1776 but the copy in Birmingham Central Library is catalogued as 1777. This copy is the only one known and has a list of names dated 1775-6 along with pages from the 1773 edition.

³⁶⁴ BBTI, Myles Swinney; Norton, p.185.

³⁶⁵ Pearson and Rollason, *The Birmingham Directory: or a Merchant and Tradesman's Useful Companion [...] Printed and sold by Pearson and Rollason*, Birmingham, 1777. The description of Soho is transcribed in appendix 2.1.

the absence of an image it used the name Soho. This appears as a heading, a title, even though it is in the middle of a sentence. Nowhere in the piece do the names of any of the proprietors appear; all is brought together as Soho. Presumably Boulton was hoping to draw further on the identity he had established in Swinney's directory. He would have hoped that purchasers of Pearson and Rollason's directory would also have owned the now-outdated Swinney's directory and would remember the image it had contained. Further editions of Pearson and Rollason's directory were produced in 1780 and 1781, an advertisement in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* listing among the contents of the 1780 edition 'a short, but correct description of Soho' implying problems with previous descriptions.³⁶⁶

Various aspects of the Soho businesses were listed in other directories including Boulton and Fothergill, Merchants and Manufacturers, Greenlettice Lane, Cannon Street, London in William Bailey's *Northern Directory of 1781*.³⁶⁷ A brief description of Soho appeared in William Hutton's *An History of Birmingham to the end of the year 1780* (1781). It began:

If we travel two miles from the centre of Birmingham, upon the Wolverhampton road, which may be called, the road to taste, and is daily travelled by the nobility and gentry, we shall arrive at the epitome of the arts.³⁶⁸

Hutton went on to refer to Boulton as a genius and Soho as the most elegant works in these parts, 'a city in miniature' and a 'nursery of ingenuity'. He

³⁶⁶ Walker, 1937, p.17; Norton, pp.184-5.

³⁶⁷ *Bailey's Northern Directory [...] containing [...] every principal town from the river Trent to Berwick upon Tweed; with London and Westminster, Edinburgh and Glasgow*, Warrington, 1781; Green Lettice Lane was the address of William Matthews, Boulton and Fothergill's London agent and later banker, G to P&F William Matthews.

³⁶⁸ William Hutton's *An History of Birmingham to the end of the year 1780*, Birmingham, 1781, p.271.

pointed out that although Soho was in Staffordshire 'we must accept it as part of Birmingham'.³⁶⁹ Hutton revised and expanded his publication in 1783 but the coverage of Soho remained the same, no image was included.³⁷⁰

Boulton and Fothergill were also listed in the Birmingham directories issued by Charles Pye who practised engraving and brought this interest to these volumes.³⁷¹ His 1791 edition carried an unsigned allegorical title-page showing Prudence with a mirror, surrounded by books, a lyre signifying poetry, a globe for international trade, a palette and drawing tools; intended to signify Birmingham as place of learning and taste, fighting against the perceived view (figure 11). Boulton and his associates had conveyed a number of messages in trade directories by using both images and text. Soho was frequently treated as a special case in directories; it did not just appear in listings but was given space for a description or image. In these volumes Boulton had emphasised the scale of his enterprise, his patriotism, his taste and fashionable status, and the application of new technology. He drew together his name, that of his manufactory and the image of the Principal Building to stand for the range of goods he was producing, to represent the brand identity.

³⁶⁹ Hutton, 1781, p.271.

³⁷⁰ William Hutton, *An history of Birmingham. The second edition, with considerable additions*, Birmingham, 1783. When it was revised and republished by James Guest in 1835 an illustration of the manufactory from the rear based on figure 46 was added, *The History of Birmingham by W Hutton FAS with considerable additions*, 6th ed, Birmingham, 1835.

³⁷¹ Jonathan Conlin, 'John Pye' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 21 Nov 2007. Charles's son, the engraver John Pye, had undertaken work for Boulton and Wedgwood, Berg, 2005, p.147; Helen Clifford, 'The Printed Illustrated Catalogue' in Snodin and Styles, 2004, p.140.

The Insurance Society Poster

After the images considered above there seems to have been a period of almost twenty years before new representations of the manufactory appeared, perhaps because of Boulton's distraction by the steam-engine business and other projects such as the new warehouse and the Albion Mill. He told his son in 1787 'I have really so many irons in the fire that it requires my utmost exertion and attention to prevent some of them from burning.'³⁷² When a new image did appear on a poster listing the rules of the insurance society belonging to the Manufactory, it was considerably more sophisticated, bringing together, as Dick and Watts have noted, 'the arts, science and technology, classics and modernity, industry and nature, knowledge and virtue.'³⁷³ Earlier copies of the society's rules existed, but by 1792 there was a poster with an allegorical illustration of the Principal Building titled *From Art, Industry and Society, Great Blessings Flow* (figures 12-13).³⁷⁴ An explanation of the plate was printed beneath, which provided a basic understanding of the meaning that could be read from the image but does not explain everything.³⁷⁵ Content not interpreted includes the bird standing on one leg next to Commerce. It is a crane, which signifies vigilance; it holds a stone in its raised claw which will drop if the bird falls asleep and cause it to wake.³⁷⁶ Through the figures of the boys attention is drawn to teaching and

³⁷² BAH3782/12/36/10 MB to MRB 21 Sep 1787.

³⁷³ Malcolm Dick and Ruth Watts, 'Editorial: Eighteenth-century education: discourses and informal agencies', *History of Education*, Vol.37, No.4, July 2008, p.510.

³⁷⁴ See catalogue 3 for the development of the insurance society and versions of the rules. The only dated version of the poster is dated 1792, other known versions were printed by printers who succeeded Pearson.

³⁷⁵ See catalogue 3 for a transcription of the explanation and detailed visual analysis.

³⁷⁶ James Hall, *Hall's Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, revised edition, London, 1996, p.76, 322. See catalogue 3 for further discussion of the allegorical content.

improvement of the young, with an emphasis on drawing. The image once again links the liberal and mechanical arts, it signifies beauty in the form of the female figures, the elevation of the Principal Building and, by association, the products and technology through the cog and auger. It conveys positive messages about Boulton as a benevolent employer, suggesting that he looks after his workforce which is contented and loyal as a result. All of these contribute to the development of a Soho identity, an understanding of what the names Boulton and Soho meant. The accompanying text reinforces some of those messages by providing additional detail but the image can stand alone without the text. By leaving some aspects of the message for viewers to decode themselves the unknown artist flatters them and highlights not only the sophistication of the viewer, but also subtly draws attention to that same sophistication in the artist and the proprietor of the business.

The copper plate used to produce the image does not include the explanation or the rules, allowing the image to be used in different formats and making it easier to alter the rules.³⁷⁷ There are printed examples of the illustration without the rules or explanation.³⁷⁸ Various versions of the rules, undated and printed by different printers are known, the only dated example being the one printed by Pearson in 1792.³⁷⁹ The explanation and rules were printed separately from the image, so the paper had to pass through a press twice,

³⁷⁷ Science and Industry Collection of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery 1951S88.36. I am grateful to Jack Kirby, Jim Andrew and Victoria Osborne for discussions on this plate.

³⁷⁸ For example BAH3147/5/1475.

³⁷⁹ Thomas Pearson was probably the Pearson of Pearson and Rollason who produced the 1777 directory of Birmingham, BBTI, Thomas Pearson. See catalogue entry for further detail.

once with text in relief and once with an intaglio plate for the illustration.³⁸⁰

There were specialist printers for different forms of printing so it is likely that these processes were carried out by two different printers. However, some printers, like Myles Swinney, were able to undertake both forms of printing in-house.³⁸¹ The copy of the rules at Birmingham Assay Office printed by Thomas Knott has the explanation and rules printed out of alignment with the image, showing clearly that the paper made two passes through presses (figure 14).³⁸²

Different versions of the image were produced for different audiences. The editions with the rules and explanation would have been created with members of the society in mind, those of the workforce who were literate but were perhaps unable to 'read' the full meaning of the image, so an explanation was provided as well as the rules. This explanation could have been read aloud to those who could not read. The most basic underlying message which was not explained for them, but which they were expected to decode for themselves, was that if they worked hard they would be looked after. The image was intended to convey messages about Boulton and Soho to his workforce as well visitors and potential customers. It was important that

³⁸⁰ This was usually done on different forms of press; an intaglio plate is thin but requires a great deal of pressure to force the paper into the sunken areas of the plate. For this reason such printing was generally undertaken on a roller press, a metal bed suspended between two rollers. The space between the rollers is adjusted to vary the pressure as required and the bed, plate and paper passed between the rollers. Relief printing could be undertaken on a flatbed press which could accommodate deeper blocks. A block would be placed on the bed of the press and an upper surface brought down to exert pressure on the paper and block, Louise Woods, *The Printmaking Handbook*, Tunbridge Wells, 2008, pp.8-9; Antony Griffiths, *Prints for Books: Book Illustration in France 1760-1800*, London, 2004, pp.2-5.

³⁸¹ See p.163.

³⁸² The text is parallel to the paper edge, the image is not, however as the paper was cut down prior to framing it is possible that originally it was the text that was squint. Knott is listed simply as a printer so it is not clear if he undertook both stages of the printing process, BBTI, Thomas Knott I.

staff understood these messages, if they realised they were well looked after they were more likely to work hard, to remain loyal and less likely to leave or pass on industrial secrets.

It is unclear the extent to which the workforce were able to decode the more sophisticated elements of the image although this would have varied from individual to individual. Clay has argued that some of the symbolism which appears on this poster was also on some of the numismatic material produced at Soho so would have been recognisable to at least some of the workforce, or familiar through cash transactions.³⁸³ Such symbolism was also used in other Soho products and in celebrations; a procession to celebrate Boulton's son's birthday in 1791 included the engineer and pugilist Isaac Perrins as Vulcan and 'a Bee-hive, composed of small buttons as an emblem of industry.'³⁸⁴

Copies of the poster with rules would have been displayed in the manufactory where they would also have been seen by visiting gentry. This would have promoted the insurance society and made them aware that Boulton was a considerate employer. The provision of the printed explanation would also have signalled to visitors that Boulton was looking after his workforce, that he was translating this code for them, making it accessible and attempting to educate them. That explanation sent out important messages about Boulton the paternalistic employer, based on the expectations of the visitors about the

³⁸³ Richard Clay, 'How Matthew Boulton helped make Birmingham 'the art capital of the world' in Clay and Tungate (eds.), 2009, pp.48-9.

³⁸⁴ Langford, Vol. II, 1868, p.148; G to P&F Isaac Perrins. Such symbolism also featured in the illuminations for Peace of Amiens in 1802, see p.182 and catalogue 16.

sophistication of his workforce and their ability to read the image. Display of the image alongside the rules about not tipping guides and encouraging visitors to contribute to the fund helped to control the staff, enhanced Boulton's reputation as an employer and made available information on the training, reliability and abilities of the Soho workforce.

Printed copies of the image without the rules or explanation were intended for an audience who had sufficient knowledge of representational conventions to interpret the code without assistance. They would understand the associations and receive the message that Boulton was a benevolent and fair employer with a clean, attractive factory in a pleasant setting and a well dressed and happy workforce, someone whose goods were worth purchasing. It also indicated that he was a man of taste and learning, and that this was a site where the mechanical and liberal arts were united. These copies of the print do not name Boulton or Soho, they rely on the viewer recognising the Principal Building or knowing from the context in which they are viewing what it represents. Neither does the illustration physically depict Boulton but, nevertheless, it conveys in a manner distinct from any of his portraits, explicit messages about him and the ways in which he treated his workforce.

Boulton took care to be seen as a good employer, 'a father to his tribe', and this illustration was intended to emphasis this.³⁸⁵ The experience of visitors to Soho was also a part of that message. There does at times appear to be a theatrical, almost staged element to some of these visits. Boswell's

³⁸⁵ Dickinson, p.73 citing Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

description of his tour in 1776 recounts a workman complaining to Boulton of his landlord having seized his goods. Boulton explained that the landlord was in the right but offered to provide half of the rent if the workman could find someone to put up the remainder.³⁸⁶ Visitors were made aware of the insurance scheme and were able to make contributions.³⁸⁷ The rules included fines of a shilling for anyone asking visiting gentry for money, which had been a 'frequent custom' and five shillings for 'conductors of the gentry' who were found to have kept tips instead of putting them in the box.³⁸⁸ Thus, the insurance society also provided a means of controlling the staff when visitors were on the premises, preventing begging, and ensuring the image projected was of a content workforce. A printed image of the Principal Building was again used to disseminate important messages about the products and practices at Soho. This time the same image was used in different formats to convey a number of messages to diverse audiences, but was underpinned by the depiction of the Principal Building which signified the whole Soho enterprise.

Conclusion

Boulton had at great expense built a grand and impressive building, one which had caused him huge financial problems. He expanded the range of goods he was making to fulfil whole orders and avoid using factors, but this meant he faced marketing a diverse range of products to different audiences and international markets. Part of his approach to tackling this was to use the name Soho and the form of the Principal Building to draw these different

³⁸⁶ Dickinson, p.73.

³⁸⁷ See catalogue 3 for further details.

³⁸⁸ Rule 23 on the 1792 version of the rules.

elements back together, to make it clear that they came from the same place. He also used the elegant form of the building as a means of signifying the taste and quality of his products through association with that building. He often chose to promote the image and reputation of the whole enterprise rather than particular products or businesses.

This association of building and products took place through personal visits to the site and the dissemination of descriptions through letters, journals and books. Images of the Principal Building could reach wider audiences than those who were able to visit, and were an important part of this process, a technique he was to extend and refine over his lifetime. A first plan to include an image of the manufactory in Feilde's *History of Staffordshire* came to nothing when Feilde failed to publish, but having had a drawing prepared Boulton seems to have chosen to use it as the basis for the small, unsophisticated views (figure 8). As Francis Eginton developed as an artist, he and Boulton began to develop methods of using images of the Principal Building to stand as a symbol for Boulton, Soho and all the products. Eginton introduced the first view of the site as it would have been seen by approaching visitors which made the Principal Building the focus of the image, but used the buildings of Rolling Mill Row to show that the site was much bigger than just the Principal Building (figure 9). Boulton encouraged experimentation with aquatint, a new printing technique, willing to explore its potential as a form with specific associations and messages. His early adoption of such an innovative technique, particularly with the intrigue surrounding the exact

method of production, made a powerful statement about his role at the forefront of technology.

He also began to exploit the combination of image and text to convey messages. Initially images appeared with short captions, sometimes for foreign audiences, but Swinney's *Directory* saw an image and a long description of Soho used together for the first time. Each had to be able to stand alone as viewers may not have looked at both simultaneously, but the text was used to add further information to what was visible in the image and to guide the viewer to think about the image in particular ways. This link between image and text is now largely lost for many images of Soho, as they have been physically separated, and is being re-established here for the first time. The insurance society poster developed this further, drawing on sophisticated allegorical imagery, but also providing an image that could be used in different contexts for different audiences, with or without the text; the rules and explanation. Boulton's association with taste and design, built up through contacts and developing his own staff meant that he was able to produce and exploit such complex images. He had explored diverse print techniques and routes to market for such images. As will be considered in chapter three, he had also mastered steering the multiple authors towards producing images with the forms and functions he required in his branding work. He would move on to consider in more detail the landscape in which the manufactory was set and to alter the way he depicted the site in order to enhance the reading of Soho as a tasteful and fashionable site which produced high-quality products through exploiting that landscape setting.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOHO ESTATE

This chapter considers the setting of Boulton's manufactory, the development of the Soho estate, and the motives and influences behind that work. It then considers views of the estate and what they can add to our understanding of the surroundings Boulton constructed for his manufactory. Most of the images explored here are private views of Soho, watercolours and sketches which were undertaken for pleasure, as exercises, or to illustrate possible improvements. They would have been looked at in portfolios or albums by invited viewers; they were not intended for widespread dissemination or public consumption. Most were not multiplied beyond one or two copies and were not used for marketing purposes. Some, however, were intended to inform material that was to be published and their relationship to those 'branding' images will be considered in this chapter and the next.

The combination of these images with descriptions and evidence from the Archives of Soho allow us to better understand Boulton's vision for the whole complex. Examining the development of the garden adds to an appreciation of his approach to, and understanding of, key principles of fashion and taste at the time and how he applied these to the construction and depiction of Soho. It also reveals the extent to which Boulton thought of Soho in its entirety, how he saw the parkland in relation to his factory, and how he worked to develop an appropriate setting for his businesses. The landscape in which he set his manufactory was also part of the creation of the brand

identity, he ostensibly came to Soho in search of a reliable source of water power, but this gave him the opportunity to create the context for his factory in its entirety.

Setting out the park

The surroundings of the manufactory were an important part of the experience of a visitor to the site and Boulton was clearly very conscious of this. He took great pride in his estate; he called it ‘the Monument I have raised to myself’ and, over forty years, transformed what had been a barren heath into an elegant park.³⁸⁹ Boulton sought not only to create a setting for his manufactory and home, but also a place which he and his family could enjoy.³⁹⁰ There were some attempts to keep the garden private but the published views, those discussed in chapter three, show fashionable couples admiring the landscape; the parkland setting was made available to those who visited the manufactory.³⁹¹ Other views, such as those of John Phillip, show figures working or walking singly along the edge of Hockley Pool rather than the fashionable visitors of the published depictions.

Boulton built the estate up slowly; he acquired a lease on thirteen acres in 1761, including a slitting mill, part of the mill pool and an unfinished house. To this he gradually added small parcels of land. Initially his mother and sister,

³⁸⁹ BAH3782/13/149/184 MB memorandum, ‘Considerations upon the Propriety of buying Soho’ [c.1794].

³⁹⁰ Phillada Ballard, Val Loggie and Shena Mason, *A Lost Landscape: Matthew Boulton’s Gardens at Soho*, Chichester, 2009.

³⁹¹ BAH3782/12/72/33 John Scale to MB, 28-29 August 1780; BAH3782/12/61/50 Samuel Garbett to Mrs Barker 13 July 1783; Mason, 2005, p.61.

then his business partner John Fothergill, lived in the house and it was not until 1766 that Boulton came to live at Soho. Even before he moved into the house he organised work to improve the soil and complained of Fothergill's neglect of the garden.³⁹² In 1772 he visited Surrey where he saw a number of other gardens, including Painshill, which resulted in him producing several pages of notes, sketches and ideas for improving Soho.³⁹³ By the time Boulton saw Painshill it was for sale, as its owner Charles Hamilton could not afford its upkeep. One reason for Boulton's enthusiasm was probably that it had been established on what had been infertile sandy heathland, like his own. It too had large expanses of water, something needed at Soho to ensure constant supply for the waterwheel, but at Painshill he saw how to use them aesthetically. There were also numerous garden buildings, specimen trees and walks through different types of landscape, all of which inspired Boulton.³⁹⁴ The visit led to further soil improvement at Soho, the construction of cascades and a number of garden buildings over the next few years. From 1776 to 1779 a monument in memory of his friend William Small was built, an aviary, tearoom and menagerie were added to the manufactory complex and a wall was built at the back of the house to hide it from the road to the Manufactory (figure 15).³⁹⁵

Boulton was involved in the enclosures of Handsworth Heath, initially approaching George Birch, Lord of the Manor of Handsworth, in 1788, because James Watt was looking for land for a house. The Handsworth

³⁹² Ballard et al, pp.1-3.

³⁹³ BAH3782/12/108/7 MB notebook 8, 1772.

³⁹⁴ Ballard et al, pp.5-6; Charles Quest-Ritson, *The English Garden: A Social History*, London, 2001, p.129.

³⁹⁵ Ballard et al, pp.6-15.

Heath enclosure act was passed in 1791 and enacted in 1794.³⁹⁶ The work Boulton had already carried out on his park showed that 'barren heath' could be made fertile and had developed his interest in the methods used to achieve this.³⁹⁷ From the late 1780s Boulton had been in conflict with Birch, partly as the result of Boulton enclosing and improving land he had not leased. Birch gave him notice to quit in 1791 and 1794, and Boulton considered continuing the business at Soho and living elsewhere.³⁹⁸ He gave the position a great deal of thought; he was reluctant to buy the land at Soho unless he could buy enough of it to control the views from his house and prevent others building too close to him. He committed his thoughts to paper, setting out his options in 'Considerations on buying Soho'.³⁹⁹ This document and his garden notebook make clear the importance he attached to views, both into and out of Soho.⁴⁰⁰ He also noted that if he bought the freehold he could look forward '[...] with the hopes of my Descendants being opulent and respectable Manufacturers, at Soho, to the third and fourth generation, rather than dependant courtiers.'⁴⁰¹ Ownership of land signified permanence and long-term stability.⁴⁰²

The Handsworth Enclosures Act meant that Boulton, conscious that the value of his buildings on leasehold lands would decrease, could 'preserve my liberty

³⁹⁶ David Brown, 'Matthew Boulton, Enclosure and Landed Society' in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.47-50.

³⁹⁷ The term 'barren heath' was frequently applied to the land at Soho before Boulton improved it, see the descriptions in the appendices.

³⁹⁸ Ballard et al pp.23-24.

³⁹⁹ BAH3782/13/149/184 MB memorandum, 'Considerations upon the Propriety of buying Soho' [c.1794].

⁴⁰⁰ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, pp.30-36.

⁴⁰¹ BAH3782/13/149/184 MB memorandum, 'Considerations upon the Propriety of buying Soho' [c.1794].

⁴⁰² Chris Jones, 'Landownership' in Janet Todd (ed.), *Jane Austen in Context*, Cambridge, 2005, p.269.

and [...] indulge the partiality I have for my child Soho'. He purchased around 113 acres of surrounding land from Birch, which cost £9,200, for which he required a loan. He told his friend and banker Charlotte Matthews (c.1720-1802) that 'if peace & trade should return' he would set aside areas for building which would 'without incommoding my part of my premises' cover his interest payments.⁴⁰³ He planned stables and an extension to Soho House, intending to let land to Birmingham people for building a small town 'which from the nature of its situation is to be calld Comfort.' He felt he had enough land to build 200 Houses 'without annoying my own [house] or my prospects [views]' next to the turnpike road.⁴⁰⁴ These plans do not seem to have gone any further. The enclosures meant displacing cottagers but Boulton argued that this was for the common good, that the more land that was cultivated, 'the more work and the more bread' there would be for the local population.⁴⁰⁵

Having made purchases of land from Birch in 1794 and 1795, Boulton embarked on a further programme of improvement (figure 16).⁴⁰⁶ Once again views were of great importance with a list of 'Views from or of Soho' and a note to look at Soho from ten different places.⁴⁰⁷ A private entrance for the house was created from the main road with a new 'bright green Gothick gate which cuts a most flaming dash'.⁴⁰⁸ New plantations of trees were added to

⁴⁰³ Charlotte Matthews was the widow of Boulton's London banker and agent, William Matthews. She took over the business on his death in 1792, G to P&F, Charlotte Matthews.

⁴⁰⁴ BAH3782/12/68/90 MB to Charlotte Matthews 3 Oct 1794; BAH3782/12/68/98 MB to Charlotte Matthews 23 Nov 1794; BAH3782/12/68/105 MB to Charlotte Matthews 15 Dec 1794; BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795. Brown, p.48.

⁴⁰⁵ Brown, pp.49-51; Smiles, p.168.

⁴⁰⁶ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795.

⁴⁰⁷ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, pp.30-1. In these instances 'Soho' probably means the whole parkland.

⁴⁰⁸ BAH3219/7/1/28 Ann Watt to Gregory Watt 13 Nov 1796. Gothic is a term with complex meanings which have changed over time. 'Gothick' was applied to arches by Boulton and a

hide the turnpike road and the road to the Manufactory, making the house feel further within the estate than it actually was. New drives and walks were created through the plantations and around the pools which also helped to create a feeling of size by emphasizing the varied scenery.⁴⁰⁹ The way the site was seen by visitors was part of Boulton's vision, he asked, 'How shall I form my Western ground to be handsome in the sight of those going to the manufactory?'⁴¹⁰ He wanted to 'surround my Farm and Works by a Garland of Flowers on one side and by an aqueous mirror on the other' and 'Form the Terras at the front of the Manufactory so as to be always clean and neat.'⁴¹¹ In 1797 he 'put a good pale fence by the side of the road and down to the Manufactory' and the informal gates visible in figures 9 and 10 were replaced with metal gates and piers.⁴¹² Those alterations immediately around the

gate by Ann Watt, and 'Gothic' to the 'splendour of Aston Hall' by Stebbing Shaw. Wedgwood had rejected 'Gothic battlements' on buildings otherwise in the modern taste at Etruria, see p.44. It had been used as a negative term, medieval Goths were seen as barbarians, but became more positive during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when it 'signalled a departure from the straight lines, rational order and often secular associations of classicism, and denoted a move towards the spiritual and organic forms of nature.' For this reason it was particularly associated with the Picturesque, considered below. Walsh, Wilkinson and Donnachie, *From Enlightenment to Romanticism, c.1780-1830: Industry and Changing Landscape*, Milton Keynes, 2004, p.156. Gothick (sometimes but not always with a 'k') was an eighteenth-century English style which sought only very loosely to evoke medieval church architecture and was connected particularly with chinoiserie and the picturesque. It was considered patriotic, as it was linked to ancient British values. Nicola J. Watson and Linda Walsh, *From Enlightenment to Romanticism c.1780-1830: The Exotic and the Oriental*, Milton Keynes, 2004, pp.30, 105; Snodin and Styles, 2004, p.56; Gilpin argued that abbeys in 'the Gothic style' showed variation, roughness and ruggedness, particularly in a ruined state so were picturesque, Martin Myrone, *The Gothic Reader*, London, 2006, pp.205 and 207 citing Gilpin's *Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1786); Ruston, p.58.

⁴⁰⁹ Ballard et al, pp.25, 29.

⁴¹⁰ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795.

⁴¹¹ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795 p. 29. The Manufactory had pools on either side and the 'canal' in front of it which could provide the aqueous mirror, see figure 3. This 'canal' formed part of the water system of the manufactory moving water between the pools rather acting than as a navigable waterway, Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.120-1; A new retaining wall was built, the ground levelled and then gravelled, Ballard et al, p.35.

⁴¹² BAH3782/12/108/75 MB notebook 1797; Ballard et al, p.35.

Principal Building are visible in the published views considered in the next chapter.⁴¹³

Remodelling work also took place at Soho House which Boulton considered an integral part of the site, and was used for entertaining visitors as well as showing Soho products.⁴¹⁴ However this work, like that at the manufactory and on the estate, proceeded in a piecemeal fashion, as and when Boulton's precarious finances and preoccupations with other projects allowed.⁴¹⁵ The house was described as unfinished in the lease but, by 1768, it was of sufficient size and quality to allow Boulton to entertain visitors, including Lady Shelburne who drank tea at the house which she described as very pretty with workshops at the bottom of the garden.⁴¹⁶ Various plans were drawn up and small-scale works carried out in the 1780s and early 1790s.⁴¹⁷ A major scheme by James Wyatt to include the construction of a new block was started in 1796 but abandoned by 1798.⁴¹⁸ James's brother, Samuel, was brought in to undertake some smaller scale works to the house, including the creation of the main elevation that survives today (figure 17).

⁴¹³ See catalogue 6.

⁴¹⁴ BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766.

⁴¹⁵ Demidowicz in Foster, p.282.

⁴¹⁶ Berg, 2005, p.174; Jones, 2008, p.57.

⁴¹⁷ Little documentary evidence survives for alterations to the house before the late 1780s. Samuel Wyatt, younger brother of William who had designed the Principal Building, prepared plans for an extension to the house in 1787 as did John Rawstorne (c.1761-1832) in 1788, neither of which were carried out. Small works took place in 1788 and 1791 and a series of outbuildings were in existence by 1792, Morriss, 1990, pp.9-10, 31-40. Samuel Wyatt undertook some work in 1788, supplying 'moveable buildings', a prefabricated system which he had originally developed for hospitals. Ballard et al, p.30; J.M. Robinson, pp.36-9.

⁴¹⁸ See p.321 for further details of this scheme.

It is likely that in undertaking all this work Boulton was seeking to make a statement about his own social standing, he wanted to create an appropriate setting for his grand manufactory and home. From the earliest days the entire site had been admired by visitors and considered as a whole. Jabez Maud Fisher wrote of the gardens as Dulce and the Utile, how they were 'interspersed with Canals, which are nothing more than his Mill Damb and his Races [...]'.⁴¹⁹ In 1777 Samuel Curwen 'walkt out to Soho, so called being Bolton and Fothergill's manufactory house and works and gardens.'⁴²⁰ Pearson and Rollason's Directory said of the manufactory

It is enriched upon the south with agreeable gardens, which give an uncommon life and chearfulness to the situation, and exhibit proofs of the masterly skill and taste of the projector, who could draw forth such beauties from so wild and disordered a state of nature.⁴²¹

An Italian architect, Giannantonio Selva was particularly impressed with the gardens when he visited in 1781, describing the use of mirrors which made the cascades appear on the other side of the lake.⁴²² The garden made from a barren heath was a recurring theme in descriptions, presumably one which Boulton emphasised, by the time of his obituary it had become the improvement of 'a bleak, swampy, and sterile waste'.⁴²³ This signifies man's victory over nature, the bringing of ordered productivity to heathland, which links to Boulton's interest in enclosure. A description of an industrial site created from an unpromising start was also applied to Wedgwood's Etruria

⁴¹⁹ Morgan, 1992, p.253.

⁴²⁰ Andrew Oliver (ed.) *The Journal of Samuel Curwen, Loyalist*, Cambridge, Mass., 1972, p.348.

⁴²¹ Pearson and Rollason, *The Birmingham Directory: or a Merchant and Tradesman's Useful Companion [...]*, Birmingham, 1777.

⁴²² Jones, 2008, pp.59, 159. This account is confusing because Sela suggests the mirrors were in the Hermitage but it would not have been possible to see the cascade from the Hermitage as it was higher than them and was situated in woodland. It is possible that he meant the cascade building.

⁴²³ 'Further particulars of the late Matthew Boulton Esq. [...]' *The Monthly Magazine*, 1 Oct 1809, p.380.

which was described as 'a colony raised in a desert, where clay-built man subsists on clay'.⁴²⁴ Boulton aimed to create a complete experience for visitors to the site, he allowed them to view his landscaped park which reinforced his own status, and at the same time, that of the products of his manufactory.

Having created this setting, he began raising awareness of it through the production and distribution of images. The earliest published view of Soho House and park appeared in the first edition of *The Tablet* (figure 18), an illustrated almanac or 'Polite Memorandum Book' printed by Thomas Pearson, who undertook much of Soho's printing, including the insurance society poster discussed in chapter one.⁴²⁵ Advertised in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* under the heading 'Utility and Taste', it was described as an 'elegant pocket book' which was to cost 3/6. The advertisement listed the plates to be included.⁴²⁶ The publication was dedicated to ladies and gentlemen of midland counties and designed to provide 'Views of principal seats in the Kingdom'. Users were encouraged to preserve the images as they had been designed to be removed at the end of each year without destroying any notes so 'purchasers may transfer to their cabinets, a collection of accurate views of the principal seats in their own and neighbouring counties.' The plates were engraved by Morris after Joseph Barber (1757-1811).⁴²⁷ Other subjects included a south-west view of Worcester, Warwick Castle, the Leasowes, Great Barr, Aston,

⁴²⁴ This passage appears in print several times, but the original source is A. Walker, *Observations, Natural, Oeconomical and Literary made in a Tour from London to the Lakes in the Summer of 1791*, London, 1792, p.19.

⁴²⁵ Boulton's copy of *The Tablet* is BAH3782/12/107/24.

⁴²⁶ *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 26 Oct 1795.

⁴²⁷ See catalogue 4 for biographical information on Barber and his relationship with Soho.

Egbaston Hall and Sandwell, all based on original drawings by Barber. The images were not given titles but a separate list identified them by month including 'Soho, Staffordshire, The Seat of Matthew Boulton Esq.'. The view of Soho is taken from the far side of Hockley Pool and shows Soho House (before the alterations that began in 1796), on top of the hill with open parkland in front, surrounded on other sides by trees. Through the trees on the hill can be seen part of the mint building, the cupola on top of the Principal Building and Thornhill House at the bottom of the hill.⁴²⁸

Inclusion in a volume that showed 'principal seats' and its naming simply as 'Soho' was a new message for a printed image of Boulton's properties. It avoided overt mention of the industrial site, although there is a reference for those who knew the site well. Instead, it began to speak of Boulton the country gentleman with a large estate. Most of the images in the publication focus on the house as the main feature; only Soho and the Leasowes show the surrounding landscape, highlighting the importance of the parkland in these cases. This image was created at a time when Boulton had made major purchases of land to extend the estate and much work was in progress. The garden occupied his thoughts a great deal and he continued to make notes on potential improvements. However, the image did not just illustrate his major preoccupations at the time; it also linked into the public image he wished to project. It emphasised his status and position as a man who had sufficient taste and wealth to create such a park. By now he had been Sheriff of Staffordshire, a symbol of acceptance into landed society and an expensive

⁴²⁸ For Thornhill House see catalogue 48.

role to undertake.⁴²⁹ He had been nominated as Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1789 and Staffordshire in 1792 but it was not until 1794 that he was successful.⁴³⁰ Brown attributes this victory to Boulton's role in the Handsworth enclosures, suggesting that the enclosures propelled Boulton into the landed gentry.⁴³¹ This image continued the branding of Boulton and Soho, but brought an additional element, Boulton's movement away from being seen simply as a manufacturer. This message would be strengthened in images discussed in chapter three.

Sketches and watercolours of Soho

Other images of Soho, the park, house and manufactory were produced at this time, but these were not multiplied, they were produced for private viewing, to inform works in the park or on the house or intended as source material for images which would be multiplied. By far the largest source of views of the estate is the work of John Phillip.⁴³² His sketches and watercolours provide the most detailed information we have about how the buildings looked and how they fitted into their surrounding landscape. Phillip was brought to Soho from Cornwall in 1793 when he was about fourteen.⁴³³ Boulton explained that the work he had intended for Phillip was now

⁴²⁹ Brown in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.50.

⁴³⁰ *Argus*, 16 Nov 1789; *General Evening Post*, 10 Nov 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, 10 Feb 1794.

⁴³¹ Brown in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.50.

⁴³² BMAG 2003.31 See individual catalogue entries 18-52. For further biographical information on Phillip see Ballard et al, pp. 43-56.

⁴³³ BAH3782/12/38/10 George C. Fox to MB, 25 Jan 1793. Fox, a Quaker copper merchant had organised Phillip's travel to Soho.

discontinued '[...] on acct of ye unfortunate rupture with France, & I now have no species of Painting done in my Manufacture: however I will find out what sort of employment is best suited for his talents.'⁴³⁴ George Fox expressed the hope that Phillip would 'exert himself to give thee satisfaction and be diligent in the line thee mayst be pleased to place as best adapted to his genius'.⁴³⁵ The tradition among Phillip's descendants has been that Phillip was Boulton's illegitimate son, although there is no clear evidence for this.⁴³⁶ It is unlikely that the relationship will ever be clear, but Phillip was treated differently from other apprentices, probably due to the artistic promise seen in him rather than any family relationship.⁴³⁷ He was an example of the 'young men of abilities' that Boulton had recommended training.⁴³⁸

As Phillip's known work begins in 1792 it is clear that he was already painting in watercolour before he came to Soho.⁴³⁹ In 1793 he copied a plate from Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye* (1782).⁴⁴⁰ He received formal instruction in architectural drawing in 1795, at fifteen shillings per quarter, from

⁴³⁴ BAH3782/12/38/20 MB to George C. Fox, 16 Feb 1793. This implies that whatever work he had originally intended Phillip to undertake was destined for the continental market.

⁴³⁵ BAH3782/12/38/37 George C. Fox to MB 2 March 1793.

⁴³⁶ For further details and the stance taken by various authors see Ballard et al, pp.43-4.

⁴³⁷ He was brought to live Soho House and seems to have been considered part of the family, see for example BAH3782/12/108/92 MB notebook 1803 'Numbers and state of my family'. This was not the usual practice, BAH3782/12/36/197 MB to Thomas Creighton, 1 Oct. 1791. Gould suggested that Boulton did treat Phillip well but that this was due to his talent rather than to any kind of relationship, arguing that his position was on a par with 'a favoured servant, or at best that of one or two of the sons of Boulton's managers, in whose education Boulton took a personal interest, Brian Gould, 'John Phillip: Birmingham Artist (1778-1815)', unpublished typescript. Copy in files at Soho House Museum.

⁴³⁸ See p.51, BAH3782/12/98 Papers relating to Paris journey, 1786.

⁴³⁹ BMAG2003.31.5 and BMAG2003.31.9 are both watercolour seascapes dated 1792.

⁴⁴⁰ BMAG2003.31.98; copied from William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye [...]*, [1782], London, 2005, p.24. It is not known if this work was carried out in Cornwall or at Soho although it seems more likely that he would have had access to Gilpin's work while at Soho. The aquatint plates for *Wye* were by Francis Jukes who Boulton knew, see p.79, n.332. Timothy Clayton and Anita McConnell, Francis Jukes (1745-1812) *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 20 Jan 2009.

William Hollins (1763-1843), a stonemason who had taught himself drawing and perspective.⁴⁴¹ Hollins would work on James Wyatt's improvements at Soho House, later taking on a clerk of the works role.⁴⁴² By the time he was teaching Phillip he had been trained in classical architecture at the London office of George Saunders who also rebuilt Birmingham Theatre Royal.⁴⁴³ It is likely that Hollins' instruction had a significant impact on Phillip; many of his Soho views feature precise pencil or ink drawings of the buildings, in contrast to his earliest known seascapes which were entirely watercolour. Hollins marketed himself as general drawing master, but the bill for Phillip's training was specifically for architectural drawing.⁴⁴⁴ Presumably this was considered more useful by Boulton; design drawings of the kind for which Phillip was destined required precision and accuracy.

At this date it was common practice for artists to receive instruction from a number of drawing masters specialising in different subjects such as heads, figures, flowers or landscapes.⁴⁴⁵ It seems likely that Phillip also received tuition from Joseph Barber, the original artist of the view in *The Tablet*, as two watercolours in the Phillip album are inscribed '1st under IB IP 1796' and '2

⁴⁴¹ BAH3782/6/195/7 William Hollins to M Boulton, 30 June 1795 Wm Hollins bill; Michael Fisher, 'William Hollins', *Oxford DNB* online, accessed 24 June 2007.

⁴⁴² Morriss, pp.45, 51.

⁴⁴³ Fisher; BAH3782/12/46/354 W Hollins to MB 6 Nov 1801.

⁴⁴⁴ Hollins went on to become an architect and sculptor, setting up a showroom in 1796 and establishing his own architectural practice in Birmingham by 1798. He had founded a Drawing Academy in Great Charles Street which re-opened in 1801 after he had purchased a large collection of casts, prints and drawings, *Aris' Birmingham Gazette*, 10 August 1801. I am grateful to Victoria Osborne for this reference. BAH3782/6/195/15 W. & J. Hollins to Matthew Boulton. 25 Sep. 1795-19 Mar. 1796.

⁴⁴⁵ Kim Sloan, *Alexander and John Robert Cozens: The Poetry of Landscape*, New Haven and London, 1986, p.29.

C.F. IB 1796'.⁴⁴⁶ IP was John Phillip, IB was probably Joseph Barber and C.F. may stand for copied from. Barber had sketched Boulton in Chinese ink in 1785, and taught drawing to Anne Boulton and the Watt children.⁴⁴⁷ There is an unsubstantiated suggestion that Boulton's employees studied art under Barber.⁴⁴⁸ No bill for Barber teaching Phillip or other Soho staff appears to survive among the Archives of Soho which may suggest that Phillip organised instruction from Barber himself as watercolour was not considered useful by Boulton. The fact that Phillip retained the works under Barber while none of his work under Hollins is known supports this conjecture. The artist Amos Green also spent time with Phillip, even if he did not give him formal tuition as one of Phillip's views of the Manufactory had trees added by Green (figure 19). Phillip also owned manuals on painting and drawing.⁴⁴⁹

Boulton had suffered from a lack of experienced designers and he planned to train Phillip to undertake a senior role, that which had been undertaken by Francis Eginton senior until he left in 1781.⁴⁵⁰ Boulton may have been inspired by, and envious of, Wedgwood's chief modeller at Etruria, William

⁴⁴⁶ BMAG 2003.31.77 and 71. Some material in the Phillip album is very similar to works by Charles Barber c.1806, (Joseph Barber's son), which may suggest that they were pieces which Barber used as standards for pupils to copy, BAH 416691. See catalogue 4 for further biographical information.

⁴⁴⁷ BAH 87716 *Album of drawings and sketches by Joseph Barber and Joseph Vincent Barber 1803-08*, Printed promotional material inserted in the front by Mr Harvey who had bought a parcel of works by J.V. Barber and others, some of which was deposited in Birmingham Archives and Heritage mentions this sketch as being among the works he acquired. It was not among the materials given to BAH and its current whereabouts is not known; BAH3782/7/10/549 Joseph Barber's bill, 1792; BAH3219/7/1/4 Jessy and Ann Watt to Gregory Watt, 1 Mar. 1793.

⁴⁴⁸ BAH 87716 *Album of drawings and sketches by Joseph Barber and Joseph Vincent Barber 1803-08*, Printed promotional material inserted in the front by Mr Harvey who had bought a parcel of works by J.V. Barber and others, some of which was deposited in Birmingham Archives and Heritage.

⁴⁴⁹ Notes in files at Soho House on a meeting with Phillip descendants suggest he owned manuals, including J.C. Le Blon, *Coloritto or the Harmony of Colouring in Painting reduced to mechanical practice*, 1725, annotated 'John Phillips Book 1793'.

⁴⁵⁰ See p.76.

Hackwood (c.1757-1839) who had been hired as an 'ingenious boy' in 1769 and would stay for sixty-nine years.⁴⁵¹ Boulton needed skilled artists for a range of roles, particularly to design and cut dies as the mint business expanded. He brought the die sinker Jean Pierre Droz from Paris to Soho in 1787, but their relationship was to be a difficult one, resulting in a dispute which had to be settled by arbitration in the early 1790s.⁴⁵² Phillip came to Soho in 1793, the year that Boulton began to use Conrad Heinrich Kuchler for this work.⁴⁵³ Following the difficulties with Droz it is easy to see the appeal of an artist trained at Soho with loyalty only to Boulton. Phillip produced high quality work but was placed in a difficult position, there was tension with Kuchler. Gould suggests that Kuchler saw Phillip as a threat and there may have been wariness about giving Phillip important and challenging work.⁴⁵⁴ Kuchler remained at Soho until his death in 1810, by which time Boulton was dead and Phillip's health problems were affecting his work so he was never able to fulfil the potential that Boulton saw in him.⁴⁵⁵ Like Francis Eginton, Phillip was expected to undertake a range of different roles including copying drawings, design of buttons and silverware as well as cutting dies.⁴⁵⁶ It seems likely that he would also be expected to produce images of the manufactory and some of his views of Soho may have been used to inform

⁴⁵¹ *Wedgwood in London: 225th Anniversary Exhibition 1759-1984*, Stoke-on-Trent and London, 1984, p.40.

⁴⁵² J.G. Pollard, 'Matthew Boulton and J.P. Droz', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1968, pp.241-265. Francis Eginton, who had by then left Soho, had also offered his services as a die-sinker as he would be sorry to see Droz 'come over until you have convinced the folks that your own pupils are able to make a Die, but indeed as it is, you may tell them that the "best coin in Europe" was done by one who spent the whole of his better days in your own manufactory.' BAH3782/12/72/66 John Scale to MB 18 June 1787.

⁴⁵³ Dickinson, p.147.

⁴⁵⁴ Brian Gould, 'John Phillip: Birmingham Artist (1778-1815)', unpublished typescript. Copy in files at Soho House Museum; Pollard, 1970, p.265.

⁴⁵⁵ Pollard, 1970, p.266. See Ballard et al pp.46-8 for Phillip's later years.

⁴⁵⁶ See for example BMAG2003.31.142 and BMAG2003.31.133.

branding images. While Phillip's views of Soho will be explored below, their relation to the branding images will be discussed in the next chapter.

Phillip's work provides detail of the wider setting, that beyond the immediate vicinity of the Manufactory which is frequently absent from the published, public images of Soho. He illustrated the geographical context Boulton had deliberately constructed for his manufactory. His work does not provide information on manufactory buildings other than the Principal Building and Rolling Mill Row. There are no known images of the buildings fronting the courtyards and only distant views of the site from the back.⁴⁵⁷ The only images of the interior of buildings or machinery relate to the Mint.⁴⁵⁸ There are seven Phillip views which include the Manufactory, sometimes merely as a backdrop. These include a view of the Principal Building from the approach road with Rolling Mill Row to the right and Mill Pool in the foreground (figure 19). This is one of the established viewpoints which had already been used by Francis Eginton senior (figure 9), in *Swinney's Directory* (figure 10) and would be used again in published images.⁴⁵⁹ Phillip's version is an undated, unfinished study. The buildings are shown in ink line with some landscape and vegetation in the foreground in pencil and crayon. Written underneath in pencil is 'The trees sketched by Amos Green York'.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁷ Catalogue 21 shows the complex from the rear.

⁴⁵⁸ BMAG2003.31.68 *DESIGNS INTENDED FOR SOHO NEW MINT*, 1799 shows the presses and designs for the ceiling; BMAG2003.31.149 *Side View of the Presses, in Soho New Mint*, 1799 and BMAG2003.31.184 *SKETCHES of one of the PRESSES, SOHO MINT* show the presses. They are illustrated in Mason, 2009, pp.210-11.

⁴⁵⁹ See figures 26, 27, 29 and 32.

⁴⁶⁰ Green (1735-1807) was a fruit and landscape painter who was strongly influenced by the theories of the picturesque, see catalogue 24 for further information.

The contrast between Phillip's straight, tight buildings and Green's looser vegetation is marked. The relationship of Phillip's drawing which is a skeletal, architectural outline, to the other versions of this view is not clear. It is possible that this is a preliminary study for another version, now missing, which provided the model for branding images. All of Phillip's dated views of the Manufactory from other viewpoints are 1796 so predate the publication of views in the *Monthly* and *Copper Plate* magazines (see chapter three). Phillip's other works which include the manufactory are considered in catalogue 19 to 25. There are two watercolours, one showing the engine works across Hockley Pool (figure 50) and the other the very top of the Principal Building (figure 51). A pen and ink view from Birmingham Heath shows how the complex sat within the landscape (figure 52). There is also a pen and wash study of a boat house which includes part of the engine works in the background (figure 53) and a view of Rolling Mill Row across Mill Pool (figure 54). These images show aspects of the manufactory that Boulton chose not to depict in the published images.

Phillip's other works which show the whole of the Principal Building are an undated design for a medal and a reworking of the aquatint plate by Francis Eginton discussed above (figure 9).⁴⁶¹ The reworking of Eginton's plate (figure 57) is likely to have been undertaken as an experiment in the technique rather than as a serious updating with a view to printing further copies as it is considerably less accomplished than the original.⁴⁶² The design for the medal (figure 56) shows the Principal Building with the canal in front of it and a blank

⁴⁶¹ See p.76.

⁴⁶² It was a very crude reworking, see catalogue 26 for comparison with Eginton's original, and only two prints from the plate are known.

exergue (space for a date). No medal of this design is known to have been made.⁴⁶³ This is perhaps a surprising omission; the only advertising medal for Soho produced in any quantity was the Medallion Scale. Struck in 1803, but dated 1798, it showed Boulton on the obverse and a reverse with series of concentric rings indicating the number of coins of that diameter that could be struck in a minute. The medal was struck to counter the claims of Droz that he had made the improvements to the minting machinery at Soho so the selection of imagery is appropriate.⁴⁶⁴ There is no evidence as to why Phillip produced his design, it may have been an exercise he undertook on his own initiative, or it may have been connected to a proposed Soho Manufactory medal with a branding purpose.

Very few images by Phillip showing the house are known, adding little to the evidence of the later printed images.⁴⁶⁵ The only views of the exterior include it in the far distance, on top of the hill (figures 58 to 60), similar to the published view by Barber (figure 18).⁴⁶⁶ These works give useful context for the immediate setting of the house but provide little additional information on the house itself. The other views of the estate (figures 61 to 78) bring life to the maps and the bills for the construction of the garden buildings, the stables and the walks. They illustrate the importance of the pools as part of the vista, and for recreation; they make clear the extent to which the area was wooded,

⁴⁶³ See catalogue 25 for other medals showing the Principal Building.

⁴⁶⁴ Sue Tugate, catalogue entry in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.211; BAH3782/12/48/131 MB to Ambrose Weston 8 Sept 1803.

⁴⁶⁵ This cannot be because he had no access to the private world of the family home as he lived there. The only known interior of the house shows a butler cleaning plate, private collection, photographs in files at Soho House. There are also a number of designs for the fitting out of a Library which are likely to relate to Soho House, BMAG2003.31.63-7. The portion of the house containing the Library was demolished in the 1860s and it is not clear if any of Phillip's designs were used.

⁴⁶⁶ The same viewpoint would later be used by Francis Eginton junior, catalogue 9 and 11.

depict the barren heath, the enclosed fields and surrounding buildings and populate the estate with real people rather than the glamorous visitors added to the published images.⁴⁶⁷ Another of Phillip's works, a transcription of a poem by an anonymous author makes available a poetic interpretation of the development of the estate that would not otherwise be known (figure 79 and appendix 1.6). These are considered in catalogue entries 30 to 48.

The dated images we have of Soho are all relatively early in Phillip's career - he was probably around eighteen when he produced these views. They may have been undertaken as a specific part of his training as many of them date to June and July 1796 when he was probably working with Joseph Barber.

This was a time when views for various branding images were under consideration, *The Tablet* was available, Phillips of the *Monthly Magazine* was in contact with James Watt and Stebbing Shaw had been discussing images for inclusion in his *History of Staffordshire* so Phillip may have been asked to produce some of the source material for these images.⁴⁶⁸ It is possible that the views by Robert Riddell, discussed below, also inspired Phillip, as may Boulton's works in the park. Phillip captured the estate at the brief time when it was surrounded by both enclosed land and Birmingham Heath, particularly demonstrated in figure 52.⁴⁶⁹ He lived at Soho until around 1807, and in Handsworth until July 1809 when he married and moved to Caroline Street.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁷ See catalogue 19 to 51 for individual consideration of these views.

⁴⁶⁸ See figures 26, 32 and 33 for the *Monthly* and Stebbing Shaw. They are considered below and in catalogue 6, 10 and 11.

⁴⁶⁹ Phillip's views were drawn after the Handsworth Enclosure Award of 1794 but before the Birmingham Heath Award of 1802, Brown in Dick (ed.), 2009.

⁴⁷⁰ BAH DR034/35, p.223 St Phillips Parish Registers, Marriage of John Phillip, Parish of Handsworth to Mary Anne Kimberley of parish of St Martins, 22 July 1809. BAH DR035/29 St Pauls Bham Burials 1813-8, p. 83 no 658 Buried St Pauls 14 July 1815 John Phillip of Caroline St. I am grateful to Nicholas Molyneux for these references.

It is not clear if he ceased to draw the Soho estate after 1796 or if there were later images which have not survived or are not known. Phillip's available work is a haphazard selection, what has survived in the hands of his descendants and has been made known to museum staff.

Phillip was not the only artist depicting Soho and its environs, but these images by other artists, like Phillip's were not multiplied, so are not widely known. However, a series of three unsigned, undated watercolours of Soho are more clearly linked to later published 'branding' images than Phillip's work. Two copies of each are known, one in the King George III Topographical Collection and the other in the Staffordshire Views Collection.⁴⁷¹ They show two views of the Manufactory, the standard view from the approach road (figure 20), and the only known view of the Principal Building from the opposite side (figure 21). The third shows Hockley Pool with Soho House on top of the hill in the distance, a viewpoint which was also used by others (figure 22).⁴⁷² These watercolours are likely to have been intended to serve as a preliminary work to inform a print for multiplication and circulation. It is not clear how copies made their way into the King's collection which drew material from a wide variety of sources, and has been described as an expression of British patriotism demonstrating British superiority.⁴⁷³ The copies at Stafford may have formed part of Stebbing Shaw's papers for a

⁴⁷¹ The standard view of the Principal Building is British Library King's Topographical Collection XLII 82.n and WSL, SV-VII.24a. The Principal Building from the other side is BL KTop XLII 82.o and WSL, SV-VII.25a. Soho House and Pool is BL KTop XLII 82.p and WSL, SV-VII.28a.

⁴⁷² Barber in the *Tablet* (catalogue 4), Phillip (catalogue 28-29), and Francis Eginton junior (catalogue 9 and 11).

⁴⁷³ Peter Barber, 'King George III's topographical collection: a Georgian view of Britain and the world', in Kim Sloan (ed.), *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 2003, p.163.

History of Staffordshire acquired by William Salt.⁴⁷⁴ Both collections also contain a watercolour of Prospect Hill, the home and workshop of the glass painter and former Soho employee Francis Eginton senior which appeared as the illustration immediately after Soho in Shaw's volume, engraved by Francis Eginton junior (?1775-1823) who also engraved the Soho plates.⁴⁷⁵ The image of the Manufactory that was included in Shaw's *History* shows a different forecourt layout and a pitched, rather than a domed roof, to the Latchet building, it illustrates changes which had taken place on the site between the production of these watercolours and the publication of the book, some six years later.⁴⁷⁶ It seems likely that the watercolours were prepared when an illustration in Shaw's publication was first proposed in 1795 and Boulton made a list in his notebook. They could be 'No 1 View of Manufactory for Mr Shaw', '2 opposite view from Brick Kiln' and '5 View of Lawn & House & pool from Ford's Corner'.⁴⁷⁷ However, the volume which included Soho did not appear until 1801 by which time the approach road had been changed and the stables and part of the Latchet Works built, so an updated version was necessary.

The view of the Principal Building from the road (figure 20), the standard view, shows that road with informal gates before it was rerouted. There is dark, dense vegetation in the foreground which contrasts strongly with the light front

⁴⁷⁴ M.W. Greenslade, 'Stebbing Shaw' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007. Other material in the Staffordshire Views collection relates to images used in, or intended for Shaw's *History*, for example SV-IV.184a, watercolour of Etruria (figure 5).

⁴⁷⁵ Francis Eginton junior was the nephew of Francis Eginton, see p.288.

⁴⁷⁶ See catalogue 6 for further details of the development of the Latchet Works and catalogue 10 for the Manufactory in Stebbing Shaw.

⁴⁷⁷ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, p. 36. Ford's corner was close to Hockley Abbey, see catalogue 50.

façade of the Principal Building, the focus of the image. Rolling Mill Row is in deep shadow, a less important building but necessary to illustrate the size of the manufactory complex behind the Principal Building. The vegetation to the left of the Principal Building is dark; again, contrasting with and highlighting the lighter building. Like the others in the series the painting shows no people. This view could be the first in the list in Boulton's 1795 notebook, 'No. 1 View of Manufactory for Mr Shaw', emphasizing the elegant building and the scale of the manufactory as the earlier branding images had done.

The watercolour of the Principal Building from the other side is taken from a track among trees (figure 21) and is likely to be the 'opposite view from Brick Kiln' of Boulton's list which was not listed as intended for Shaw's publication.⁴⁷⁸ Both sides of the path are flanked by trees forming dark side screens which open out to the light, smooth expanse of the Principal Building. This time the light is from the right, so again it falls onto the main façade. Only the Principal Building is shown, with the flat terrace in front and the canal in front of that. To the right is Hockley Pool, depicted to look like a curving river. This is probably a deliberate device, altering the view to provide more of the variety called for in the picturesque than the actual flat expanse of water, a technique which was approved by Gilpin.⁴⁷⁹ Thornhill House is visible in the distance.⁴⁸⁰ This is the view that most illustrates Boulton's plan to make the entrances dark, it suggests that the viewer is emerging from a dark, secluded

⁴⁷⁸ BAH3782/12/60/265 Memoranda by Matthew Boulton, respecting his partnership with John Fothergill. 3 Sep. 1765 and 20 Mar. 1766 mention building a brick kiln in 1761 to make bricks for building work and selling the surplus. No information has been found about its location or how long it was operated.

⁴⁷⁹ Richard Humphries, 'Introduction' in Gilpin, 2005 [1782], pp.10-11.

⁴⁸⁰ For Thornhill House see catalogue 48.

woodland path and has come upon the massive, light, classical Principal Building.⁴⁸¹ In reality the viewer would have just come close by the Mint, not through woodland. Even if these buildings were screened from view by vegetation it would have been impossible not to be aware of their presence when they were working because of the noise, smoke and smell. There were secluded wooded glades to walk through at Soho, but they were elsewhere in the park. This view may have accorded with Boulton's private plans for the estate, even for the experience he was happy for people to have when they were actually there, but this watercolour was not an image he chose to use to promote his factory. This angle does not show the full scale of the enterprise, it captures the Principal Building but not the number of other buildings beyond. It is not even readily identifiable as a factory, whereas the small workshops beyond in the more commonly used view make it immediately apparent that this was not a country house.

The third watercolour shows Hockley Pool in the foreground with Soho House, with Samuel Wyatt's elevation, on top of the hill in the distance, similar to Barber and Phillip's views (figures 18, 58, 59 and 60). This could be the 'View of Lawn & House & pool from Ford's Corner', the fifth view on Boulton's list. Again, there is open grassland in front of the house and dense trees around and behind. At the bottom of the hill to the left is the mint chimney. The cupola and weather vane of the Principal Building are also visible in the trees. The foreground shows a track, rough grassland and the trees which are visible in Phillip and Eginton junior's views. These unsigned views are less

⁴⁸¹ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, p.29. It is not really an entrance to Soho but demonstrates the opening up of a view of the Principal Building through an arch of trees.

concerned with topographical recording than Phillip's watercolours of Soho and make greater use of contrasts of dark and light. The manufactory buildings are drawn in ink with watercolour wash, the landscape and vegetation are watercolour. The relationship between the two sets of watercolours is uncertain, those in the King's collection are perhaps copies done at his request.⁴⁸² The depiction of the approach to the manufactory prior to the rerouting of the track and the gates and piers seems to date the view of the Principal Building to 1797 or earlier.⁴⁸³ However, the view of the house and pool includes Samuel Wyatt's 1798 front elevation of Soho House which would suggest that this was made later or the artist had prior knowledge of how the house would look when completed. This view could have been produced in order to illustrate how the new elevation would look in its landscape setting.⁴⁸⁴

Another pair of watercolours of Soho Manufactory exist with an associated plan (figures 23-25). These are also by an unknown artist and were prepared as part of the papers for the trial of a group of men who raided the manufactory in 1800. The front view shows the Principal Building and Rolling Mill Row with the robbers' entry route marked in red and some rooms labelled

⁴⁸² The copies of the plates at the Salt library have annotations which give the numbers of the copies in the King George III topographical collection but it is not clear when these were added. There are some slight differences between the versions, for instance in vegetation, skies and the central portion of the Latchet Works has two storeys of windows in the WSL version but three in the BL version.

⁴⁸³ The Stafford copies are dated as c.1798 in the catalogue but this would appear to be linked to the same date assigned to the loose sheets from Stebbing Shaw in the same collection, probably based on the date of publication of volume one of his *History* in 1798. The British Library date these views as c.1775-1809.

⁴⁸⁴ There is a further unsigned watercolour by a different hand, WSL SV-VII.21. It has a catalogue date of 1798 but this is based on the other material in the collection. It shows the curving approach to manufactory, before it was altered and a domed roof to the latchet works and appears to be a later copy of John Phillip's view or a related image, see catalogue 24.

(figure 24). It adds little to an understanding of the robbery but is the standard, recognisable view of the Principal Building. The 'view of Brook Row & the back of the manufactory' shows the roofs and chimneys of the courtyard buildings and the back of the Principal Building (figure 25). This is the first since the *batiment vû* (figure 8) to show the complex from the back in any detail. There would not be another until William West's *Picturesque Views, and Descriptions of Cities, Towns, Castles, Mansions [...] in Staffordshire and Shropshire* (1830) and *The Penny Magazine* in 1835 which were produced after Boulton's death when the Principal Building was no longer used as a symbol of the business to the same extent (figures 46 and 47).

The works by John Phillip and others considered above indicate the range of possible alternative views of the Soho Manufactory. The fact that none of these possibilities were used in publicly circulated images until after Boulton's death emphasises his desire to maintain a recognisable, consistent image of the factory in order to promote his brand identity. The repeated use of the same viewpoint showing the Principal Building made it easier for viewers to recognise the manufactory and associate it with Boulton's products.

Influences and inspiration

Boulton was aware of, and at times influenced by, debates on aesthetics and taste throughout the development of the Principal Building, its setting, and the products made there. As was noted in chapter one, it was essential that a

manufacturer selling goods dependent on being considered fashionable and tasteful, be seen to be up-to-date with such considerations. He was prepared to engage and to use the vocabulary and techniques if advantageous, emphasising his knowledge of current theories to relate to potential customers. At other times he was more influenced by practical issues. The improvements that took place on the estate at Soho were planned and overseen by Boulton. He wanted to create something that was his own, that could be used and enjoyed by his family, friends and visitors, not to adhere to current fashions and theories. There is no indication of input from professional garden designers. He did know Humphry Repton (1752-1818) who wrote in 1789, early in his career as a landscape gardener, to ask about the potential and cost of using steam engines to move water.⁴⁸⁵ In the same letter he queried the spelling on Boulton's halfpenny as he was 'too jealous of your Character as a friend to suffer even the appearance of a slip to pass unnoticed'.⁴⁸⁶ Repton visited Soho in 1795, a time when much work was being undertaken in the garden. He expressed thanks to M.R. Boulton for the gift of a copy press, enquired about shoe latches and passed on his thanks to Boulton senior for his hospitality. Only one sentence in this long letter appears to relate to the garden at Soho, 'I long to know whether you have persevered in the line of approach, and how you have succeeded in opening the water from the library', so M.R. Boulton at least, appears to have sought informal advice from Repton about improving the views from the house.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Stephen Daniels, 'Humphry Repton' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 14 Feb 2009.

⁴⁸⁶ BAH3782/12/34/171 Humphry Repton to MB 21 Sept 1789.

⁴⁸⁷ BAH3782/13/14/14 Humphry Repton to MRB 6 Dec 1795.

Boulton's avoidance of professional garden designers was not unique. Uvedale Price's *An Essay on the Picturesque* (1794) suggested that gentlemen with a taste for drawing and painting could arrange their own garden improvements rather than hiring a professional to 'torture their estates'.⁴⁸⁸ However, in Boulton's case it is more likely to have been the result of having a clear idea of what he wanted to achieve himself. The gentlemen Price had in mind were able to devote much more time and money to their projects than Boulton. He could be quick to reject ideas he did not like, even though they may have been fashionable. An unknown writer had seen Soho before the improvements and again in 1796 and been inspired to write a poem.⁴⁸⁹ Boulton drafted alternatives to sections of it, ending:

And most of all myself to please
Nor Knight nor Price nor Burk sublime
I ape in Landskip, nor in Rhime.⁴⁹⁰

It emphasised the creation of a neat garden from barren waste, the conquering of nature. Boulton stressed that the work had been done to please himself and that he had not attempted to thoughtlessly reproduce the theories and ideas of Richard Payne Knight, Uvedale Price or Edmund Burke. The original poem had noted that 'To your own taste you owe your own Parterre' so, Boulton did not initiate this rejection of theorists but appeared to agree and is likely to have discussed it with the anonymous author.

Yet, in the same year that this poem was written Robert Riddell ARA (fl. 1790-1807) produced seven views of Soho which seem to have been strongly

⁴⁸⁸ Stephanie Ross, 'The Picturesque: An Eighteenth-Century Debate', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol.46, No.2 (Winter 1987), pp.271-9.

⁴⁸⁹ Transcribed in appendix 1.6.

⁴⁹⁰ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB Notebook, 1795 See catalogue 52 for further discussion.

influenced by popular theoretical approaches.⁴⁹¹ He had been introduced to Boulton in 1795 by the engine erector, James Lawson (c.1760-1818), because Boulton 'wanted some views taken for an Account of Staffordshire then publishing'.⁴⁹² Lawson's letter explained that Riddell had made 'the rough sketch of Soho taken from the Common near Mr. Ford's house'. He was now a 'professional drawer' in London and had published some views in Scotland.⁴⁹³ What Riddell produced were not merely topographical views of the existing landscape but included proposals for improvements to the park. He told Boulton every care had been taken to make the views as agreeable as possible and to 'make every variety that the scenes would admit of'. He continued:

In the view made to suggest the improvements, you'll observe that simplicity is particularly attended to and can easily be accomplished in nature, the places planted with shrubs are purposely to break the lines of formality, and hide the stalks of the fir trees which give the scene a bare dry look, and to break the edge of the ford when seen from the windows of the house &c. I think the break in the hill where the sand has been dug adds to the beauty of the place and will moreso if there is an ash & Oak tree planted in it, you often perceive such places in nature which strikes you with admiration.⁴⁹⁴

Riddell's choice of language and proposed alterations suggest that he was strongly influenced by the theories of the beautiful and the picturesque.

Terms such as 'simplicity' and 'beauty' link to the theories of Burke and

⁴⁹¹ Simon Houfe, *The Dictionary of British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists 1800-1914*, Woodbridge, 1978, p.433; Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, London, 1906, Vol. VI, p.269.

⁴⁹² BAH3782/12/66/45 James Lawson to MB 12 July 1795. This was Stebbing Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*, but the volume containing a description of Soho was not published until 1801 and used images by Francis Eginton junior, see catalogue 10 and 11, and p.173.

⁴⁹³ BAH3782/12/66/45 James Lawson to MB 12 July 1795. Mr. Ford's House was Hockley Abbey, see catalogue 50.

⁴⁹⁴ BAH3782/12/41/203 R Riddle [sic] to MB 15 June 1796. I am grateful to Professor Peter Jones for this reference.

Hogarth while phrases like 'break the lines of formality' connote contemporary writings about the picturesque.⁴⁹⁵

The aesthetic category of the picturesque was particularly fashionable, and influenced landscape gardening and poetry as well as sketching and painting. Theorists of the picturesque included Gilpin as well as Knight and Price, mentioned in the poem above. Riddell's references to variety, to breaking up the lines of formality and the admiration of, and desire to replicate nature are characteristic of the picturesque.⁴⁹⁶ Riddell proposed to add new trees that Boulton had planted when he next visited and explained that he had not finished the other drawing where the 'new house' was to have been placed. The completion was to wait for James Wyatt's grand scheme for the house to be finished, which, with its regularity and smooth lines would have been beautiful rather than picturesque. Riddell's views are not known to have survived, nor is their format or medium known, but he charged five guineas for each of the seven views which suggests that they were not simply watercolours.⁴⁹⁷

It is difficult to determine the understanding and influence of debates on garden design and aesthetic theories on Boulton and his circle, but they did inform the way the Principal Building looked, the way the park was set out and

⁴⁹⁵ William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, [1753], New Haven and London, 1997; Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, [1757], Oxford, 1990.

⁴⁹⁶ Ann Bermingham. *Landscape and Ideology*, Berkley, Ca., 1986.

⁴⁹⁷ BAH3782/12/41/203 R Riddle [sic] to MB 15 June 1796. There is a possibility that the unsigned watercolours at the BL and in the WSL (figures 20-22) considered above are some of the works by Riddell but these unsigned watercolour views would be extremely expensive at the prices he charged. Amos Green and Joseph Barber are also artists with connections to Soho who could be possible authors of these works. Riddell's work would later be used by Francis Eginton junior when preparing images for Shaw's volume, see p.175.

how both were depicted in published images. As producers of decorative goods aimed at the upper classes and veterans of the Grand Tour there must have been an understanding of such fashionable concepts. Boulton was always anxious to portray himself as a man of taste and fashion; it made good business sense to draw on current aesthetic approaches for design of his high-end products.⁴⁹⁸ Erasmus Darwin wrote that Boulton ‘has joined taste and philosophy with manufacture and commerce’.⁴⁹⁹ Complex debates raged around these theories and their application. Bills show that Boulton’s purchases from booksellers were wide-ranging and did include works which addressed these issues. He bought Hogarth’s *Analysis of Beauty* (1752) from Thomas Aris in 1754 and another copy in 1774.⁵⁰⁰ This second copy may have been a replacement or it may have been a reference copy for use by designers at the Manufactory. He made notes to buy Thomas Whately’s *Observations on Modern Gardening and Laying out Pleasure Grounds*, (1770) and William Mason’s poem *The English Garden*, (1772).⁵⁰¹

The catalogue of the disposal of part of the Boulton library by Christie’s in 1986 includes Gilpin’s *Observations relative chiefly to picturesque beauty* (1792), *Three essays on picturesque beauty* (1792), *Remarks on forest scenery* (2nd edition, 1794), *Observations on the River Wye* (5th edition, 1800) and *An essay on prints* (5th edition, 1802). Other books on aesthetics and taste were Price’s *Essay on the Picturesque*, Archibald Alison, *Essays on the*

⁴⁹⁸ Fox in McCalman (ed.), 1999; Robinson, 1953.

⁴⁹⁹ Erasmus Darwin to Feilde 26 April 1768 quoted in Stebbing Shaw, 1801, p.117.

⁵⁰⁰ BAH3782/6/189/4 Bill Thomas Aris 9 Jan to 16 Dec 1754; BAH3782/6/192/28 Bill Executors of Samuel Aris 3 July 1772-16 Jan 1775.

⁵⁰¹ BAH3782/12/107/6 MB diary 1771; BAH3782/12/108/7 MB Notebook 8, 1772. It is not certain that he did actually purchase these works.

nature and principles of taste, (1811 edition)⁵⁰² and Richard Payne Knight's, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (2nd edition, 1805).⁵⁰³

However, inclusion in this sale does not necessarily mean that the books were purchased at the time of publication, in 1804 M.R. Boulton asked a book dealer to find him copies of Gilpin's works that he did not already own.⁵⁰⁴

Similarly, exclusion of a title from this listing does not mean it was not owned as this sale did not represent the entire library. The Soho House library loans book for 1814-45, includes a range of books 'rather broader than suggested by the remains of the library sold at Christie's'.⁵⁰⁵

Some in Boulton's circle, like Amos Green and his wife Harriet Lister were enthusiastic about the picturesque.⁵⁰⁶ Others were actively involved in aesthetic debates. Erasmus Darwin was criticised for being too much influenced by Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* (1753).⁵⁰⁷ He argued that poetry should be like nature and have 'so much sublimity, beauty, or novelty, as to interest the reader; and should be expressed in picturesque language, so as to bring the scenery before his eye'.⁵⁰⁸ He wrote in his own poetry of Wedgwood's pottery in terms of beauty and of the steam engine as sublime.⁵⁰⁹ Boulton and his family used the terminology of the aesthetic debates. In a tongue-in-cheek letter to his son in 1793 Boulton's 'Extract of

⁵⁰² The catalogue suggests this was a first edition; in fact it was first published in 1790.

⁵⁰³ Christie's, London, *Books from the Library of Matthew Boulton and his family*, 12 December 1986, Lots 96 and 167.

⁵⁰⁴ BAH3782/13/13/55-6 Charles Meyer to MRB 19 Dec 1804 and 2 Jan 1805.

⁵⁰⁵ Dealer's catalogue entry for Soho House Library Loan book, now BAH3782/21 Acc2009/168.

⁵⁰⁶ See catalogue 24.

⁵⁰⁷ King-Hele, p.291.

⁵⁰⁸ Robert N. Ross, ' "To Charm Thy Curious Eye": Erasmus Darwin's Poetry at the Vestibule of Knowledge', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol.32, No.3 (1971), pp.379-394.

⁵⁰⁹ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1997, pp.594-5.

the Journal of the Sohoites' told of a journey from Derby to Matlock, 'The sublimity of the lofty rocks, the beauty of the scenery, and the sprightliness of the company all conspired to delight and make all our flock of chickens kackle' which picked up on the language of Hogarth and Burke.⁵¹⁰ Later he made a note to 'Make a picturesk Building'.⁵¹¹ Although he was inspired by Hockley Abbey, Richard Ford's picturesque building, and used it when creating views out of Soho, Boulton does not seem to have built his own version.⁵¹²

However, he did apply techniques of the picturesque, creating variety and breaking up lines, making a note to 'plant some handsome Single Trees on ye South side the great walk which make only 10 or 10½ feet wide & thus ye walk will be broke by Shadows.'⁵¹³ His plan to make the entrances to the estate dark and form 'Gothick arches' of trees would create contrasts of dark and light that could highlight the beauty and regularity of the Principal Building as seen in the anonymous watercolour (figure 21).⁵¹⁴

Some of the theorists visited Soho; Burke came in 1782 with Lord Plymouth and Lord Craven, long after he had written his *Inquiry into [...] Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Boulton was in Cornwall and Hodges reported that they purchased 'a few trifles'.⁵¹⁵ William Gilpin (1724-1800), the proponent of the Picturesque, visited Birmingham and Soho on his way to the Lakes in 1772. He complained that the buildings near Birmingham were 'in

⁵¹⁰ BAH3782/13/36/106 MB to MRB 1-2 Sept 1793. The 'chickens' were Patty and Mary Fothergill, the daughters of Boulton's former business partner John Fothergill, and Anne Boulton, Patty Fothergill's diary, private collection, copy in files at Soho House.

⁵¹¹ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB Notebook 1795, p.31.

⁵¹² See p.134, for Hockley Abbey see catalogue 50.

⁵¹³ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB Notebook 1795, p.29.

⁵¹⁴ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, p. 29.

⁵¹⁵ BAH3782/12/63/30 John Hodges to MB 14 Nov. 1782.

great profusion, and generally of a reddish hue' as the houses were built of a 'kind of brick, which has a peculiar red cast. This tint predominating in a country, as it does here is very displeasing.' He continued:

Near Birmingham we went to see Bolton's hard-ware manufactory. It is a town under a single roof; containing about seven hundred work people. But notwithstanding it is a scene of industry, utility, and ingenuity, it is difficult to keep the eye in humour among so many frivolous arts; and check it's looking with contempt on an hundred men employed in making a snuff-box.⁵¹⁶

The scale of enterprise and division of labour championed by Adam Smith and believed by the Earl of Shelburne to have contributed to Birmingham's development did not impress Gilpin.⁵¹⁷ The division of labour destroyed the artisan quality; it removed the link between the maker and the object, even 'frivolous' objects like snuff boxes.⁵¹⁸ Mass production, with its aim to produce thousands of standard objects, did not fit into Gilpin's beliefs, so his opinion of Soho was not favourable, although he did see it as ingenious. Boulton's reaction to this description is not known; Gilpin visited in 1772, the work was not published until 1786, but had been privately circulated before then.⁵¹⁹ Gilpin's opinion of Wedgwood's products was very different. He had hoped to visit as he continued north on the same journey:

In our road we wished for time to have visited the potteries of Mr. Wedgwood; where the elegant arts of old Etruria are revived. It would have been pleasing to see all these works in their progress to

⁵¹⁶ William Gilpin, *Observations, relative chiefly to picturesque beauty, made in the year 1772, on several parts of England; particularly the mountains, and lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland*, Vol. 1, London, 1786, p.51.

⁵¹⁷ Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Oxford, 1998, pp.11-31; Hopkins, 1989, p.7.

⁵¹⁸ This prefigures Marxist ideas on alienation, that workers produce goods from which only the capitalist owners profit and that those workers become commodities, who must sell their labour in the marketplace as goods are sold, Jae Emerling, *Theory for Art History*, New York and London, 2005, p.19.

⁵¹⁹ Humphreys in Gilpin, 2005 [1782], p.9.

perfection; but it was of less moment; as the forms of all his Tuscan vases were familiar to us.⁵²⁰

As he did not see these goods being produced, Gilpin was able to continue to think of them in terms of classical beauty. Wedgwood was strongly influenced by classical designs and had communicated those credentials more effectively than Boulton. He had not undertaken mass production on the scale that Boulton had, nor had he sought to make cheap objects, so was not viewed in the same way.

Although he was careful to show his factory consistently from one viewpoint so that it became a recognisable symbol of the businesses, Boulton's notebooks make clear his interest in views both into and out of the whole estate. He planned to 'shut out the sight of the world and make openings to all that is pleasant and agreeable'. A list of 'Views from and of Soho' is followed by a note to look at Soho from seven different places.⁵²¹ A few pages later there is a list of eight 'pictures of and from Soho' which probably relate to the three unsigned watercolours considered above, the first intended for Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*.⁵²² When it was finally published in 1801 it described how the house, on top of the hill, provided spectacular views.⁵²³ Boulton considered not just his own estate but also those of his neighbours when constructing views:

Hockley Abby
Make a picturesk Building & plant

⁵²⁰ William Gilpin, *Observations, relative chiefly to picturesque beauty, made in the year 1772, on several parts of England; particularly the mountains, and lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland*. [...]. Vol. 1. London, 1786., pp.69-70.

⁵²¹ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, pp. 30-1.

⁵²² BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, p. 36.

⁵²³ Stebbing Shaw, 1801, p.121, see transcript in appendix 1.5.

some trees nr Ford's Corner to look at & from⁵²⁴

Hockley Abbey was owned by Richard Ford who had also created pleasure grounds around his house.⁵²⁵ This adjoining estate would have made Soho feel larger than it actually was, extending the views beyond the boundaries of Boulton's own grounds.

This interest in views was particularly fashionable at the time. It had grown out of the opening up of the Lake District to tourists and the guidebooks produced to help the traveller undertake these journeys. Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* (1778) identified a number of carefully selected points, which he called stations, from which the best views could be obtained. He wrote of the landscape in the language of pictorial composition, of foreground, middle-distance and sidescreens. West's *Guide* became indispensable to tourists; there had been ten editions by 1812. The stations were carefully listed and described by West but were sometimes marked on the ground by crosses on the turf or by a summerhouse or shelter from which to admire and sketch. The first station at Bowness even had a caretaker.⁵²⁶ Gilpin also set out specific points from which he suggested views should be taken as they most complied with his theories of the picturesque. Having identified those positions he argued that it was acceptable when painting them to alter the view in front of the artist to make it even more picturesque. This caused some

⁵²⁴ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB Notebook 1795, p.31.

⁵²⁵ See catalogue 50 for more on Ford and Hockley Abbey.

⁵²⁶ Moir, pp.140-4.

confusion as tourists tried to compare the plates in his published tours to the landscape in front of them.⁵²⁷

Boulton too was creating stations, specific places from which he expected the factory and house to be admired, and from which it was most frequently illustrated. The most effective of these were the Principal Building from the approach road, and the house and lawns from the opposite side of Hockley Pool. The repeated use of these same stations and suppression of published versions of the alternatives, shown by the images considered in this chapter, helped to create a recognisable image. The solid, beautiful, classical Principal Building stood for a long established, tasteful and reliable business. The view of the house showed Boulton's extensive landholdings and his garden, again speaking of taste and permanence but suggesting that he had gone beyond successful manufacturer to attain the additional status of gentleman. This repetition reinforced the messages Boulton wished to convey about Soho. Boulton was using the landscape to present Soho as an experience rather than simply a factory; visitors had to enter the landscape that Boulton had transformed to reach the manufactory. His understanding of aesthetic categories such as the beautiful and the picturesque informed the layout of the site, and the way it was depicted in the images considered in chapter one. It would go on to influence the images considered in the next chapter; the selection of Francis Eginton junior to produce images led to the introduction of further elements of the picturesque into views of Soho.

⁵²⁷ Susan Rasmussen, 'Let us amuse ourselves with searching after effects [...]' in Rasmussen, Reynolds, Smith, Walker, *Travel by the Book: An exhibition of 18th Century illustrated travel books at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts*, Birmingham, 2006, p.8; Richard Humphreys, 'Introduction', to William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye [...]*, [1782], 2005, pp.9-10.

Conclusion

The development and subsequent depiction of the estate was part of the construction of the image of Soho and Boulton. The parkland setting was an important element of the experience of the visitor to the manufactory, a demonstration of the taste and elegance of the owner, and by extension, his factory and its output. Warner's description of Soho in 1802 began, 'The situation of the house is commanding, the disposition of the grounds tasty, and the manufactories as striking for their neatness as magnificence.'⁵²⁸

However, Boulton was very much his own man, adopting and adapting theories and fashions when they suited him and rejecting them when they did not. Throughout, attention was paid to practical issues, power for the factory, the watering of the plants and level walks which were easier for him and his daughter. It became a haven for Boulton to 'shut out the sight of the world and make openings to all that is pleasant and agreeable'.⁵²⁹ Peter Jones has argued that latterly Boulton became disenchanted with Birmingham and increasingly withdrew to Soho, the creation of the estate allowed him to do this.⁵³⁰

Ownership of land represented permanence; it identified the owner physically with the nation. The governing classes tended to rely on income from land rather than commerce, so landholding was an important signifier of wealth *and*

⁵²⁸ Rev. Richard Warner, *A Tour through the Northern Counties of England, and the Borders of Scotland*, 1802, Vol. II, p.212.

⁵²⁹ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, p. 29.

⁵³⁰ Peter Jones, pers. comm. and 'Matthew Boulton: Enlightenment Man', keynote lecture given at 'Where Genius and Arts Preside': Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory 1809-2009, University of Birmingham, 3 July 2009.

social status for a manufacturer like Boulton.⁵³¹ The creation of the park became part of Boulton looking to realign his social standing, to be seen as a Gentleman, lobbyist of Parliament and Sheriff of Staffordshire, more than just a manufacturer. With the publication of an image of the park in *The Tablet* Boulton began to use visual imagery to promote this aspect of himself as well as his manufacturing role. This would be developed further in the images considered in the next chapter.

Boulton's notebooks make clear the importance he attached to views of and from Soho and the care he took over their construction. Having undertaken so much work, he sought to circulate images which emphasised the taste and sophistication of the estate as well as the manufactory. He wanted to exploit the views of the approach to the manufactory and of the house across the pool through published images. Barber's view in *The Tablet* showed the house on top of the hill with a vast expanse of lawn in front, and the manufactory buildings hidden in the trees, to be recognised as an industrial reference for those who knew the site. It did not convey the subtleties or the detail of the grounds; it was poetry and prose descriptions which provided that for those who could not visit. Most of the material that now brings the estate to life for us, particularly the work of John Phillip, an artist Boulton had taken on as a young man and trained as a replacement for Eginton, was in the private, not the public domain. These works were created for pleasure, for training in drawing, or as tools to visualise planned works on the estate. At the same time Boulton had again gone to the expense and trouble of having

⁵³¹ Chris Jones, 'Landownership' in (ed.) Todd, 2005, p.269.

an image prepared for publication in a history of Staffordshire and again this publication failed to appear within the promised timescale. He turned next to the more rapid turnover of the world of periodicals to depict his manufactory in combination with descriptive text.

CHAPTER THREE

REINFORCING THE BRAND IDENTITY 1797 – 1802

This chapter will examine the inclusion of visual representations of Soho in the rapidly growing field of periodicals and books, using original research into the commissioning process for those images. Having spent time refining the parkland setting in which Soho sat and considering the associated aesthetic debates, Boulton was able to take advantage of the expanding and evolving print trade to disseminate images of the manufactory in its landscape.

Between 1775 and 1792 when the Insurance Society poster was produced no views of Soho had been published, but from 1797 to 1801 illustrations appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*, *The Copper Plate Magazine*, Bisset's *Magnificent Directory* and Shaw's *History of Staffordshire* (figures 26, 27, 29 and 32). This meant that representations of Soho were multiplied on a greater scale than previously and were disseminated to larger and broader audiences. At the same time, people began to be discouraged from visiting the site, probably as a result of pressure from Boulton and Watt's sons.⁵³² Each of these images was associated with text, with captions on the plates themselves and related descriptions within the volumes, building on the approach taken in Swinney's *Directory* in 1773. These representations of the manufactory took the familiar viewpoint established in the 1770s by Francis Eginton (figure 9), but used it in slightly different ways. The accompanying texts were likewise altered to suit the intended audiences.

⁵³² Jones in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.77.

This chapter will consider the publications in which the foci images were included, their formats and readerships, and will draw on archive material to explore the reasons for inclusion in those publications, providing previously unknown information about the commissioning process. I will explore how that inclusion was mediated, the various people involved in producing the images and text, how image and text inter-related and the extent to which each anchored or relayed the messages of the other. This is the first time the texts and images have been considered together in this way. Text and image had to be able to stand alone in case they were separated, but originally were intended to be linked closely; both were used to strengthen the brand identity of Soho, but this link has frequently been lost over time.⁵³³ Absences from the images will also be considered, those things that were deliberately not shown, and the reasons for those exclusions.

The chapter will also survey the illustrations of the illuminations at Soho which were held to celebrate peace in 1802 and 1814. These were reported in newspapers so illustrations had to be provided quickly while the subject was still newsworthy. Concerted efforts were made to maximise the coverage of these celebrations and to ensure the inclusion of images and descriptions of the Principal Building, which once again stood for the whole Soho enterprise. The building was used to reinforce the brand, to ensure that Soho, Boulton, and later his son, were seen as patriotic, benevolent and tasteful.

⁵³³ Many images of Soho survive as single sheet prints in topographical collections, separated from their text.

Printed text and printed image

The late eighteenth century was a period of great change in the production, availability and use of printed texts; the numbers of men, women and children who read them grew rapidly. St Clair has noted that such texts shape the times, but are also the products of those times; the supply of printed material changed to meet demand, but also stimulated that demand. People who could, read more books, journals and newspapers than ever before and on a greater range of subjects. Individuals with less disposable income had access to a wider range of cheap print, partly through circulating libraries.⁵³⁴ The desire for news was accommodated by newspapers, regular entertainment and information was provided by magazines or 'periodicals'.⁵³⁵ Print was the medium of mass communication and was to remain unchallenged as such until the development of radio.⁵³⁶ Raven has suggested that entrepreneurs of the book-trade 'ranked with Hogarth, Boulton, Watt and Wedgwood as promoters and beneficiaries of an evolving 'consumer society''.⁵³⁷ Printed works contained advertisements and other promotional items, helping to fuel demand for material goods and stimulate interest in fashion by providing information about what was being worn in fashionable circles, but they were also objects of consumption themselves.⁵³⁸ Boulton, Watt and their sons all subscribed to and read periodicals as well as books. Bills for magazines and

⁵³⁴ William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Cambridge, 2004, pp.7-11; James Raven, 'Book production' in Todd, 2005, pp.194-203; Brewer, 1997, pp.167-97; Myrone, p.300.

⁵³⁵ S.H. Steinberg, rev. John Trevitt, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, London, 1996, pp.121-4.

⁵³⁶ John Feather, 'The Commerce of Letters: The Study of the Eighteenth-Century Book Trade', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol.17, No.4 (Summer 1984) p.406.

⁵³⁷ Raven, p.194.

⁵³⁸ Berg and Clifford, 2007, p.145; Robinson, 1987, p.100.

for binding them appear in the archive, including the purchase of back issues of magazines dating to 1734.⁵³⁹ They sent others to buy magazines for them, lent and borrowed issues, and had them sent on when travelling.⁵⁴⁰

Periodicals were popular with both readers and publishers and could provide regular income and employment for printers. Alexander suggests that at least 500 different titles were published in London alone between 1730 and 1800, although many titles lasted only for a few issues. There were a number of formats; magazines, miscellanies (which included essays), learned journals and reviews.⁵⁴¹ Illustrations became an important part of those publications from the late 1740s and were frequently mentioned in advertisements. Their inclusion created additional problems for publishers as they were produced by engravers who were independent craftsmen, not employees, and often did not meet deadlines. Such illustrations had to be printed separately, by specialist printers and then inserted into each issue.⁵⁴²

The inclusion of plates must have been considered such an important selling point that publishers were prepared to go to this additional trouble and expense. Sometimes the plates were larger than the publication and were folded before insertion. They were often placed at the beginning of an issue, which was easier for collation, but meant that the image was separated from

⁵³⁹ BAH3782/6/189/20 Richard Bailye to Matthew Boulton. 6 Sep. 1758, includes the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1734, 1754, and 1755; BAH3782/6/192/28 Bill. Executors of Samuel Aris to Matthew Boulton. 3 Jul. 1772-16 Jan. 1775; BAH3782/6/11/172 Thomas Pearson, M.R. Boulton's bill for 1794. Numerous bills for books also exist.

⁵⁴⁰ BAH3782/13/16/38 John Woodward to MRB 16 Jan 1795; BAH3782/13/8/17 Thomas Beddoes to MRB 28 Nov. 1798; BAH3219/6/1/240 JW to JWj 31 Aug. 1804.

⁵⁴¹ David Alexander, ' "Alone worth treble the price": illustrations in 18th-century English magazines', Myers and Harris (eds.) *A Millennium of the Book*, Winchester, 1994, p.107.

⁵⁴² Alexander, pp.108, 113.

the text. The *London Magazine* made a particular feature of its topographical plates in the 1750s, these were often folded and readers could remove them for integration into collections. At least one such plate was available separately. Many showed provincial views, possibly supplied by readers and subsidised in order to ensure their inclusion as a matter of local pride.⁵⁴³ The earliest plates were generally unsigned and frequently low quality, but from the late 1740s onwards more accomplished plates were produced and signed by their engravers. By the 1760s advertisements for magazines emphasised the quality of the plates and the calibre of the artists and engravers.⁵⁴⁴

The images of Soho considered in this chapter were produced at the beginning of a period when the application of technology transformed the way images and text could be reproduced, when problems were all too apparent and solutions were being developed. The Fourndrier brothers began to produce paper using a mechanised process in Hertfordshire in 1803 which meant it was quicker and cheaper to produce so more paper was available. Stereotyping, taking a mould of a page of type which allowed a plate of the whole page to be produced, had been developed in the sixteenth century and was being used for whole books by the eighteenth. The real revolution in printing was the application of the steam engine to the presses, one which Boulton did not live to see, but James Watt did. *The Times* adopted steam-powered presses in 1814.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ Alexander, p.108.

⁵⁴⁴ Alexander, pp.112, 117.

⁵⁴⁵ Steinberg, p.137-9; Michael Twyman, *The British Library Guide to Printing*, London, 1998, p.54.

Images in books and periodicals had to be of appropriate quality, and withstand printing in large quantities. In the 1790s copper plates were the favoured medium, but they did not stand up well to increasingly large print runs. They had to be printed separately from the text as they were intaglio rather than relief.⁵⁴⁶ This meant that the images were often on a different page from the accompanying text and the reader had to be prepared to look for them, to unfold them or turn the book to a different orientation because views were generally of a landscape format, but books and magazines more frequently portrait in orientation. Images on separate sheets had to be inserted at ninety degrees to the orientation of the text or be larger than the volume and folded.⁵⁴⁷ The convention tended to be to place landscape views so that the top of the sheet was at the spine but sometimes binders placed them the other way round.⁵⁴⁸ If the images were to be the main focus of the publication it could be set out to accommodate this, like the *Copper Plate Magazine*. It was possible to include text and image on the same sheet, by passing it through the press twice, as with the Soho Insurance Poster discussed in chapter one, but this presented problems with alignment and potential damage to the section already printed. Integration of text and image onto the same page became more common in the nineteenth century with the adoption of wood engravings, and in due course the revolution in photomechanical reproduction.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁶ Twyman, p.161.

⁵⁴⁷ The image of Soho in *The Monthly Magazine* is folded, those in Stebbing Shaw and the view of the Manufactory in Bisset are in a different orientation from the text.

⁵⁴⁸ For example, one copy of Bisset in BAH has the Soho plate with the bottom of the page at the spine.

⁵⁴⁹ Twyman, p.159; Griffiths, 2004b, pp.2-5.

In the late eighteenth century, Boulton used this changing technology and greater availability of printed material to explore ways of presenting images of his factory to different audiences and convey different messages. This ensured that the image of the Principal Building remained fixed in the imaginations of various publics, even though access to the building was becoming increasingly limited as adverts were placed in newspapers from 1800 explaining that the many inconveniences and interruptions had forced closure of the site to visitors.⁵⁵⁰ The Archives of Soho provide unusually detailed information about the production of some of those images which will be considered below. This material makes it clear that there were many hands involved in this process, including artists, editors, authors, publishers and printers. By moving into national volumes rather than single sheet prints or a local directory, Boulton had to relinquish some control over exactly how his factory was depicted, but he continued to ensure that the images conveyed the messages he required.

The Monthly Magazine

The image and account of Soho which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine and British Register* in May 1797 demonstrates this multiple authorship (figure 26). The magazine was founded in 1796 by the author and publisher Richard Phillips (1767-1840) with bookseller and publisher Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), both men with strong radical sympathies. Johnson had published

⁵⁵⁰ See p.164.

works by a number of members of Boulton's circle including Joseph Priestley, Erasmus Darwin and the surgeon John Hunter.⁵⁵¹ The magazine was described in its prospectus as containing an impartial record of foreign and domestic occurrences, a historical view of literature and original communications on miscellaneous subjects. It was intended to 'forward the progress of mental improvement upon the most liberal and unshackled plan'.⁵⁵² The readership was defined by Phillips and Johnson not through social groups, such as gentlemen or merchants, but as those whose 'liberal principles' had been ignored or opposed by the other magazines.⁵⁵³

They hoped that the publication would have contacts throughout the country so that communications would appear on a wide range of topics. This discussion was to be 'open to the voluntary contributions of the liberal and ingenious of all classes and professions, although they may not have been expressly solicited for their favours.'⁵⁵⁴ Correspondence was a large and important part of the magazine, frequently signed with initials or pen-names, often covering subjects of particular interest to Boulton and his associates. A letter from 'Sciolus' discussed the state of chemistry, mentioning Watt, Joseph Black, Thomas Beddoes, Joseph Priestley and James Keir; another from 'Civis' in Dundee addressed minting and the 'rejection, or neglect, of Mr Bolton's proposals' and his mint at Soho.⁵⁵⁵ It is of course, possible, even

⁵⁵¹ Thomas Secombe rev. Loughlin-Chow, 'Sir Richard Phillips' and Carol Hall, 'Joseph Johnson' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 17 July 2008 and 20 Jan 2009.

⁵⁵² [Richard Phillips], *Prospectus of a new miscellany* [...], London, 1796.

⁵⁵³ Klancher, p.39.

⁵⁵⁴ [Richard Phillips], *Prospectus of a new miscellany* [...], London, 1796.

⁵⁵⁵ Letter from 'Sciolus', *Monthly Magazine* January 1797, pp.2-3; Letter from 'Civis', *Monthly Magazine*, Feb 1797, p.120. 'Civis' was James Wright junior who asked Boulton various technical questions and explained that he had written to the *Monthly* on coins under this

likely, that Boulton and others in his circle had arranged or influenced some of this correspondence.

This format of a miscellany of essays, poems and letters which appeared to be written by readers built on an earlier tradition, including the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731). Klancher argues that some journals, the *Monthly* among them, acted as a community where members participated in both reading and writing roles, a replacement for face-to-face discussion, 'a *portable* coffeehouse'.⁵⁵⁶ James challenges Klancher's view of the magazine as an 'ideologically cohesive' periodical; she sees it as 'a site of ongoing debate and argument' where reader and writer contest, rather than exchange, roles.⁵⁵⁷ She highlights the use in Dissenting education of exchange and response, its appearance in the magazine and the way it built on Phillips and Johnson's existing contacts with Dissenters, creating a network of readers who contributed news and reports. The publication brought together 'metropolitan, provincial, and European concerns'.⁵⁵⁸ James draws attention to the need to consider how an individual author would feel about participating in such a collective, multi-voiced enterprise, one involving editors, writers and readers, where contributions were solicited by Johnson and Phillips, and directed by Aikin, the editor.⁵⁵⁹ The publication was collectively authored and so were the image and text on Soho it included.

name, BAH3782/12/42/215 James Wright junior to MB 1 Sept 1797. I am grateful to Sue Tungate for this reference.

⁵⁵⁶ Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences 1790-1832*, Wisconsin, 1987, pp.22-3.

⁵⁵⁷ Felicity James, 'Writing in Dissent: Coleridge and the Poetry of the *Monthly Magazine*', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 3 (2006), pp.1-2.

⁵⁵⁸ James, p.5.

⁵⁵⁹ James, pp. 2-4.

The *Monthly Magazine* was, unsurprisingly, available in monthly editions and as a bound volume every six months. Altick indicates a circulation figure of 5,000 for 1797 which places it on a par with the *Monthly Review* (founded 1749) 450 copies above the *Gentleman's Magazine* and 1,750 above the *European Magazine*, making it one of the most popular periodicals of the 1790s.⁵⁶⁰ It was aimed at, and helped to create, the middle-class liberal intellectual and was carefully marketed to appeal to them priced at a shilling an issue.⁵⁶¹ Scrivener has described it as 'the most important middle-class periodical [...], radical in its way for representing the concerns of the most insurgent and innovative sectors of the intelligentsia.'⁵⁶² James suggests that the particular target audience was 'the provincial Dissenter, newly prosperous, perhaps through trade, and beginning to exert influence in the community.' She notes that places with a large body of liberal Dissenters, like Birmingham and Derby, would have been of particular interest to the publishers.⁵⁶³ However, the readership was not exclusively Dissenters and the intended audience would have included many of Boulton and Watt's friends.

The inclusion of Soho in the magazine was the result of an approach from Phillips to James Watt in the first few months of publication. Boulton and Watt did not actively seek coverage of Soho, although others did so on their behalf.

⁵⁶⁰ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader*, Chicago, 1957, p.319, pp.391-2. However, he does suggest caution needs to be exercised as these figures do not always come from a reliable source; the writer may not be in a position to know the figures accurately or if they come direct from the publisher exaggeration cannot be ruled out. Some figures may include the bound annual or six-monthly volumes while others may not.

⁵⁶¹ James, p.4. One of the things that would have helped to keep the price down was the policy of keeping illustration to a minimum, see p.151.

⁵⁶² James, p.5 citing Michael Scrivener, *Poetry and Reform: Periodical Verse from the English Democratic Press, 1792-1824*, Michigan, 1992, p.131.

⁵⁶³ James, p.4.

As many of Watt's friends were connected with the publication, Phillips hoped that he was aware of the 'Plan & Object' of the magazine and sought correspondence '[...] especially on Topics of a mechanical nature & relating to those wonderful improvements of the useful arts always making in your manufactory at Birmingham.' He assured that he would not begrudge the expense of Plates which might illustrate anything Watt supplied. A Mr Northmore of Devonshire had told Phillips of improvements to the steam engine and suggested that Phillips should seek an account of them.⁵⁶⁴ No record of any form of approach to Boulton has been found, perhaps because Watt was seen as the technical partner and this was the aspect in which Phillips was most interested.

Watt considered the best way to use this opportunity; he sent his reply via James Watt junior who was in London, suggesting that he call on Phillips, as such publications could be of use, particularly for the copying machine.⁵⁶⁵ Watt told Phillips he had not yet seen the magazine and would endeavour to do so, but his age, health and the 'necessary avocations of business' meant it would not be possible for him to undertake correspondence. As Boulton and Watt were involved in lawsuits against pirates of the steam engine, he felt it could be prejudicial to publish technical material. He asserted that no significant alterations had been made to the steam engine for many years, but their users had learnt to maintain them better 'consequently more to their and

⁵⁶⁴ BAH3147/3/418/42 R. Phillips to JW, 8 May 1796.

⁵⁶⁵ BAH3147/3/25/7 JW to JWj 16 May 1796. The copying machine was a device invented by James Watt to take copies of letters or drawings to avoid them having to be rewritten by hand. It was patented in 1780 and a separate business, James Watt & Co., established for its manufacture and sale. In 1794 Boulton, Watt and Keir withdrew from the business passing it on to the sons of Boulton and Watt with James Watt junior designing a new, portable version, hence his interest in its publicity. BAH3147/17-20 Records of James Watt & Co.

our honour'.⁵⁶⁶ Although Watt was not prepared to be drawn into correspondence, he offered to supply short papers.⁵⁶⁷ Phillips replied that Watt would find the names of various of 'your Philosophical Friends' in the magazine and hoped for preference on any notices of improvements.⁵⁶⁸

Phillips wrote again, almost a year later and for the first time mentioned an illustration of the manufactory, 'I wish through the medium of the Monthly Magazine to present to the public an engraved view & description of your celebrated Manufactory the Soho.'⁵⁶⁹ He asked for a drawing or engraving as a source for a plate in the next issue. He also asked for assistance with the description or to be referred to one already in print to 'serve as the groundwork of that which may be written for my purpose'.⁵⁷⁰ It is not clear what was supplied to Phillips. The use of a view of Soho directly contradicts the prospectus for the magazine which had stated that as public expectations of the quality of engravings had increased, the monthly miscellanies could not afford to produce images of the quality expected. Phillips proposed to use available funds to enrich the literary portions of the publication and to include only plates which were illustrative of scientific or mechanical descriptions or contained maps or charts. He hoped the public would approve of this 'sacrifice of the eye to the understanding'.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁶ BAH3219/4/124/464 JW to R Phillips 16 May 1796.

⁵⁶⁷ BAH3219/4/124/464 JW to R Phillips 16 May 1796.

⁵⁶⁸ BAH3219/4/38/13 R Phillips to [JW] 6 June 1796.

⁵⁶⁹ BAH3147/3/418/43 R Phillips to JW, 1 May 1797.

⁵⁷⁰ BAH3147/3/418/43 R Phillips to JW, 1 May 1797.

⁵⁷¹ [Richard Phillips], Prospectus of a new miscellany [...], London 1796.

This policy does seem to have been largely adhered to as the only other plate in the six month volume from January to June 1797 was Mr Jordan's new patent suspended bridge. It too was more illustrative than informative and was smaller than the plate of Soho. A graph, a plan, two lines of music and several simple mathematical diagrams were also included on separate pages, much more in the spirit of the original intention.⁵⁷² It seems likely that, having failed to extract technical drawings from Watt, as he had originally wished, Phillips asked for a view of the Manufactory instead, hoping that it would lead to more coverage and eventually more technical material. For Boulton and Watt this image was the best possible outcome, it avoided providing commercially sensitive detail, an increasing concern with industrial espionage and court cases regarding the steam engine. It assisted with the branding of Soho, Boulton and Watt, and for the first time firmly linked Watt and his engine to an image of the Principal Building. It provided a recognisable, but technically uninformative image, not what Phillips had originally sought.

The issue included a description of Soho and a large plate, folded and placed at the front and both image and description were unsigned (figure 26). This layout allowed a landscape format image to be included in a portrait format publication, but also meant that the viewer had to look for the plate in a separate place from the written description and then unfold the page. The index gave the page reference for the text and the text drew attention to the 'engraved view taken on the spot', but did not explain where it was positioned

⁵⁷² The simple line diagrams were probably wood-cuts, printed with the text.

in the volume.⁵⁷³ This suggests that readers were expected to understand the conventions of placing images within the publication. There were, however, some problems with collation. The bound copy now at Astor Library, New York, places the Soho plate at the beginning of the April issue rather than May which included the text. This separation meant that it was not certain that the audience would read the image and the text together; each had to be able to stand alone.

The image was a line engraving showing the Principal Building, Rolling Mill Row and Latchet Works from the access road, the viewpoint adopted by Francis Eginton (figure 9). The dominant element is the Principal Building with the light from the left illuminating the main front. For the first time buildings to the left of the Principal Building are depicted, part of the planned Latchet Works is shown with a domed roof.⁵⁷⁴ It was important to show the symmetrical, classical building as it was planned rather than part-built as it existed at the time. The intended building would demonstrate an understanding of taste and classical architecture far more effectively than the actual unsymmetrical, unfinished portion. More of the surrounding parkland is shown than in the aquatint and the open forecourt contrasts with the enclosed, walled one of the earlier view. Boulton sought to show the site as accessible and welcoming, to make the setting more apparent, to show that

⁵⁷³ See appendix 1.2 for a transcript of the text.

⁵⁷⁴ The way in which the Latchet Works roof is portrayed provides important dating evidence, it was built in stages and was originally intended to have a central domed section but in the event this was built with a pitched roof. At the time this image was produced only the portion of the Latchet Works not visible in this image (the wing furthest from the Principal Building) had been built, see p.275.

this factory was set in a clean, pleasant environment and that he was a gentleman capable of creating such a park.

A couple are depicted with a child strolling in that park, the first inclusion of a non-working child.⁵⁷⁵ The presence of women and children in such images suggests 'safety, civility and leisure as well as production and commerce.'⁵⁷⁶ It depicts Soho as part of the middle-class family circuit of country houses and industrial sights which developed at the end of the century.⁵⁷⁷ One figure bows to another at the far end of the forecourt, presumably a guide or manager with a visitor. There is little evidence of the working manufactory, only smoke from the chimneys of Rolling Mill Row. No working staff are visible, although it could be argued that this is because they are inside working; the *batiment vû* (figure 8) considered in chapter one shows them because it includes the inner courtyard which is part of the working factory. As the images of the manufactory became more explicitly targeted at particular audiences from the 1790s the use of inscribed viewers became more sophisticated. Most were targeted at potential customers, not at the workforce who were not depicted other than in images where they were part of the intended audience, like the insurance society poster considered in chapter one. There was, however, concern that the manufactory should appear busy with orders. John Hodges told Boulton in 1780, on the visit of Princess Dashkova 'The [work]shops in general were but thinly peopled. I

⁵⁷⁵ A young boy is shown holding open the gate in figs 9 and 10. A couple had been shown in fig 9 but removed in fig 10.

⁵⁷⁶ Layton-Jones, p.87.

⁵⁷⁷ J.H. Plumb, 'The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, No.67, p.87; Moir, pp.77-107.

had a good apology by saying it was Whitsuntide holiday.⁵⁷⁸ Boulton would tell people of the number of staff he employed as an indication of the scale of the enterprise, the text in this magazine explained numbers varied with the state of trade but could be upwards of 600.⁵⁷⁹

The plate was labelled 'Monthly Magazine No. 17' in the top left corner, suggesting there was an expectation it would be removed from the publication. It was titled 'the SOHO MANUFACTORY near BIRMINGHAM belonging to Messrs Boulton & Watt.' The Manufactory did not belong to Boulton and Watt but to Boulton alone. This is a further indication of the extent to which the main interest of the publishers was in Watt, the steam engine and his chemical work. It is not clear whether Boulton and Watt checked this caption before printing, but it is possible that it was agreed in order to link Watt more strongly with Soho. Little work relating to the steam engines took place at the manufactory; Soho Foundry was in operation by then. When there had been precision manufacturing of small engine parts on the manufactory site it had happened in the engine works which are not visible in this view.⁵⁸⁰

The accompanying 'ACCOUNT OF SOHO, NEAR BIRMINGHAM [*With an Engraved View, from a Drawing taken for the Purpose, on the Spot*]' was around five hundred words long, just under a quarter of those were related to

⁵⁷⁸ BAH3782/12/63/14 John Hodges to MB 15 May 1780.

⁵⁷⁹ For example, Swinney's *Directory* suggested there were workshops for a thousand men, while Boulton told James Adam he employed 700 to 800, BAH3782/12/2/23 MB to James Adam 1 Oct 1770, John Byng was told on a tour in 1781 that 500 workmen were now employed, before the war it had been 700, Andrews, 1934, Vol. 1, p.49.

⁵⁸⁰ Demidowicz, forthcoming. The engine works buildings at the manufactory did belong to both Boulton and Watt and are shown in figure 3 but cannot be seen in this view.

Francis Eginton's nearby glassworks and his stained-glass windows.⁵⁸¹ It could not be assumed that the reader would look for the illustration, so text and illustration had to work separately, both had to be able to convey the key messages of large-scale, successful and tasteful manufactory. The text was not specific to Boulton and Watt but outlined the development of the entire Soho complex and its products. It emphasised many of the same themes as Swinney's *Directory* of 1773: the export of goods, Boulton's role as a merchant and his resolve to render his works a seminary of taste, sparing no expense to do so, the transformation from a barren heath and the size of the enterprise. Only forty-nine words considered the addition of the steam engine to the established enterprise; more were devoted to the mint which would also have been of interest to the reader. The text anchors the messages of the image; Soho was large, successful and tasteful. It adds general background information, but not the technical material on the steam engine that Phillips had sought; instead it concentrates on the entire Soho enterprise, taking the opportunity to promote the output of the whole site. This print was produced by multiple authors, Boulton, Watt, Phillips, the editor, artist, engraver, printer and authors of the earlier images which influenced this one, like Eginton, all of whom contributed to the final image and text. In turn, the material in this magazine influenced and contributed to the authorship of the works that would be produced next and are considered below.

⁵⁸¹ See appendix 1.2 for full transcript. Eginton had left Boulton's employ in 1781.

The Copper-Plate Magazine

The year after the illustration and account in the *Monthly Magazine* Soho was featured in a periodical aimed at a different audience (figure 27). *The Copper-Plate Magazine, or, Monthly Cabinet of Picturesque Engravings* placed more emphasis on image than text.⁵⁸² Sometimes referred to as the *New Copper-Plate Magazine*, it was engraved and published by John Walker (fl. 1784-1802) and addressed to 'Lovers of the Arts'.⁵⁸³ Launched in 1792 by Walker with Harrison and Company, it ran to two hundred and fifty views and was continued until 1802.⁵⁸⁴ Each number contained 'Two exquisite prints, engraved in a very superior Style, from Original Paintings and Drawings by the First Masters with Letter-Press descriptions'. It cost a shilling for the first ninety-nine issues, rising to one and six as a result of the increase in the price of paper.⁵⁸⁵ As I will show it had questionable aesthetic and printing quality which meant it was aimed at a wide audience, not the connoisseurs the prospectus implied but those who aspired to that role. It was competitively priced but still a considered purchase, the two plates and associated text cost

⁵⁸² *Copper-Plate Magazine*, No 80, later reissued as John Walker, *The Itinerant: A Select Collection of Interesting and Picturesque Views in Great Britain and Ireland: Engraved from Original Paintings and Drawings. By Eminent Artists*, London, 1799.

⁵⁸³ Laurence Worms, 'Anthony Walker, etcher and engraver' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007; [J. Walker], 'New Copper-Plate Magazine [...] This day is published number C', [London], nd. This is catalogued by the BL as '?1792', the date the magazine began but as it was produced on the publication of the hundredth issue it must be later. The title 'new' was presumably to avoid confusion with *The Copper Plate Magazine, or a Monthly Treasure for the Admirers of the Imitative Arts* while drawing on its reputation, Ronald Russell, *Guide to British Topographical Prints*, Newton Abbot, 1979, pp.34-5; Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Aldershot, 1989, p.35.

⁵⁸⁴ Russell, p.47. However Joanna Selborne, *Paths to Fame: Turner Watercolours from The Courtauld Gallery*, London, 2008, p.45 suggests it was launched with Hamish and Company.

⁵⁸⁵ [J. Walker], 'New Copper-Plate Magazine [...] This day is published number C', [London], nd.

the same as the eighty-two pages of *Monthly Magazine*.⁵⁸⁶ Publication in parts made it more affordable as well as providing a regular income for Walker.⁵⁸⁷ He aimed to combine beautiful views with 'historic truth', high quality art and value for money. He listed a number of artists who had assisted, among them Sandby, Wheatley, Marlow, Burney, Courbould, Dayes and Girtin.⁵⁸⁸ J.M.W. Turner was commissioned to produce fifteen views for the magazine between 1794 and 1798 which included one of Birmingham.⁵⁸⁹ In 1799, Walker retouched a selection of the plates from the first eighty-five issues and published them in one volume, *The Itinerant: A Select Collection of Interesting and Picturesque Views in Great Britain and Ireland: Engraved from Original Paintings and Drawings. By Eminent Artists*.⁵⁹⁰

No archive material relating to this illustration of Soho has been found. It appeared in issue 80, titled 'SOHO, Staffordshire' along with Saltwood Castle near Hythe and engraved by Walker from an original drawing (figure 27).⁵⁹¹ Walker did not engrave all of the plates but his name did appear on all of them as publisher. This would have drawn on an association with the reputation of his father for quality magazine engravings.⁵⁹² Again the view is of the Principal Building from the usual angle but with problems in the perspective of

⁵⁸⁶ *The Virtuosi's Magazine* was described by its publishers in 1778 as 'elegant engravings [...] at the very moderate price of One Shilling for each plate, instead of the usual demand of from 2s 6d to 5s made for landscapes of an inferior merit.' Russell, p.39.

⁵⁸⁷ Griffiths, 2004b, p.10.

⁵⁸⁸ [J. Walker], 'New Copper-Plate Magazine [...] This day is published number C', [London], nd.

⁵⁸⁹ James Hamilton, *Turner's Britain*, London, 2003, p. 36.

⁵⁹⁰ The price of this volume was not on the frontispiece and no other indication of price has been found.

⁵⁹¹ The artist of the drawing is not named although they sometimes were, e.g. Birmingham, issue 46 by Turner. Well known artists are more likely to have been specifically named.

⁵⁹² See catalogue 7.

the figures in the foreground.⁵⁹³ Elegant visitors in a fashionable carriage are displayed prominently in the foreground with others strolling in the grounds as inscribed viewers, allowing the actual viewer to identify with them and relate more directly to the scene. This image carries this to a further extent than any of the others through the inclusion of the couple in the carriage moving towards the viewer, the male with a whip in motion which frames their heads. These figures appear in a publication targeted at an audience that understands issues of taste and fashion, or aspires to do so. Again there is no indication of staff or of work being undertaken, so the overall impression is that of a genteel country house rather than a bustling manufactory.

Neither is there a suggestion in the title of the plate that Soho was an industrial site. The publication advertised itself as one which covered 'interesting, sublime, and beautiful views' of a wide range of subjects which did not include industrial sites.⁵⁹⁴ Views of industrial towns such as Birmingham and Sheffield had been included, but at a distance so, an idea of overall scale, density and spread of building was conveyed rather than the detail of individual sites.⁵⁹⁵ An illustration of Derby Silk Mill was titled simply 'Derby', although the accompanying text did explain in the final paragraph that the silk mill was in the centre of the view (figure 4).⁵⁹⁶ The only explicitly titled industrial site in the magazine was Ayton Forge in Yorkshire.⁵⁹⁷ It was shown from the outside with a group of visiting gentlemen and no reference to

⁵⁹³ See catalogue 7.

⁵⁹⁴ [J. Walker], 'New Copper-Plate Magazine [...] This day is published number C', [London], nd.

⁵⁹⁵ Issues 46 and 79.

⁵⁹⁶ Issue 27.

⁵⁹⁷ Issue 81.

the work carried out there. Ayton Forge did not appear in *The Itinerant*, although Ayton village did.

The magazine was laid out in such a way that it could have been broken up and integrated into collections. Copies from the magazine carried volume and plate numbers top right (but not the name of the magazine); those from *The Itinerant* had 'The Itinerant' and the county, making classification within collections easier.⁵⁹⁸ Each plate occupied a full page and was accompanied by 'letter-press descriptions', a short piece of text. The unsigned text is simply a summary of that in the *Monthly Magazine*. It once again highlighted the importance of design and taste to Boulton and his products, referring to the seminary of taste and noting that the most able and ingenious artists had been secured in every field at considerable expense.⁵⁹⁹ The text anchored the idea of the tasteful site with its elegant visitors seen in the image and added information about the products, export and the size of the establishment. Image and text were physically more closely related in this publication, they were placed next to each other so the viewer did not have to hunt for the text, but each still had to be able to stand alone as they could be separated within collections.⁶⁰⁰

Walker repeatedly highlighted the quality, superior finish and value for money of his publication. It was marketed as a collection,

⁵⁹⁸ The volume and plate numbers of the *Copper Plate Magazine* are misleading, see catalogue 7 for further discussion.

⁵⁹⁹ See appendix 1.3 for full transcript.

⁶⁰⁰ There seen to have been different formats but text and image were closely linked, see catalogue 7.

a repository of Grand and Picturesque Scenes [...] at an expense so comparatively inconsiderable as not to merit consideration, for those who are at all desirous to possess so truly estimable and unparalleled a collection as Two Hundred accurate and enchanting Views; uniform in size, execution and appearance: a recommendation no other collection so numerous possesses.⁶⁰¹

When advertising the publication after the first hundred issues, Walker advised that 'A few selected first impressions, hot-pressed, may be had in boards, price 7L 10s' for the hundred numbers already published.⁶⁰² For all Walker's assertions about the quality of the publication, the British Library copy of *The Itinerant* contains a plate of Soho which is printed squint, suggesting problems with overseeing the printing, and the horses in the foreground of the Soho plate are unfeasibly small.⁶⁰³

The print runs of the magazine or *The Itinerant* are not clear, Russell states that the magazine was popular but does not justify the statement, while Worms calls it much esteemed.⁶⁰⁴ However, it is one of the images of the Soho Manufactory that is now more readily available; it is easier to find for sale which suggests the magazine may have been the largest print run of the images of Soho, or the example that was most often kept and integrated into collections. Inclusion in these publications again broadened the range of viewers who saw images of Soho; it introduced Soho to a middle-class

⁶⁰¹ [J. Walker], 'New Copper-Plate Magazine [...] This day is published number C', [London], nd.

⁶⁰² Hot pressed is the grade of finish of the paper. Its very smooth finish is obtained by pressing the sheets between metal plates. Susan Lambert, *Prints: Art and Techniques*, London, 2001, pp.18-9. This is presumably intended as a very select collection with highest quality prints, taken before the plates wore. If bought as individual issues these images would have cost £5, so a premium was being placed on these prints.

⁶⁰³ BL 10348.e.21. The following image of Tamworth Castle is not centred on the page. A coloured example considered in catalogue 7 (figure 48) also has the text out of alignment with the image.

⁶⁰⁴ Russell, p.47; Laurence Worms, 'Anthony Walker, etcher and engraver' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007.

audience, a potential market for some of the products. Through the use of inscribed viewers it suggested that Soho was not just for the wealthy aristocracy, it was also accessible to purchasers of the magazine.

Bisset's Directories

At the same time, Soho continued to be included in trade directories which were also growing in sophistication. Charles Pye's 1797 directory of Birmingham had an even more ambitious title page than his 1791 edition.⁶⁰⁵ It was drawn by Joseph Barber, engraved by Pye and showed Industry gesturing towards a beehive with a screw and auger beside her (figure 28). A scroll reads LABOR IPSE VOLUPTAS (work itself is a pleasure), once again emphasising Birmingham as a place of hard work, learning and taste. The volume consisted of alphabetical lists which included Boulton's businesses and did not have the introductory description that many other directories carried. In 1800, Pye advertised a further edition, explaining that those who wished to be included must send their names to him and pay him sixpence. The result was a much shorter directory with a rather disillusioned preface, concluding that as the inhabitants seemed to think such a directory was useless or unnecessary he took his leave of the business.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵ Considered on p.92.

⁶⁰⁶ Walker, pp.20-21; Charles Pye, *The Birmingham directory, for the year 1800; containing the names of the inhabitants who considered such a publication either useful or necessary, at a small expence*, Birmingham, 1800.

Inclusion in these directories was limited to text only; an illustration of Soho did not appear in a directory again until 1800 when it was featured in Bisset's *Poetic Survey round Birmingham [...] accompanied with a magnificent directory*, and again in the second, enlarged edition of 1808. This was a directory that moved far beyond the usual lists of manufacturers and their addresses to include illustrations and a poem. There were two images of Soho, one of the manufactory and one of the house and pool (figures 29-30), and Boulton was named in a third plate that listed merchants in Birmingham.⁶⁰⁷ James Bisset (?1762-1832) saw his directory as a 'A brief Description of the Different Curiosities and Manufactories of the Place Intended as a Guide for Strangers' with 'names, professions &c. superbly engraved in emblematic plates'.⁶⁰⁸

Different versions of the *Directory* were listed as available; the basic edition at six shillings, with proof plates at 10s 6d, hand coloured at one guinea and printed in colour at 2 guineas and intended for the libraries of gentlemen.⁶⁰⁹ It was printed for Bisset in Birmingham by Swinney and Hawkins but was also sold by T Heptinstall, Holburn, London and 'all other book sellers'.⁶¹⁰ Myles Swinney was listed as both a printer and a copperplate printer which suggests that his printing business was of sufficient scale to employ different staff to

⁶⁰⁷ Bisset, 1800, Plate B.

⁶⁰⁸ James Bisset, *A Poetic Survey round Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1800, Address to the Reader.

⁶⁰⁹ Bisset, 1800, frontispiece. Although these different versions were listed as available it does not necessarily mean they were produced, Norton notes that no coloured copy has ever been found, even the specially bound presentation copy to the King is in black and white, Norton, p.188. In fact Boulton did own a hand coloured copy, see p.165. Hand coloured copies cost less than printed colour copies as this was a much quicker and cheaper form of colouring to achieve. Further consideration of coloured copies of plates can be found in catalogue 10-11. For proofs see p.205.

⁶¹⁰ Bisset, 1800, frontispiece. Although the directory was published by Swinney and Hawkins plate F in the directory illustrates Swinney's type foundry without mentioning Hawkins.

print in intaglio and relief so he could produce the text and the illustrations.⁶¹¹

The illustration of his type foundry in Bisset's *Directory* (figure 31) identifies the buildings and shows a general printing house and a copper plate room.

The 1808 edition was printed by R. Jabet, Herald Office, High Street, Birmingham as Swinney and Hawkins were no longer trading.⁶¹²

Like Boulton, Bisset saw himself as moving between the spheres of the manufacturer and the gentleman, as a connoisseur and collector. He was proud of his literacy, he bought and lent books throughout his time as an apprentice, took care to dress well and emphasised the role of artists and design in the creation of the new consumer goods which were fuelling the growth of Birmingham at the time.⁶¹³ Bisset issued promotional material and advertised his intended directory. He sent Boulton a copy of the prospectus in July 1799, explaining that he intended to include a view of Soho, although his printed notice stated clearly that no personal applications would be made.⁶¹⁴ Presumably Bisset was worried that Boulton had not submitted his name, and felt he could not afford to exclude the most famous factory in the area, although it was not actually in Birmingham. It is possible that Boulton felt Bisset was not targeting an audience of interest to him. Bisset's initial proposition was that the Directory be intended mainly for Strangers who visited Manufactories; Boulton had large numbers of applications to visit and no wish to encourage more due to concerns about industrial espionage and

⁶¹¹ BBTI, Myles Swinney.

⁶¹² BBTI, Richard Jabet; BBTI, Swinney and Hawkins. Swinney was still operating, the BBTI suggests Swinney and Ferrall were in partnership from 1803-1811 and the partnership with Hawkins ran until 1807. The plate of his type foundry is included in the 1808 edition of Bisset's *Directory*.

⁶¹³ Berg, 1998, pp.28-33; David Powell, 'James Bisset' in Mason, 2009, p.200.

⁶¹⁴ BAH3782/12/44/211 James Bisset to MB, 30 July 1799 and enclosures.

the amount of time taken up by visitors. From 1800 he placed advertisements in London and provincial newspapers that led John Hodges to write to Boulton in July saying he was glad to see the advertisement in the newspaper prohibiting strangers seeing Soho.⁶¹⁵ Bisset's descriptive text for Soho states that as improper use has been made of access to the factory by foreigners it was now only possible to see the showroom.⁶¹⁶

An advertisement in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* in late January 1800 announced a delay in publication as the printers had not been able to print them as fast as had been hoped owing to the large number of plates 'amounting in the whole to upwards of Sixty Thousand'.⁶¹⁷ This implies a print run of around 2,500, although Bisset was likely to have been exaggerating.⁶¹⁸ As soon as the first copies were put together, Bisset sent one to Boulton who was in London. Bisset recognised that this could provide a useful opportunity for distributing copies to those with influence in London:

If any of your friends in Town Approve of the Design or should you wish to present a copy to any Nobleman or Gentleman by favouring me with a line I will forward you some immediately but at present the one now sent and one to Alderman Boydell are the only books that are complete – and as Encouragers & Promoters of the Liberal Arts I was anxious you should reap the first fruits. I hope to have a few couler'd in a few days One of which will await your arrival at Soho.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁵ BAH3782/12/63/72 John Hodges to MB, 14 Jul 1800. Jones in Mason, 2009, p.9. As Jones notes applications to visit did not stop and the message had to be repeated several times.

⁶¹⁶ See appendix 1.4 for full text.

⁶¹⁷ Walker, p.23.

⁶¹⁸ Much depends on what he considered plates for this calculation. There are 24 listed for Birmingham in the 1800 edition however, there are also three extra plates and the plan; if the latter are included, a run closer to 2,100 is implied.

⁶¹⁹ BAH3782/12/45/43 James Bisset to MB, 6 Feb 1800. Alderman John Boydell (1720-1804) had been one of the most important printsellers in London, described by Lippincott as one who 'deserves ranking with Wedgwood and Boulton as one of England's heroic entrepreneurs', Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London: The Rise of Arthur Pond*, New Haven and London, 1983, p.147. Although his firm was by now in financial trouble, his approval would still have helped sales in the city. Boulton had known him for years, having subscribed to two sets of his prints in 1760 and continuing to purchase from him for his own

Boulton's hand coloured copy remained with the family until its sale in 1986.⁶²⁰

The layout of the Bisset's *Directory* did not follow established practice; it was not simple lists of professions or the occupants of streets. Instead there were plates showing such lists, often on scrolls, alongside views of Birmingham buildings, emblems or allegorical figures and trompe l'oeil cards or plates dedicated to individual businesses. Most of these lists were themed, such as those for artists, button makers or sword manufacturers with a few geographical lists for the most important streets and several miscellaneous lists.⁶²¹ There was also an alphabetical index of those included. The text of the description, the poetic survey and the 'Ramble of the Gods through Birmingham' depict Birmingham as a centre of elegance and taste, as well as innovation, portraying it as a seat of the arts with Soho as one of its star attractions.⁶²²

Bisset described his *Directory* as 'perfectly novel and unique' in his announcements prior to publication of the 1808 edition.⁶²³ Norton argues it was the first illustrated example and suggests he started the process by which

collection and reference material for designers at the Manufactory, Timothy Clayton, 'John Boydell, engraver and printseller' in Oxford DNB online, accessed 24 June 2007, BAH3782/6/190/8 and 9 John Boydell to MB 6 June 1760; MB to Wm Matthews 10 May 1771; Robinson, 1953, p.369.

⁶²⁰ Christie's, London, *Books from the Library of Matthew Boulton and his family*, 12 December 1986, Lot 22, present location unknown, listed with 28 hand coloured plates. Norton p.188 suggests a presentation copy to Boulton was at Birmingham Assay Office but its location is not now known.

⁶²¹ Bisset, 1800 Plates J, R and K. The only geographical lists are Plates C, miscellaneous professions in New Street, D, High Street and S, Deritend. Layton-Jones, 2008a p.79, n.30 suggests the layout was more geographical than it actually was.

⁶²² See appendix 1.4 for extracts of these texts relating to Soho.

⁶²³ *The Monthly Mirror*, January 1808, p.71.

trade cards evolved into advertisements in directories.⁶²⁴ By the early nineteenth-century billheads and letterheads also used images of premises.⁶²⁵ Bisset intended his publication to replace trade cards for individual businesses, collecting them together and binding them which made them less ephemeral than loose cards. By gathering these images together Bisset was able to ensure they were of high calibre, emphasising the number of tasteful and important businesses in the area and associating Birmingham with high quality products. By including his poem and description he was able to highlight these merits, to anchor them and provide additional information. In promoting and publicising Birmingham he would have hoped that increased travel to the area would provide potential visitors and customers for his museum and shop on New Street.⁶²⁶

The directory and its plates were well received by reviewers but the poetry was not. The *Monthly Mirror* noted:

Mr. BISSET is an ingenious artist; and we have admired the curiosities in his museum at Birmingham; *sed non omnia possumus omnes* [but not everyone can do everything]. His verses are too wretched to be sung even by the bell-man, who nightly cries the hour at which the inhabitants of Birmingham may regale on *tripe and cow-heel*, when the business of the day is concluded. As a directory, however, the publication will be found accurate, useful and entertaining: and the plates, which represent many of the public buildings, and most considerable manufactories, in the town, are executed with extraordinary elegance.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁴ Norton, pp.13,39. Norton, p.13 suggests that he also he intended to supply the plates singly to individuals for use as cards or advertisements but there were no applications.

⁶²⁵ Layton-Jones, p.81; Berg, 2005, p.186.

⁶²⁶ Bisset, 1800 Plate C.

⁶²⁷ *The Monthly Mirror reflecting men and manners [...]* Vol X, December 1800, p.384. A footnote insists of the bell-man 'This is a fact.' Bisset was not alone in receiving such reviews in this publication, in the same issue W.H. Ireland, the author of a romance 'has, certainly, some talent; but it is uncultivated and misapplied. His object seems to be rather to write much, than well; and his imagination hurries him away into the most childish and ridiculous excesses.' *The Monthly Mirror [...]* Vol X, December 1800, p.383.

The *Monthly Review* was similarly dismissive of the poetry but also enthusiastic about the plates, concluding 'we have no doubt that his spirit and taste will meet with all the encouragement which they appear to deserve.'⁶²⁸ This publication was of sufficient importance that it received reviews in national publications, promoting the directory (if not the poetry) to larger audiences. The reviews provide us with valuable information on the contemporary reception of the work which can be so difficult to determine. Bisset was always aware that the quality of the plates meant the volume would have a broader appeal than just those wishing to know about businesses in Birmingham. His 'Ideal Inference' expressed a hope that it would be read all over the world and encourage people to visit 'The Toy Shop of the World'.⁶²⁹ The plates meant that the volume would appeal to those who would never consider purchasing an un-illustrated directory of Birmingham.

Many of the plates, including those of Soho, were engraved by Francis Eginton junior (?1775-1823), the son of John Eginton (d.1786) and nephew of Francis Eginton (1737-1805).⁶³⁰ The others were also produced in Birmingham by T. Hancock of Congreve Street, Smith of King Edwards Place, William Reynolds of Newhall Street and James Howe of Snow Hill.⁶³¹ The quality and taste of the plates was remarked upon by reviewers as 'executed with extraordinary elegance' and 'well executed', associating Birmingham with

⁶²⁸ *The Monthly Review or Literary Journal, Enlarged* Vol XXXIII, Nov. 1800, pp.319-20, quoted in full in the catalogue. Extracts of Bisset's poem relating to Soho are given in appendix 1.4.

⁶²⁹ Bisset, 1808, p.61.

⁶³⁰ Timothy Clayton, 'Francis Eginton' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007; See pp.76-77 and for Francis senior and John.

⁶³¹ Manuscript note in Birmingham Assay Office copy of Bisset's *Directory*.

high quality work.⁶³² The plates allowed the directory to stand as a recommendation for the quality of line engraving being carried out in the town at the time. The *Monthly Review* continued 'Here much taste is displayed; and we should hence infer that the artists of Birmingham could execute the shield of Achilles, though no poet may be found competent to a description of it.' Birmingham would go on to produce a group of engravers who were taught in the drawing schools of the Barbers and others and associated with the die-sinkers and medallists of Soho who refined and applied the techniques of die-cutting to the production of works on paper.⁶³³ It would have been hoped that this association of quality was also applied to the products of Birmingham, particularly those from Soho.

The most prominent of the plates in both the 1800 and 1808 editions was the full-page view of Soho Manufactory. Once again the Principal Building was shown from the approach road, dominating the image. It is a landscape image in a portrait format book; the viewer has to turn the page through ninety degrees and the plates are grouped together, separate from the relevant text.⁶³⁴ Soho is depicted, not as part of an urban streetscape like others in the volume but, set apart in extensive grounds in which visitors are seen strolling. For the first time the Latchet Works are shown with a pitched roof as they were built rather than the proposed domed roof.⁶³⁵ The new stables for

⁶³² *The Monthly Mirror* [...] Vol X, December 1800, p.383; *The Monthly Review or Literary Journal, Enlarged* Vol XXXIII, Nov. 1800, pp.319-20,

⁶³³ Fawcett, p.58; Tessa Sidey, *Turner and the Birmingham Engravers*, Birmingham, 2003, p.2.

⁶³⁴ Many of the plates in the volume are portrait format in order to avoid having to turn the page. The proportions of the Principal Building meant that it could not be effectively depicted in a portrait format.

⁶³⁵ See p.275.

Soho House are visible on the left, masking the buildings of the Mint. Eginton junior introduced sophisticated artistic techniques such as the picturesque trees which act as a sidescreen, highlighting the Principal Building which is once again bathed in light that ensures it is the focus of the illustration. By the 1808 edition the view of Soho was considered so important that it was the only one mentioned by name on the title page, 'A view of the Royal Mint and Soho Manufactory'. As Boulton was minting coin of the realm, Bisset included the reference to the Royal Mint even though it is not actually visible in the plate. The inclusion of, indeed emphasis on, a business in Staffordshire in a Birmingham directory highlights the importance of Soho and Boulton to Birmingham and the wider area. Although Soho Manufactory was seen as one of the most important plates from the outset, this was not a consideration in the ordering of the plates in the volume - it was not placed first.⁶³⁶

Bisset's *Directory* was initially aimed at visitors to Birmingham interested in touring the manufactories so, Boulton took the opportunity to promote the breadth of his businesses, including the mercantile trade and banking by listing the businesses under the image. The view suggests the scale of the enterprise, the caption supports and highlights the diversity of products and businesses, and the descriptions within the volume reinforce that further. The importance of Boulton is emphasised even though he is not physically depicted; seven of the eight businesses listed contain his name. The use of text within the plates is an important feature of the whole of Bisset's directory which is effectively illustrated lists with text on all of the plates. Including so

⁶³⁶ Soho Manufactory is plate T, part way through the volume, not placed at the front as might have been expected for an image specifically mentioned on the frontispiece of the 1808 edition.

many businesses on a plate relating to one man establishes his importance. Other plates list separate businesses or at best multiple products of one business; Boulton stands above all the other entries. Most of the other plates in the volume are emblematic or show the exteriors of factories and important buildings in the town. There are other full-size plates, but most of those are portrait format with scrolls and emblems. There are many building exteriors, including the Warstone Porter Brewery and the Hen and Chickens Inn which are, like Soho, full-size landscape plates.⁶³⁷ Some follow a similar layout to Soho, the brass founders shows a classical frontage with the working buildings behind and a number of businesses listed below. The difference is that these were distinct businesses, on separate sites with different owners; Soho has separate businesses but they were all associated with Boulton.⁶³⁸ The text relating to the Soho is both prose and poem. Once again it anchors the taste, size and the peaceful nature of the gardens visible in the images.⁶³⁹ It also adds information on patriotism, the link between technology and art, and suggests that Soho will stand as a long-term memorial to Boulton.

Another aspect of Soho appears in the directory courtesy of a plate listing people living adjacent to Birmingham, including Boulton and Watt. The list is on a scroll, leant on a tree stump with Soho House on the right and Hockley Abbey on the left (figure 30). Neither is identified on the image, the viewer is

⁶³⁷ Bisset, 1808, Plates V and 15.

⁶³⁸ Bisset, 1800, Plate L. Layton-Jones, 2008, p.86 illustrates a plate for Thomason's manufactory signed by Pye which she credits to Bisset, 1808. Copies of Bisset examined for this thesis include different illustrations for Thomason but BAH3782/15/12/9 Bill, Thomason & Co to Mary Anne Boulton, 15 Aug 1817 uses the same image with slightly different text below. This plate follows a similar layout to the Bisset plate of Soho Manufactory with an elevation of a classical building and lists of his products (rather than businesses) below but is likely to have been produced after the Soho example had been published.

⁶³⁹ See appendix 1.4 for the text.

expected to be able to recognise them or to consult the list of plates.⁶⁴⁰ The main elevation of Soho House is shown on top of the hill sheltered by trees with the pool in the foreground. It is the same viewpoint used by Phillip (figure 59), the anonymous watercolour (figure 22), by Joseph Barber in *The Tablet* (figure 18) and again in Stebbing Shaw (figure 33, discussed below). This list and the image of Soho House surrounded by parkland emphasised that Boulton was not in Birmingham, but nearby.

Bisset's *Directory* highlights Birmingham as a place of industry and manufacture, consumption and taste. It suggests Birmingham was a part of the world of arts and unites that world with science and manufacture, strengthening a link previously made by others like Charles Pye with his directory frontispieces. Good design and aesthetic pleasure were important aspects of manufactured consumer goods. This was also a link repeatedly made in the text accompanying descriptions of Soho and Bisset cited Boulton as an influence on his thinking in this area.⁶⁴¹ Once again this is a multi-authored depiction of Soho; the artist of the drawings from which Eginton junior engraved the plates is not named, but they had an important role in forming the depiction, as did Eginton. Boulton and others at Soho would have been involved in determining the illustration and captions, Bisset's text and format for the volume influenced the way the plates were read. The experience and knowledge of the viewer determines how they interpret an image; viewers are also involved in the authorship. Contemporary reviews

⁶⁴⁰ Bisset, 1800, 'Bankers, Birmingham, and Gentlemen, adjacent, Emblems of Stability; View of Mr. Ford's, Hockley Abbey, and M. Boulton's Esq. Soho.'; Bisset, 1808, p.iv listed 'a distant view of Matthew Boulton's, Esq. Soho' but not Hockley Abbey. See catalogue 50 for Hockley Abbey.

⁶⁴¹ Berg, 1998, p.32.

provide an insight into the interpretation of this volume, evidence which is rarely available. This collective production of images is also apparent in the next depiction of Soho discussed below.

Stebbing Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*

In addition to directories and magazines, Soho featured in a history of Staffordshire some thirty years after its inclusion in such a volume was first discussed.⁶⁴² A pair of images drawn and engraved by Francis Eginton junior appeared in part I of the second volume of the Reverend Stebbing Shaw's *History and Antiquities of Staffordshire* (1801) with an extensive description of Soho, the longest to date (figures 32 and 33).⁶⁴³ The advertisements addressed these volumes to 'the Public but more especially to the Nobilty, Gentry, Clergy, &c. of the County of Stafford.'⁶⁴⁴ Like Bisset's *Directory*, this work was available in a variety of formats; small paper with folded plates at £2 12 6, large paper at £3 15s or a special 'illuminated' version at £8 8s which included additional watercolours, the map of the county and some coloured plates.⁶⁴⁵ It was printed by and for J Nichols & Son, Fleet Street, sold by three other London dealers and the principal Booksellers in Staffordshire and

⁶⁴² See p.69

⁶⁴³ The text is transcribed in appendix 1.5.

⁶⁴⁴ WSL SMS 342/6/20.

⁶⁴⁵ 'BOOKS printed for, and sold by, JOHN NICHOLS' in Rev. Samuel Pegge, *An Historical Account of Beauchief Abbey [...]*, London, 1801, p.267. At least ten illuminated copies of volume one seem to have been sold but two were sold to Henry White for eighteen guineas rather than the ten guineas per copy listed. Boulton subscribed to a large copy of volume one. WSL SMS 342/5/160 Deliveries for Volume One; Greenslade and Baugh, p.xxi.

surrounding counties.⁶⁴⁶ Shaw's paperwork suggests sufficient material was printed to allow the collation of 250 copies each of the large and small volumes but some missing or damaged pages meant that slightly smaller quantities were actually possible. Shaw's undated lists show that 124 large and 198 small copies were delivered.⁶⁴⁷ The plates are by a variety of artists and engravers, some drawn by Stebbing Shaw himself. There is little consistency in format, style, size or layout across the volume and Eginton's plates of Soho are among the most accomplished. It is this chaotic approach which led Lord Bagot to remark of Shaw 'What he did publish is full of curious matter, miserably ill arranged.'⁶⁴⁸ A review of the first volume noted that the plates 'are of unequal merit and execution, which must invariably be the case when different artists are employed.' Plate 50 of Lichfield Cathedral was 'entitled to every praise' while plate 15, of Armitage Park, 'disgraces the work'.⁶⁴⁹

Shaw intended to include significant industrial sites as well as grand houses and churches. He visited Wilkinson's ironworks at Bradley in 1794, Wedgwood provided help and Shaw reported he had been promised information by the owners of 'the coal mines, manufactories and other curious works which have so long enriched the populous vicinity.'⁶⁵⁰ His updates to *The Gentleman's Magazine* do not mention Boulton, but by 1795 they were

⁶⁴⁶ Stebbing Shaw, *History of Staffordshire*, Vol. 1, [1798], reprinted Wakefield, 1976, frontispiece. BBTI lists Nichols & Son only as printers so it is not clear if the illustrations were printed in-house or by others.

⁶⁴⁷ WSL SMS 342/5/178 Vol II. Boulton does not appear on the delivery lists for volume two which suggests they are not complete.

⁶⁴⁸ M.W. Greenslade, 'Stebbing Shaw' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 24 June 2007.

⁶⁴⁹ *The British Critic*, Vol XIII, April 1799, p.345.

⁶⁵⁰ M.W. Greenslade and G.C. Baugh, 'Introduction', in Stebbing Shaw, *History of Staffordshire*, Vol. 1, [1798], Wakefield, 1976, Stebbing Shaw, letter to *Gentleman's Magazine*, Aug 1794, p.711.

discussing images of Soho as James Lawson introduced Robert Riddell to Boulton in June with this volume in mind.⁶⁵¹ Presumably John Phillip was considered too inexperienced to undertake the work. A list of 'Pictures of & from Soho' in Boulton's notebook includes 'No1 View of Manufactory for Mr Shaw'.⁶⁵² Shaw's first volume was published in 1798 but did not include the section on Handsworth which was deferred to the second volume. Shaw promised not to publish anything on Soho without showing it to Boulton who agreed to supply two plates.⁶⁵³ There was considerable delay in providing these plates and the other illustrations had been printed before they arrived.⁶⁵⁴ Both plates were again drawn and engraved by Francis Eginton junior. He was paid £52 10 0 for drawing and engraving these two views. His letter explained that this charge included

several sketches and drawings which were made before the views to be engraved were determined by Mr Boulton, a large plate of an outline of the Manufactory &c without the Landscape and colouring several views after the drawings by Mr Riddle [sic] for the plates of the outlines of which I have been paid.⁶⁵⁵

This makes extremely clear the multi-authored nature of this material, Eginton junior drew on the work of an earlier artist and Boulton selected the final representation.

⁶⁵¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1794, pp.602-5; *Gentleman's Magazine*, Aug 1794, p.711. BAH3782/12/66/45 James Lawson to MB 12 July 1795. See p.127 for further discussion of Riddell and these works.

⁶⁵² BAH3782/12/108/70 MB Notebook 1795, p.36.

⁶⁵³ BAH3782/12/43/257 Stebbing Shaw to MB, 4 June 1798.

⁶⁵⁴ See catalogue entry for further details.

⁶⁵⁵ BAH3782/8/21/43 Bill Francis Eginton to William Cheshire 17 April 1805. The bill was not paid until 1807 as it is filed with those vouchers. In this account Eginton notes that he was paid £26 5 0 in October 1798 and £25 in May 1799. This is likely to have been preliminary work for Stebbing Shaw's volume as it predates Bisset's approach to Boulton. For Riddell see p.127.

The plate of the manufactory shows the usual oblique view of the Principal Building with the Latchet Works and Soho House stables visible to the left and Rolling Mill Row to the right (figure 32). It is very similar to Eginton junior's view in Bisset (figure 29), although some of the trees have grown and the figures strolling in the park are different. The facade of the Principal Building is bathed in light and the same picturesque trees act as a sidescreen. What shows that this version was intended for a different audience is the way the plate was captioned. Where Bisset's *Directory* had listed businesses this read To Mathew [sic] Boulton Esq.^r this N.E. View of SOHO MANUFACTORY is inscribed by his obliged Serv.^t S. Shaw' with Boulton's coat of arms. This plate was intended to depict Boulton as a gentleman as well as a manufacturer.

Volume one had included a list of plates intended for volumes two and three which had only one plate of Soho, that of the manufactory; presumably the view of the estate was agreed on later.⁶⁵⁶ Depicting the estate would have served to strengthen the view of Boulton as a gentleman, someone who could create such a park. It showed Soho House on top of the hill, emphasising the scale of the surrounding open space and moved on from the views of the house in the *Tablet* and Bisset's *Directory* by including more of the park in order to emphasise its scale (figure 33). Cattle and swans emphasise the peaceful nature of the setting. Klingender noted that the industrial reference was insignificant and what appeared to be an ornamental lake was actually

⁶⁵⁶ Stebbing Shaw, 1798, p.xxiv.

the mill pool in disguise.⁶⁵⁷ There is a further hint of the industrial; the source of the wealth that created the park is visible in the smoking Mint chimney in the trees. There are references to leisure with a sailing boat on the pool and a garden seat on the hillside below the house. Again, this is a deliberate move away from Boulton the manufacturer towards Boulton the gentleman in a volume that concentrated more on the homes of the gentry than on industrial sites.

For the large volumes the plates were landscape format in a portrait format book, placed with the pages of descriptive text; the reader did not have to look for the plates separately but did have to turn the volume through ninety degrees to view them. In the small paper version the plates were folded. Not all of the illustrations in the volume were treated in this way, some were printed with the text but the most important subjects were given a full page, most often in a landscape orientation. Shaw used the research undertaken by the Rev. Thomas Feilde for his proposed history of Staffordshire in 1769 for which Boulton had supplied an image.⁶⁵⁸ Shaw quoted a description of Soho written by Erasmus Darwin in 1768. Darwin had drawn Feilde's attention to Soho as worthy of inclusion 'If you admit into your account of Staffordshire the wonders of art as well as those of nature'.⁶⁵⁹ Darwin's text was followed by a 4,500 word description and history of Soho.⁶⁶⁰ Once again there was a strong emphasis on taste and design, and direct reference was made to the plate to support the argument, 'No expense has been spared to render these works

⁶⁵⁷ Klingender, p.69.

⁶⁵⁸ See p.69.

⁶⁵⁹ Stebbing Shaw, 1801, p. 117.

⁶⁶⁰ See appendix 1.5 for a full transcript of the text.

[the Manufactory] uniform and handsome in architecture, as well as neat and commodious, as exhibited in the annexed plate.⁶⁶¹ The reader was instructed to view the plate at a specific point in their reading so that the image could anchor the message of the text; they were being told how to read the plate. The text went on to explain that the same taste had been applied to the grounds which separated Boulton's house from his manufactory and provided peace and seclusion, that Soho was 'a much-admired scene of picturesque beauty'.⁶⁶² It encouraged the viewer to consider the illustrations of Soho with particular topics in mind, to think of the elegance of the products as well as of the building and its surroundings; the audience was guided towards thinking of the whole Soho enterprise. It made explicit the link between image and text and provides information on how Boulton wanted these plates to be read. However, the text was written and printed before the images had been supplied so that text would have been written based on personal knowledge of the site or on earlier views.⁶⁶³ In 1811 M.R. Boulton referred Cadell and Davies to the text in Shaw's *History* for a notice of Boulton's life so he considered it an accurate account that was suitable for informing text in their intended *British Gallery of Portraits*.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶¹ Stebbing Shaw, 1801, p.121.

⁶⁶² Stebbing Shaw, 1801, p.121, Stebbing Shaw had undertaken and written on tours of the highlands of Scotland and west of England in the 1780s, so was presumably using the term 'picturesque beauty' as defined by Gilpin.

⁶⁶³ Printed proofs of the text were supplied to Boulton in 1798 although Shaw still offered to make changes, BAH3782/12/43/257 Stebbing Shaw to MB 4 June 1798. Proofs were again supplied in 1799, WSL SMS 342/5/172 S Shaw (Soho) to ---- 25 Sept 1799. The plate of Soho House but not the Manufactory had arrived by February 1801, Stebbing Shaw to Francis Eginton senior 22 Feb 1801 BAH3782/12/46/73.

⁶⁶⁴ BAH3782/13/9/166 MRB to Cadell and Davies 13 May 1811. They produced an engraving after Beechey's portrait of Boulton (figure 40), drawn by W. Evans and engraved by Cardon in 1812.

Further information on the mint and the robbery discussed in chapter two was included in an appendix which was harder for the reader to find as there was no reference to it in the main text.⁶⁶⁵ This was a consequence of Shaw encouraging additional material until the very last minute. The *Monthly Review* published a long piece on the volume, noting that the village of Handsworth was 'distinguished by the vast Soho manufactory belonging to the celebrated Mr Boulton, whose noble mansion and pleasure grounds add beauty to the surrounding scenery.'⁶⁶⁶ Most of Shaw's text on Soho was reprinted, emphasising the position of Soho as one of the most important entries in the volume.⁶⁶⁷ This reviewer was more interested in the text than the images, only mentioning at the end that 'numerous plates embellish the common copies of this work'.⁶⁶⁸ This suggests that his audience and the audience he envisaged for Shaw's volume would also prioritise the text. The article on Soho was also reprinted in *The New Annual Register [...] for the year 1801*.⁶⁶⁹

Shaw died in 1802 and Boulton attempted to retrieve the copper plates from his executors, asserting that they could be of no use to Shaw's heirs.⁶⁷⁰ This would allow Boulton to control the production of any further copies of the images. In 1810 Shaw's collection, including plates, was sold in spite of his wish that it should have been left to the British Museum. The Birmingham

⁶⁶⁵ 'Appendix of Additions and Corrections' in Shaw, 1801, p.16. For the robbery see p.124.

⁶⁶⁶ *The Monthly Review*, June 1802, p.158.

⁶⁶⁷ *The Monthly Review*, June 1802, p.158-164.

⁶⁶⁸ *The Monthly Review*, June 1802, p.164.

⁶⁶⁹ *The New Annual Register, or general repository of History, politics and literature for the year 1801, 1802*, pp.197-202. Such reprinting was relatively common, see also for example p.239 for the text of *Public Characters*.

⁶⁷⁰ MB to John Woodward, 11 April 1803 BAH3782/12/83/122. Control over plates is considered further in chapter four in relation to Sharp's engraving of Boulton after Beechey.

antiquarian William Hamper later bought all of Shaw's original drawings and plates, both published and unpublished.⁶⁷¹ It is not clear whether the Soho plates were recovered by Boulton or were among those sold. The Handsworth section was republished as a separate volume by Swinney and Ferrall in 1812 so the plates were accessible for that. It was repaginated, but no alterations were made to update the text in spite of the deaths of Boulton and Francis Eginton senior.⁶⁷²

These views continued to be used by the Boultons after the publication of the volume, Francis Eginton junior's bill included colouring four views of Soho, presumably to give to people who were considered of sufficient importance to receive a copy distinct from the ordinary version.⁶⁷³ In 1832 Boulton's son supplied a number of 'Engravings of Soho' to the collector William Salt (1808-1863) which are likely to have been copies of the plates from Shaw's volume. He hoped 'I have not robbed you by asking for so many, as I fear you have not laid hands upon the Copper Plates themselves.'⁶⁷⁴ The sale of Boulton family material in 1987 included thirty-nine copies of the view of the manufactory and eighteen of the house and park. Sold as one lot they were

⁶⁷¹ Hamper's Staffordshire collections were later sold to William Salt and much of the material is in the WSL. Hamper's papers on Aston were acquired by James Watt junior and now form part of BAH3219/6/6. Greenslade, p.xxv; BAH3219/6 Introduction to Catalogue, Part 6: 'Papers of the antiquarian William Hamper'.

⁶⁷² Stebbing Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Handsworth in the County of Stafford*, Birmingham, 1812. This was the same Myles Swinney (1738-1812) who had published the *Directory* considered in chapter one, BBTI, Myles Swinney. Page numbers within the text have not been altered to correspond with the repagination. This lack of alteration to the text suggests that the pages had been stereotyped.

⁶⁷³ BAH3782/8/21/43 Bill Francis Eginton to William Cheshire 17 April 1805. The cost was £1 0 0.

⁶⁷⁴ BAH3782/13/25/154 William Salt to MRB, 4 Aug 1832 The letter is endorsed 'Thanks for impression from Plates of Soho'; D.A. Johnson, 'William Salt' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 Feb 2010. Much of Salt's collection is now at the WSL.

described as 'etchings with aquatint, some printed in colours'.⁶⁷⁵ It is not known if these were printed at the same time as the plates for the books or later using the recovered plates (if they were successfully recovered). However, the fact that the family had such a large quantity of them suggests they could have been used for some form of promotional purpose. Boulton did use such material for its marketing potential. He requested extra copies of the text and sent one to Joseph Franel in Smyrna, assuming Franel was 'little acquainted with my home and my establishments which consist of a merchantile house in Birmingham and the most considerable manufactory of sundry hardware in England [...]'.⁶⁷⁶

Shaw's volume combined image and text more effectively than previous volumes. They were physically placed together and readers were given specific guidance on how to interpret some aspects of the plates. While still emphasising the scale, elegance and importance of the manufactory, this volume sought to make more of a feature of Boulton as a landed gentleman. Like the other material considered in this chapter it was the result of collective authorship, Eginton junior produced the images, informed by earlier works with the final selection by Boulton. The text was by Shaw, drawing on material supplied by Feilde and Erasmus Darwin, commented on and approved by Boulton and Watt.

⁶⁷⁵ Christie's, *Great Tew Sale*, 27-29 May 1987, Lot 567.

⁶⁷⁶ WSL SMS 342/5/172 S Shaw (Soho) to ---- 25 Sept 1799; BAH3782/12/43/257 Stebbing Shaw to MB, 4 June 1798; BAH3782/12/90/103; MB to Joseph Franel. 30 Sep. 1799. I am grateful to Sue Tungate for this reference. He must be referring to the text only as Eginton had not yet completed the plates.

The Illuminations

The works considered above are general views of Soho, they do not relate to a particular date or event. Boulton was clearly aware of the importance of allowing people to see the factory, having allowed visits for many years until stopping them for the reasons discussed above.⁶⁷⁷ He also used the park for large public celebrations, particularly the patriotic illuminations for peace. Boulton and his son sought to derive maximum possible advantage from these events by ensuring that they were well reported, used the image of the Principal Building, and picked up on some of the themes outlined above; they were made to link into the brand identity as well as acting as celebrations.

The manufactory was illuminated in 1802 to celebrate the Peace of Amiens. The event was reported (without illustration) in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* which suggested that 'for elegance and boldness of design, grandeur of effect, and promptness of execution' it would remain unequalled. The report continued 'The well-known taste and abilities of the liberal proprietors of those premises had given the public every reason to anticipate a very superb and brilliant exhibition'. The road from Birmingham was 'crowded with passengers' and the gardens were opened to thousands of spectators. Soho House had a coloured star of variegated lamps on the roof and a glass transparency of a female figure offering thanksgiving in the central window. The manufactory had lamps spelling out G.R. and Peace with a crown and star above. There was a transparency of a dove, representing peace,

⁶⁷⁷ See p.164

descending onto a globe in the central window, on the left wing the 'Caduceus of Mercury' between two cornucopias and on the right a beehive decorated with flowers.⁶⁷⁸ Three Montgolfier balloons and sky-rockets were launched. An unsigned pen, ink and wash drawing shows the principal building (figure 34).

After Boulton's death, the Manufactory was again illuminated to celebrate peace with the new French Government in 1814, following Napoleon's abdication and exile to Elba. This was expected to be such a large event that the proprietor of the theatre wrote to enquire the planned date as he intended to close on that night.⁶⁷⁹ An illustration and description were printed in the *Birmingham Commercial Herald & General Advertiser* on June 13, but M.R. Boulton was determined to maximise the promotional opportunities of this event and unhappy with the extent of coverage in *Aris's Gazette*.⁶⁸⁰ He printed a circular with detailed information and an illustration, in effect a press release, hoping for inclusion in the London papers (figure 35). This highlighted the architecture of the building as well as the illuminations

The Building is regularly constructed in well proportioned architecture; being full one hundred and eighty feet in length, and about fifty-five feet high, situate upon a broad and elevated terrace, separated by a canal in front from the amphitheatre formed by an opposite hill, fringed with plantations.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁸ *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 5 April 1802, quoted in *James Watt Centenary Commemoration Catalogue for exhibition in Art Gallery, 1919*, Birmingham, 1919, pp.25-6 and in Langford, Vol. II, pp.151-2. The Caduceus of Mercury was the winged staff entwined with two serpents carried by Mercury as Messenger of the Gods.

⁶⁷⁹ BAH3782/13/8/87 Mr Bartley to MRB June 1814.

⁶⁸⁰ The illustration in the *Herald and Advertiser* was similar to that in figure 35 with the addition of a balloon. Both show the building with two storeys rather than the three it actually had.

⁶⁸¹ BAH3147/10/31 printed circular, Birmingham, 15 June 1814.

These illuminations featured the words, 'BY PERSEVERANCE, VALOUR, UNION AND MAGNANIMITY EUROPE REPOSES FREE COMMERCE AND THE ARTS REVIVE.' M.R. Boulton was very much aware that peace meant that export markets could open up again, the celebrations again picked up the themes of nationalism, export, taste and the arts. The printed circular conjectured that the event was seen by over 50,000 spectators.⁶⁸² Zack Walker junior sent copies to John Mosley, their London agent, for distribution, telling M.R. Boulton that

Mr Phillp is proceeding with his representation of the Manufactory when illuminated, but he is trying so many schemes with a view to produce improvements in effect, that I am apprehensive public curiosity on the subject will be almost extinct before his drawing is ready to put into the hands of the engraver.⁶⁸³

Boulton and Walker were aware of the publicity potential of such an image but also of the fact that it had a limited lifespan and the event would only be considered newsworthy for a few weeks. Phillp was more concerned with getting the appropriate effect than the practicalities of getting it published.⁶⁸⁴ It is not clear who produced the images that had already been used in the *Commercial Herald* and on the circular.⁶⁸⁵ An article on the illuminations, using the text from the circular, but without illustration appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, 23 June 1814 so the event did have some coverage in the London papers. An enthusiastic description appeared without illustration in the Staffordshire section of Provincial Occurrences in *the Monthly Magazine*,

⁶⁸² BAH3147/10/31 printed circular, Birmingham, 15 June 1814. *The Monthly Magazine*, July 1814, p.572 suggested 60-100,000.

⁶⁸³ BAH3782/8/50/91 Zack Walker junior to MRB 20 June 1814.

⁶⁸⁴ By this date Phillp's health and behaviour were causing concern and he was being given less work, Ballard et al, pp.47-8.

⁶⁸⁵ Phillp would have been the logical choice but unlikely to have depicted the building with only two storeys.

not the high profile position M.R. Boulton would have hoped for.⁶⁸⁶ Clearly, like his father, M.R. Boulton was conscious of the value of a recognisable brand identity and was keen to ensure as much coverage as possible, but wanted use the still recognisable image of the Principal Building. By making the building the focus of the celebrations they could ensure that even descriptions without images carried extensive detail of the tasteful Principal Building. M.R. Boulton had, like his father, produced collectively authored imagery. This drew on the earlier depictions initiated by Boulton senior who can also be considered an author of this later image.

Absences

What is omitted from images can be as informative and important as what is included.⁶⁸⁷ There are conspicuous absences from all of the images considered in this and previous chapters. None show Boulton or the products of the manufactory; descriptions of the site by visitors often focus on the production processes, on the objects that they can carry away with them, and on Boulton himself. Soho, its output and Boulton were all sufficiently well known at the time that they could stand for each other, so that when people saw an image of the manufactory it was synonymous with Boulton the man. Sometimes he was indicated in captions, but not always. The Mint would have been of particular interest to many as Boulton now had the national coinage contract and was undertaking further technical refinements to the

⁶⁸⁶ *The Monthly Magazine*, 1 July 1814, pp.572-3.

⁶⁸⁷ Wolff, p.124.

processes. An 'exclusive view of the Royal Mint and Soho Manufactory' was advertised as a particular attraction by Bisset in 1808, but the Mint is not fully visible in any of the views, masked by the stables, outside the area of the picture or shown only in the distance. Boulton was especially concerned to keep the operation of the new mint secret and would not admit visitors.⁶⁸⁸

Indications of a working factory are also missing; workers are not shown in the images, partly because they are working inside and cannot be seen, but also because they were not part of the messages Boulton generally wished to communicate about his factory, although they had been present in earlier images (figures 8, 9 and 10).⁶⁸⁹ The later views show visitors rather than workers, as Boulton and those around him learnt to use devices like inscribed viewers more effectively and understood their intended audiences better. They sought to include figures that those viewers could relate to and understand. The insurance society poster (figure 12) depicts a member of the Soho staff, well looked after at a time of need. This figure was an inscribed viewer for a different audience; the workforce was a part of the intended audience for this image. This was also designed to show potential customers how well Boulton looked after his workers, those staff were both part of the audience and part of the message so, for the only time, were given prominence in an image of Soho.

⁶⁸⁸ Bisset, 1800, frontispiece; Demidowicz, forthcoming.

⁶⁸⁹ The depiction of such labourers in an industrial setting is an area worthy of further study, building on the research of John Barrell on agricultural labourers and Celina Fox but is beyond the scope of the current work, John Barrell, *The dark side of the landscape: the rural poor in English painting 1730-1840*, Cambridge, 1980; Fox, 2009.

None of the published images show machinery, other than the earliest (figure 8) where the waterwheel is visible, hidden in shadow. This is perhaps surprising given that steam engines were large, impressive and strongly linked to Soho. However, the engine was enclosed and would not have been visible in any of the views used.⁶⁹⁰ Likewise the products would have been inside, in the workshops or displayed in the showroom.⁶⁹¹ Various techniques were used by others to show or indicate industrial production. Two of the other plates in Bisset's *Directory* show workshop interiors with production in progress and attendant staff, but as Whitfield notes, they are made to appear as if a theatrically staged performance by the use of drapes.⁶⁹² The exterior view of the brasshouse included large chimneys, machinery and the working buildings alongside the polite classical façade bathed in sunlight.⁶⁹³ Other plates position goods and machinery for display rather than for practical use, Myles Swinney's type foundry (figure 31), shows a printing press outside and has a key identifying the functions of the individual buildings, the button makers plate shows machinery alongside cards of finished buttons while the Eagle Foundry has its products strewn around the forecourt.⁶⁹⁴

Boulton was trying to unite his broad output and therefore avoided overt reference to one product above others. He did not need to resort to such devices because his products were sufficiently well known for the viewer to be

⁶⁹⁰ The engine house is indicated on figure 3.

⁶⁹¹ It is noteworthy that the showroom was not depicted, perhaps because it was not under the direct control of Boulton from 1775 but also for reasons suggested below. Wedgwood's London showrooms were illustrated in *Ackerman's Repository of Arts* in 1809, *Wedgwood in London*, 1984, front cover.

⁶⁹² Bisset, 1808, Plates W and 12. Whitfield, p.260.

⁶⁹³ Bisset, 1808, L.

⁶⁹⁴ Bisset, 1808, Plates F and U.

able to picture them without assistance. Captions or lists in the associated text meant that information was available if necessary, but the viewer was flattered by the understanding that they would already know about such an important factory. It was possible for the plates of Soho to be apparently accurate topographical views, rather than the constructions that others had to use.⁶⁹⁵ Some of Boulton's products depended on being highly fashionable for sales and their inclusion would have dated these printed images. The views of Soho considered here were intended to have long-term impact, they were expected to be integrated into collections or kept in libraries so, it was important that the prints did not include anything that could be perceived as unfashionable.

The smoke and dirt of manufacturing processes are less apparent than might be expected. Bisset used smoke to signify the presence of the steam engine. His poem indicated that where 'curling eddies of black smoke ascends' could be found the 'wond'rous force and pow'r' of the steam engines and drew attention to a view of Birmingham from the Warwick Canal with plumes of smoke rising among the buildings.⁶⁹⁶ Smoke from different sources has different characteristics and could be read or used in various ways depending on the requirements of the writer or artist. It was used in Westley's 1731 Map of Birmingham to indicate industrial buildings.⁶⁹⁷ Anna Seward had seen it as a despoiler of nature, 'columns large / of thick sulphureous smoke [...] spread

⁶⁹⁵ In fact it was often not entirely accurate, the Latchet Works were frequently shown as intended, not as they existed at the time of depiction, see catalogue 6.

⁶⁹⁶ Bisset, 1808, p.15, plate Q. See appendix 1.4 for transcript.

⁶⁹⁷ Buildings such as Carless' or Kettle's Steelhouses were shown in three dimensions with smoking chimneys. Other important buildings were also shown in three dimensions but without the smoke, see Evans and Rydén, 2007, p.128.

like palls, / that screen the dead' when writing about Coalbrookdale which would have generated more smoke than Soho.⁶⁹⁸ Boulton could also recognise its unpleasant aspects but felt that Soho was not affected. He told a Mrs Dibbs that the 'quietude and fresh air of Soho will do you more good than ye smoak and Noise of Birmgm.' and Lord Liverpool's secretary wrote of the 'wonderful effects' attributed to the pure air of Soho.⁶⁹⁹ Gilpin had seen the smoke of the foundries by the Wye as an asset, as providing picturesque qualities, 'the smoke issuing from the sides of the hills, and spreading its thin veil over a part of them, beautifully breaks their lines, and unites them with the sky.'⁷⁰⁰ This idea of the smoke blending with the clouds, the connection of nature and industry is a marked contrast to Anna Seward's interpretation.

The portrayal of smoke varies for the different images of the manufactory and with different artists. The Walker (figure 27) and Bisset (figure 29) show none at all, the view of the manufactory in Stebbing Shaw includes a little, that in the *Monthly Magazine* shows more emerging from the chimneys of Rolling Mill Row, the von Breda portrait of Boulton (figure 37, discussed in chapter four) shows smoke in the background. Eginton junior and the unknown watercolorist signified the presence of industry with the top of the smoking mint chimney in the views of the house and park (figs 22 and 33). In other views cloud appears to hang over the Principal Building which can also be read as smoke, but has no apparent source because it is not connected to the

⁶⁹⁸ Anna Seward, *Coalbrook Dale* cited in Whitfield p.196.

⁶⁹⁹ Undated letter in William Salt Library quoted by Brown in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.32. It may date to 1796 when Samuel Garbett asked Boulton to pass some particulars to Mrs Dibbs, Mr Stevenson or Mr John Stevenson Salt if he had the opportunity. BAH3782/12/62/147 Samuel Garbett to MB 25 Apr 1796. BAH3782/13/116 Thomas Lack to MB 5 Feb 1801.

⁷⁰⁰ Gilpin, [1782], 2005, p.27.

chimneys (figure 10). Minerva's cloud on the insurance society poster (figure 12) could be read as smoke. Depiction of smoke on published views of Soho was kept to a minimum in line with an intended perception of the site as clean and healthy.

It is in the work of John Phillip that we see the most smoke but that work did not reach a wider audience; it was private and could therefore be more accurate. He made a study of smoke from the brass foundry at Smethwick and drew smoke in what was probably the open roof of the observatory.⁷⁰¹ His views of the manufactory and Soho Foundry also include smoke, sometimes making it a feature.⁷⁰² The quantity of smoke changes with the temperature, particularly where it comes from a fire which is a source of warmth rather than for an industrial purpose. Its behaviour changes with the wind hence, two very similar views of the house on the hill show the smoke from the factory chimney blowing in different directions, perhaps because the wind direction changed or to allow for the artist's compositional preference (figures 22 and 33). Smoke is the only unpleasant aspect of manufacturing shown in these views, there is no indication of noise, smell or dirt, aspects which cannot so readily be shown in images, although their causes can. Such potentially negative aspects do not tend to appear in descriptions either so

⁷⁰¹ See BMAG2003.31.30 and catalogue 37.

⁷⁰² The Soho Foundry was established 1795-6 to manufacture parts for the steam engine. It was on a separate canal side site, a mile from Soho Manufactory. The retention of the Soho name indicated the importance attached to that name but did cause confusion. Smoke is visible in Phillip's catalogue 19, 21, 23 and 29 and his view of Soho Foundry BMAG2003.31.18. There is none in catalogue 24 but it is unfinished. He was also interested in cloud, using it to make dramatic skies and adding far more when he reworked Eginton's aquatint, catalogue 26.

Soho may have been considered cleaner than other, similar manufactories.

The Rev. Richard Warner wrote

As much praise is due to the highly-gifted proprietors of Soho for their attention to morals, as to scientific improvements, in their extensive works; which has shewn itself in the orderly and citizen-like behaviour of the little army of labourers employed upon them. All is decorum, cleanliness, and decency, throughout the works; the pleasing effects of good example and wise regulations.⁷⁰³

Conclusion

This group of images of Soho Manufactory, house and park, published over a relatively short period saw the largest print runs of images of Soho. Indeed, the magazines and Bisset's *Directory* would have been printed in the thousands. They depict the complex in a subtly different way from the earlier images; there is more of an emphasis on space and the surrounding estate on which so much time and money had been spent. Each of the views considered in this chapter places the manufactory in its landscape setting to a greater degree than those of the 1770s, each devotes a large part of the foreground to grass, planting and paths or tracks, as well as including details of adjacent buildings and the landscape beyond Soho. Like the earlier images they show a lot of sky, giving a feeling of space and allowing the Principal Building to dominate. Sunlight is generally made to fall on the main façade of the Principal Building, drawing attention to it as a feature. The plates and their accompanying text depict this manufactory as somewhere

⁷⁰³ Warner, 1802, Vol.II, p.216.

that is clean and in a pleasant, spacious setting which celebrated nature. This is a direct challenge to the view of industrial towns and factories as dirty, unpleasant and destroying nature which was apparent in the work of people like Anna Seward.⁷⁰⁴ Groups of figures, a family (figure 26) and a couple with a dog (figure 27) are seen in the middle ground, walking in the park, enjoying Boulton's creation. The publication of four different images of Soho in five years shows the alterations taking place at the front of the site, particularly when compared to some of the material considered previously. As shown in chapter two, Boulton took care to organise the approach to the manufactory to display it to its best advantage, including altering the approach road and separating the access to Soho House.

Captions are used in different ways in these images, that in Bisset emphasised the number of businesses while Stebbing Shaw's title and inclusion of Boulton's coat of arms highlight Boulton the gentleman as well as the manufacturer. The Walker print has the much simpler caption 'SOHO, Staffordshire' but was designed to be viewed together with the description acting as an extended caption or label. In the other three examples the plate is some distance from the text and either in a different orientation or folded so they could less easily be viewed together. The *Monthly* is captioned 'The SOHO MANUFACTORY near BIRMINGHAM belonging to Messrs Boulton & Watt' although the manufactory did not belong to Boulton and Watt.⁷⁰⁵ The captions demonstrate Boulton's willingness to associate the manufactory with

⁷⁰⁴ She described Wolverhampton as 'grim' and Sheffield as 'sullied' in *Colebrook Dale*, 1785, and wrote of 'Violated Colebrook', Whitfield, p.196. Donna Coffey, 'Protecting the Botanic Garden: Seward, Darwin, and Coalbrookdale', *Women's Studies*, 31:2, pp.142, 150.

⁷⁰⁵ See p.155.

different geographical locations as circumstances dictated. The aesthetic and antiquarian publications place him in Staffordshire, the others near Birmingham. Boulton was willing to apply this to other areas of his life, standing unsuccessfully for nomination as Sheriff of Warwickshire before becoming Sheriff of Staffordshire.⁷⁰⁶

The written descriptions which accompany these images pick up common themes, some of which are visible within the plates. Beauty, taste and elegance, sheer scale, landscaped park and visitors can be seen in both, the texts add the transformation of a desolate heath, long established business, export and competition with France, the wide range of products and the combination of science and art. Many viewers and readers would already have been aware of at least some of those attributes from other sources, as Boulton reinforced them repeatedly. These same themes were also found in descriptions written by visitors, suggesting they had read them in descriptions or been told of them during a visit, that these texts were also collective productions. The published descriptions informed the expectations of visitors and the guided tours had provided a further method of emphasis until they had to be stopped. Such descriptions also informed each other, Priscilla Wakefield's was written without visiting Soho.⁷⁰⁷ These same themes would be picked up again in Boulton's obituaries (discussed in chapter four). Many of them have survived to the present day and continue to feature in publications, museum displays and guided tours of Boulton's former home.

⁷⁰⁶ *Argus*, 16 Nov 1789; *General Evening Post*, 10 Nov 1792; *Morning Chronicle*, 10 Feb 1794.

⁷⁰⁷ She did not travel and wrote most of her work based on extensive research, Ann B. Shteir, Priscilla Wakefield [nee Bell] in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 18 Nov. 2009.

The repeated use of such a similar angle of view by different artists over a period of thirty years helped to reinforce the image of the Principal Building as a symbol of Boulton and of Soho. It is not clear if this was a conscious piece of branding or if this was simply the most obvious view to take of the site. It is certainly the way most visitors would have approached, coming down the hill from the Birmingham to Wolverhampton road. The Principal Building was designed to be a dominant, eye-catching construction, so it is no surprise that this was the building selected for depiction. The earliest views of Soho showed the site from a bird's eye view but the views were soon standardised to show the Principal Building from the same angle. Only one, unknown, artist has shown the front of the Principal Building from the opposite direction (figure 21) and it is depicted square on in the insurance society poster and illustrations of the illuminations (figures 12, 34 and 35). The illustrations associated with the robbery show the site from the rear for practical reasons and other, later, artists have shown the site from the rear (figure 25, 46 and 47). It was only Phillip who provided more informal views, an indication of the fact that he knew the site far better than any other artist, had greater access to the surrounding estate and did not have audience expectations to meet. He drew and painted not only the Manufactory but also the park, the heathland and the garden buildings which is why we have such a comprehensive idea of the surroundings of the factory. Those images were not intended for public consumption, they were not the views controlled and influenced by Boulton in order to present a coherent and repeated image of Soho to potential customers, to create and then sustain the Soho brand identity.

The archival research has shown how many authors were involved in the production of these images, a theme which will be explored further in the next chapter. It has made clear that the images drew on earlier depictions of the site and that Boulton had a key role, for instance selecting from a series of views prepared by Francis Eginton junior to ensure Soho was depicted in a way that reinforced the messages he wished to convey. The images became increasingly sophisticated, particularly once Eginton junior was involved which is why he was selected to produce views for Bisset's *Directory* and Shaw's *History*, and later to engrave Boulton's portrait.⁷⁰⁸ He introduced techniques such as repoussoir and picturesque elements like the trees on the left while continuing to use the beautiful Principal Building (figure 32).

Bisset's poem, like Boulton himself and the anonymous writer discussed in chapter two, portrayed Soho as a physical memorial to Boulton, seeing future generations taking over the businesses.⁷⁰⁹ The images considered here can be understood as contributing to this memorialising function as they ensured that people recognised the site as well as the products. In fact, the businesses were wound up by subsequent generations and Matthew Piers Watt Boulton, Boulton's grandson, oversaw the demolition of the Principal Building after a proposal to turn it into 'four first-rate dwellings' failed.⁷¹⁰ Today people are much more aware of Watt than Boulton, largely as the result of the efforts of James Watt junior to ensure his father had a lasting legacy,

⁷⁰⁸ See p.242 for the portrait.

⁷⁰⁹ See p.102 for Boulton's view and appendices 1.4 and 1.6 for transcripts of these poems.

⁷¹⁰ *The Engineer*, 2 July 1858, p.17, Ballard et al, pp.70-1.

termed the 'filial project' by Miller.⁷¹¹ This included the distribution of likenesses of Watt in the form of a monument in Westminster Abbey, a statue at the University of Glasgow, busts presented to institutions like the Royal Society and the Institute of France, and numerous plaster casts supplied to friends.⁷¹² Boulton too had been aware of the importance of the distribution of likenesses and the next chapter explores printed portraits of him, how they were distributed during his lifetime and immediately afterwards and how they linked to the Soho brand identity.

⁷¹¹ David Phillip Miller, *Discovering Water: James Watt, Henry Cavendish and the Nineteenth-Century Water Controversy*, Aldershot, 2004, pp.83-99.

⁷¹² BAH3219/6/79-83 Letters and papers concerning monuments, statues and busts of James Watt, 1824-1845. BAH3219/6/83/35 Account, Francis Chantrey to JWj 1819-1821 is for 44 casts supplied to friends 1819-1821 at a cost of £160 4 0 and copies continued to be distribute after this account.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEPICTING AN INDUSTRIALIST 1801 - 1809

This chapter will consider the importance of Boulton himself to the Soho brand and the way he was portrayed in single sheet prints, books and magazines. It draws on extensive archival evidence for the commissioning, production and distribution of a line engraving of Boulton by William Sharp after Sir William Beechey. This material provides a unique opportunity to consider the production and reception of this print in great depth. It also makes clear the extent to which these images, like those of the manufactory were the result of multiple authorship. This was a period when portraiture was growing in popularity; having a portrait painted was no longer the preserve of the aristocracy, but was opening out to a wider range of sitters and viewers. Mill owners, manufacturers and engineers could now afford to commission portraits.⁷¹³ Through the use of gesture, pose, dress, props, background, and labelling the painter could convey signals about the sitter for viewers to interpret.⁷¹⁴ Boulton was aware of this and had his portrait painted several times, by different artists, for different audiences, to be hung in different locations, each signifying messages about his role and status. Some of those portraits were copied in various formats, as paintings, miniatures and prints.

⁷¹³ Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians: Eighteenth-Century Portraiture and Society*, London, 1990; Shearer West, 'Portraiture' in McCalman (ed.), *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, 1999, Oxford, pp.656-658; John Ingamells, *National Portrait Gallery Mid-Georgian Portraits 1760-1790*, London, 2004, pp.xiii-xvi.

⁷¹⁴ Shearer West, *Portraiture*, Oxford, 2004, p.71.

At the same time, access to single sheet prints, including portraits, expanded to a wider audience as they were produced in large quantities by publishers like John Boydell with annual catalogues of prints which encouraged their collection by a broader range of viewers.⁷¹⁵ This was not limited to London; provincial publishers such as Edward Jee in Whittall Street, Birmingham also carried prints, although by the time of his bankruptcy in 1799 the only portrait he is known to have stocked was of Edmund Burke.⁷¹⁶ Print collecting was extremely popular in the middle and later eighteenth century, portfolio collections were kept by the wealthy connoisseur. Glazed and framed prints were used as decorations in the homes of the middle-classes.⁷¹⁷ Having a printed portrait was the only way of making an image of a person available to large numbers of people and became more important as fascination with the famous grew.⁷¹⁸ Exhibiting a portrait made it available to a large audience, but only for the duration of the exhibition. Portraits were reproduced as single sheet prints, and many more times in magazines.⁷¹⁹ As shown in chapter three the market for periodicals was expanding and portraits were among the plates included in many magazines. These were valued enough to be removed and integrated into collections.

⁷¹⁵ Nenadic, 1997, p.204.

⁷¹⁶ Nenadic, 1997, pp.208-9. Jee was the business partner of Francis Eginton senior's brother John who had died in 1796, see p.77. This assertion is based on the catalogue of the sale of his stock in London. It is possible that he also stocked portraits of local interest but these were not considered saleable in London, the sale is described as 'the selected part of the stock', BM A1-1.30 *A Catalogue of the Many Valuable Copperplates, Prints etc. of Edward Jee, Print seller in Birmingham*, London, 1799.

⁷¹⁷ Nenadic, 1997, pp.209-10. Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-century England*, New Haven and London, 1993 p.55; Shawe-Taylor, 1990, pp.26-7.

⁷¹⁸ William Vaughan, *British Painting: The Golden Age*, London, 1999, p.47.

⁷¹⁹ Lippincott, p.52.

As has been shown, Boulton used the depiction of the Principal Building as a way of representing and promoting the diverse range of products emerging from his manufactory. He also used his own personality to do this. Julius Hardy, a Birmingham button maker, recognised the importance of character and personality in selling his products. He noted in 1789 ‘an absolute necessity of one’s being bold and properly forward’ and argued that his knowledge and adaptation of his own character had helped him to obtain orders. He needed to be a skilled salesman as well as a manufacturer and his own personality was an important part of that sales ability.⁷²⁰ Boulton was clearly aware of this and worked hard to build his reputation locally and nationally. Boulton was the better known in each of his business partnerships, cultivating a high profile by lobbying parliament and seeking patronage from important and famous figures. He ensured he was involved in local affairs such as the General Hospital, the Theatre Royal and the Birmingham Chamber of Manufacturers.⁷²¹ As Boulton’s fame grew, visitors to Soho expected to be able to see the man as well as the factory, John Hodges told Boulton, ‘I observe that the generality of people of distinction and fortune that visit Soho, as well as foreigners that are recommended or have heard of you, seem much disapointed [sic] when they cannot see you.’⁷²²

Boulton’s awareness of his role in the promotion of the businesses is also visible in the way he chose to have himself represented in portraits. His portrayal became increasingly sophisticated, probably partly due to his experience of using portraits on medals produced at the Soho Mint, and the

⁷²⁰ Scott, pp.152-3.

⁷²¹ Quickenden, 1990, p.61.

⁷²² BAH3782/12/63/16 John Hodges to MB 12 Sep 1780.

later portraits were disseminated to much wider audiences.⁷²³ The earliest known portrait of Boulton was painted by Tilly Kettle c.1762-4 and is a pair with one of his second wife Ann.⁷²⁴ They are likely to have hung in a domestic situation, probably on either side of a chimneypiece, and seen by a domestic audience.⁷²⁵ The next portrait was painted by J.S.C. Schaak in 1770 (figure 36), showing Boulton in a court suit with elaborate buttons and frogging, his hand tucked into his waistcoat, a convention of portraiture rather than something people actually did, showing that Boulton understood and could make use of such conventions.⁷²⁶ The bill indicates that it was also one of a pair but it is not clear who was the other sitter.⁷²⁷ It could have been his wife or his business partner, John Fothergill.⁷²⁸ Who the other sitter was would provide an indication of where the portrait was intended to hang, if it showed Fothergill it was highly likely that this would have been at the manufactory, possibly in the showroom which opened in 1771.⁷²⁹ If the portraits did depict the business partners this would have strongly linked the personalities of the partners to their products. Boulton was also painted by Zoffany, probably in the early 1770s, a painting described by a descendant as an oval picture, 'a hard careful likeness in a brown coat & greenish silk waistcoat.'⁷³⁰ A portrait of Boulton by the Birmingham artist and family friend

⁷²³ For further discussion on portraits of Boulton, particularly the oil paintings see Val Loggie, 'Portraits of Matthew Boulton' in Dick (ed.) 2009, pp.63-76.

⁷²⁴ Reproduced in Goodison, 2002 plates 1 and 4 and Mason, 2005 plates 1 and 2.

⁷²⁵ West, 2004, p.112.

⁷²⁶ West, 2004, p.25.

⁷²⁷ BAH3782/6/191/56 Matthew Bolton Esq to JSC Schaak, 1770

⁷²⁸ There is an apparently unsigned portrait of Fothergill with his descendants which could be its pair, pers. comm. Dr Alastair Brown. It is reproduced in Mason, 2005, plate 13. I am grateful to Dr Brown and Brendan Flynn for discussions on this portrait. For further consideration of this possibility see Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009 pp.64-5.

⁷²⁹ See p.39.

⁷³⁰ National Portrait Gallery, London (RP1532 NPG Archive), Lionel Muirhead to Cust 6 Feb 1909. The current location of this portrait is unknown.

James Millar was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1784, the first time Millar had exhibited there, and the first time an image of Boulton had been exhibited.⁷³¹ Boulton had previously experienced the publicity potential of inclusion in an exhibition; the architect William Chambers had exhibited models for ormolu items Boulton was to make for the king and queen at the Royal Society in 1760 which had raised awareness of his work.⁷³² Zoffany and Millar's portraits of Boulton were probably intended to be hung in the home and viewed mainly by family and friends.

Matthew Boulton by S.W. Reynolds after C.F. von Breda, 1796

As Boulton's fame grew, people outside the family circle expressed an interest in owning images of him. John Rennie (1761-1821), an engineer who had worked for Boulton and Watt in the early stages of his career, asked them to sit for the American artist Mather Brown in London in June 1792.⁷³³ Boulton was short of time and offered instead to sit for Thomas Lawrence when Lawrence next visited his brother in Birmingham.⁷³⁴ However, Boulton did not have his portrait painted by either of those men, but by the Swedish artist Carl Frederick von Breda (1759-1818) who was introduced to Boulton by the architect William Chambers. Chambers explained that von Breda intended to

⁷³¹ Graves; Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.65-6. It was exhibited under the title portrait of a gentleman. Ingamells, p.66 lists this as a doubtful portrait but given the links between Boulton's family and Millar I would argue that this is no longer the case. The current location of this portrait is not known although the portrait by an unknown artist NPG 1532 is probably a copy of an earlier portrait which could be the Millar, for further discussion see Loggie, in Dick (ed.) 2009, p.66.

⁷³² Hilary Young, 'Sir William Chambers and John Yenn: Designs for Silver', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 128 No 994 Jan 1986 pp.31-5.

⁷³³ BAH3147/3/296/12 John Rennie to MB, 7 June 1792.

⁷³⁴ BAH3782/13/49/91 MB to John Rennie, 12 June 1792.

undertake a tour to see the country, painting portraits to cover his expenses.⁷³⁵ While he was in Birmingham, von Breda painted Boulton, Watt and William Withering, another member of the Lunar Society. Boulton was portrayed three-quarter-length, seated and dressed in black, looking directly at the viewer (figure 37). He has a medal in one hand and a magnifying glass with which to examine it in the other. The magnifying glass signifies the quality of the medal, that it will withstand close examination, but its use also portrays Boulton as a connoisseur, a man of learning and taste.⁷³⁶ There is not sufficient detail to identify any particular medal, although he had made a number by this date, his minting activities would not reach their peak until 1797 and the production of the regal coinage.⁷³⁷ On the table beside him are four mineral specimens which cannot be identified with any certainty but one could be intended to represent copper ore, the raw material from which many of Boulton's products were made.⁷³⁸ The Principal Building is visible in the background, so the image links the manufacturer, the product, the place of manufacture and possibly the raw material with Boulton at the centre. Thus the portrait signifies and unites learning, arts, science, and manufacturing, as many of the images and descriptions of the manufactory had done. This

⁷³⁵ BAH3782/12/36/150 William Chambers to MB, 13 Aug. 1791. Boulton also received a letter of introduction to von Breda from R.E.Raspe, BAH3782/12/36/148 Raspe to MB Aug 9 1791.

⁷³⁶ Harry Mount, 'The Monkey with the Magnifying Glass: Constructions of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Oxford Art Journal*, 29.2 2006, pp.167-83.

⁷³⁷ Dickinson, pp.133-162; I am grateful to Sue Tungate for discussion on this.

⁷³⁸ I am grateful to Dr R.A. Ixer for guidance on the mineral specimens. Whitfield, p.128 n.290 and p.178 suggests that Jenny Uglow feels they are more likely to represent specimens from Boulton's mineral collection, now at the Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham. This is possible, but as Whitfield acknowledges the collection and study of such samples is, for Boulton, closely linked to industrial application. I would argue that the inclusion of the medal makes the industrial application more explicit in the portrait. Whitfield does not recognise the medal, suggesting that the magnifying glass has been used to examine the mineral collection, presumably having mistaken the medal for a case for the magnifying glass. Ingamells, 2004, p.65 suggests that one of the specimens is bluejohn fluorspar, also implying a link with industrial production through Boulton's ormolu work. However, Dr Ixer has advised that none of the minerals depicted are fluorspar.

portrait was painted in 1792, the year of the insurance society poster with its similar messages, discussed in chapter one.⁷³⁹

Von Breda's portraits of Boulton and Watt were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1793.⁷⁴⁰ Exhibition of Boulton's portrait alongside that of Watt would draw attention to their business connection.⁷⁴¹ Full-size copies of the portrait of Boulton were made by von Breda for Watt, Withering and John Rennie.⁷⁴² Miniature copies, a more intimate format for family or close friends, were made for Boulton's daughter, Anne and by John Phillip.⁷⁴³ In 1796 Boulton agreed to further duplication and circulation to a wider audience when von Breda asked to produce a print after the portrait. Von Breda, aware of the potential of reproductive prints to broaden the market for his portraits, engaged the painter and printmaker Samuel William Reynolds (1773-1835) who had already produced a number of prints after his works.⁷⁴⁴ He acknowledged there was a risk in publishing a print so long after the painting and its exhibition, 'but I trust the original picture and the Aprobation it met with will not yet be obliterated in the memory of your Numerous friends who may wish to become subscribers.'⁷⁴⁵ The ideal time to publish a print would be as it was exhibited so that it could benefit from the publicity surrounding the

⁷³⁹ See p.92 and catalogue 3.

⁷⁴⁰ Graves. No evidence of response to the exhibition of these portraits has been found.

⁷⁴¹ Both portraits were exhibited as 'portrait of a gentleman', as was common practice at the time so viewers would have to be aware of the identity of the sitters from other sources such as reviews or through personal contact, Graves.

⁷⁴² BAH3782/12/38/55 von Breda to MB 27 Mar 1793; BAH3782/12/38/169 von Breda to MB 5 Oct 1793. Watt was portrayed with an engine drawing on the table in front of him.

⁷⁴³ BAH3782/12/39/314 von Breda to MB 18 Nov 1794. It was painted by Gillberg. For Phillip's copy see catalogue 18. There is no provenance for this item and it is not clear who owned it but it is signed by Phillip.

⁷⁴⁴ Felicity Owen, 'Samuel William Reynolds' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 29 August 2008; 'for instance Sir Joshua Reynolds, the Turkish Embasador, My Lord Eglinton, Miss Langton etc.' BAH3782/12/39/314 von Breda to MB 18 Nov 1794. Wilton, p.15.

⁷⁴⁵ BAH3782/12/41/50 C.F. von Breda to MB 10 Feb 1796.

exhibition.⁷⁴⁶ The painter asked how best to publicise the print in Birmingham and suggested that Boulton should ask ‘some of your more intimate friends’ to begin a list of subscribers which would ‘render the formality of Proposals unnecessary.’⁷⁴⁷

Von Breda hoped that the main purchasers would be Boulton’s friends, acquaintances and admirers. This would avoid the publication of a proposal, a printed sheet advertising the image and seeking subscriptions before it was published. Implicit to von Breda’s query is the assumption that much of the market for the print would be in Birmingham. The question of the audience for a print of someone who was not a famous actor, politician or royalty is one which later concerned Boulton’s friend Sir Joseph Banks. He wrote about the wisdom and financial viability of producing prints after portraits, allowing that Thomas Phillip’s portrait of him did honour to the artist’s talents, but that he was not in a position to tell if a print would be a profitable undertaking. He suggested the sales of a print depended on three things, ‘the Excellence of the Painter; the Talents of the Engraver, & the Notoriety of the Person it Represents.’ There were already three prints of him available.⁷⁴⁸

How these three have fared in the world, the Printsellers will tell you. I doubt, however, whether any adequate Reward was obtained by the artist for Either of the Large ones. A man like me, who has never medled in Politics, & who Cannot, of Course, possess a Squadron of Enthusiastic Friends, is not likely to Sell a dear Print. A Cheap one will

⁷⁴⁶ In theory there were copyright advantages in publishing a print before the painting was exhibited. Little protection was available for paintings at this date, more was available for engraved images and publishing an engraving provided protection of the image, Ronan Deazley, ‘Breaking the Mould? The Radical Nature of the Fine Arts Copyright Bill 1862’, in R Deazley, M Kretschmer and L Bently, *Privilege and Property: Essays on the History of Copyright*, Cambridge, forthcoming.

⁷⁴⁷ BAH3782/12/41/50 von Breda to MB 10 Feb 1796.

⁷⁴⁸ Mezzotints after Joshua Reynolds and Benjamin West, both produced in 1773 and a stipple engraving after John Russell’s pastel of Banks produced in 1789.

answer better among the men of Science, many of whom have honored Russells print with a place in their apartments.

He felt that soliciting a subscription for the publication of his portrait would be interpreted 'by Cool headed men' as vanity, but admitted he felt inclined to do so as an act of gratitude to Phillips. He worried that people would not understand his motives so, he dare not subscribe himself,

nor should I venture, on account of the high Price put upon proofs, & Very little real superiority they have over Prints, to purchase privately more than a Few of them. Some prints I certainly should try to Lay by [for my] Family, in hopes that they may become usefull to some one sometime hence as Presents, when difficult to obtain in the Shops.⁷⁴⁹

Proofs are the earliest prints taken in a run which are of higher quality as the plate has not worn. They were sought after by collectors and were more expensive than the common prints.⁷⁵⁰ Banks highlighted one of the important roles of portrait prints for their sitters, as presents, tokens of respect or affection that could be handed out.

The print of Boulton was to be a mezzotint, a form which was quick and cheap to produce and could reproduce the tonal effects of painting (figure 38). The technique dominated portrait prints until the 1780s when other forms such as line engraving began to become more popular.⁷⁵¹ Mezzotint plates wore quickly so, the earlier, proof prints were of higher quality than later prints and the difference between proofs and prints was more marked than in other forms. Ten days after submitting his proposal, von Breda wrote that the plate was ready and 'it does in my opinion honor to the artist both as to the likeness

⁷⁴⁹ Joseph Banks to Thomas Phillips RA, 12 Sept 1808 in Neil Chambers (ed.), *The Letters of Joseph Banks: A Selection 1768-1820*, 2000, River Edge, N.J., p.287.

⁷⁵⁰ See p.205 for further discussion on proofs.

⁷⁵¹ David Alexander, 'The Portrait Engraving in Georgian England' in *The British Face: A View of Portraiture 1625-1850*, 1986, London, p.27.

and execution and will I hope meet with your approbation.⁷⁵² His father was ill and von Breda returned to Sweden immediately and did not come to Soho to discuss publicity and distribution. Leaving meant that he was unlikely to make any money from the undertaking, but hoped that if friends collected names for subscription as soon as possible his share of the expense would be covered. He estimated this at not much more than twenty-five guineas.⁷⁵³ He gave up his financial interest in the publication and it was published by S.W. Reynolds alone. Von Breda initially stipulated that the price of the proofs should not exceed 15/- and the prints 10/6, on publication they were fixed at 12/- for proofs and 7/6 for prints.⁷⁵⁴ He sent a list of prices of prints after his other paintings in case any of Boulton's friends should want copies.⁷⁵⁵ Presumably, he was trying to clear as much stock as possible and release capital before leaving the country. Boulton ordered a proof copy of each of these prints.⁷⁵⁶

The von Breda portrait and the multiples made after it contributed to the development of the Soho identity, particularly with the exhibition of the painting, alongside that of Watt, to the fashionable London audience at the Royal Academy. Portraits of manufacturers, if they referred to the sitter's occupation frequently showed a single identifiable product or invention, for

⁷⁵² BAH3782/12/41/72 von Breda to MB 20 Feb 1796.

⁷⁵³ BAH3782/12/41/72 von Breda to MB 20 Feb 1796.

⁷⁵⁴ BAH3782/12/41/50 von Breda to MB 10 Feb 1796; BAH3782/12/41/72 von Breda to MB 20 Feb 1796.

⁷⁵⁵ The Turkish Ambassador, The Earl of Eglinton and Sir Joshua Reynolds were 15/- for proofs, 10/6 for prints; the Rev Hussey 12/- and 7/6; Miss Langton 10/6 and 7/6. All of these were by S.W. Reynolds. The King of Sweden and Revd Mr [Thomas] Clarkson by J. Young were 10/6 and 5/- while the Benevolent Planter instructing his negro and Baron Arm[illegible] by Pyott were 10/6 and 7/6. BAH3782/12/41/72 von Breda to MB 20 Feb 1796.

⁷⁵⁶ BAH3782/12/41/72 von Breda to MB 20 Feb 1796; BAH3782/12/41/176 von Breda to MB, 21 May 1796.

example, Joseph Wright's portraits of Arkwright with a set of cotton-spinning rollers (1789-90) or Samuel Oldknow with his bolt of muslin (c.1790-2).⁷⁵⁷

Von Breda's portrait of James Watt showed him with a steam engine drawing which stood for his improvements to the engine. However, Boulton's diverse range of businesses made it difficult to select a single symbolic object. An unidentifiable medal stands for the whole of his medallic output, the area of his greatest interest at the time. Highlighting this area of his manufactures, particularly to the London establishment who would see it at the Royal Academy exhibition, was particularly important to Boulton at this time because he was seeking the contract to produce the national coinage.⁷⁵⁸

The Principal Building was included in von Breda's portrait as a symbol of Boulton's wider businesses and to link the portrait to a specific location. This may have been inspired by Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of Boulton's friend Dr John Ash (1788) (fig 39). Ash was a physician and co-founder of Birmingham General Hospital, a campaign in which Boulton had also been involved. Ash had been involved in the design of the hospital building and Reynolds shows him holding a copy of the plan with the building itself visible in the distance.⁷⁵⁹

It is likely that Boulton also knew George Stubbs' 1780 portrait of the Wedgwood family which included a large black basalt vase on a tripod table to Josiah Wedgwood's left, intended to stand for Wedgwood's business and products.⁷⁶⁰ It also shows kilns in the background which could be read as

⁷⁵⁷ Judy Egerton, *Wright of Derby*, London, 1990, pp.197-8, 200-1.

⁷⁵⁸ Dickinson, p.148.

⁷⁵⁹ Mason, 2009, pp.191-2; BAH3782/12/60/30 John Fothergill to MB 20 Nov 1765.

⁷⁶⁰ Judy Egerton, *George Stubbs, Painter. Catalogue Raisonné*, New Haven and London, 2007, p.433 suggests this was likely to have been Wedgwood's idea. It is an incongruous object in the garden setting of the portrait.

symbolising his manufacturing process.⁷⁶¹ There is doubt about whether they are Wedgwood's own kilns, or were simply visible from the real landscape of the park at Etruria Hall in which the family were placed. Egerton argues the former, Vincent-Kemp the latter, suggesting they are the bottle ovens at Longport and that they were included 'as being of topographical interest, as well as being symbolic of Josiah Wedgwood's own industry.'⁷⁶² Boulton's reference to his site of manufacture is much clearer and it is possible that he was aware of confusion of interpretation of this portrait.

In von Breda's portrait of Boulton the Principal Building is framed by drapes as if it were visible through a window. Although the portrait was probably painted at Soho House, it would not have been possible to see the manufactory like this from its windows as the house is on top of the hill and much higher than the factory.⁷⁶³ This is a capriccio, an invented picture. The inclusion of the Principal Building makes the assumption that viewers will understand that it was a manufactory, or accepts the possible reading of it as a house. The original portrait and its various painted copies were owned by friends and family, and the portraits would have been hung in a domestic situation where, if necessary, they could be explained to visitors. However, with exhibition and multiplication through the mezzotint, its interpretation passed beyond the

⁷⁶¹ The painting shows Wedgwood as a family man and the exterior setting and sitters appear to have been determined by Stubbs, Wedgwood wanted two portraits of the children only. The result was 'a source of exasperation' to both Wedgwood and Stubbs and was not exhibited. It is particularly well-known now, described by Egerton as 'endlessly reproduced' but at the time would not have been known to many beyond Wedgwood's immediate circle, Ruth Vincent-Kemp, *George Stubbs and the Wedgwood Connection*, Stoke-on-Trent, 1986, p.27; Egerton, 2007, p.433; Graves.

⁷⁶² Egerton, 2007, p.69; Vincent-Kemp, p.34. The displays at the Wedgwood Museum suggest that they are Wedgwood's kilns.

⁷⁶³ Von Breda's portrait of Withering was certainly painted at Soho, see Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.68.

control of Boulton's immediate circle. Purchasers of the print, or those who were given copies, were likely to have been people who knew Boulton, or knew of, and were interested in, his work and reputation. How many of those understood what the building represented cannot be known, but by the twentieth century viewers misunderstood and assumed that the print showed Boulton as 'a frequent host at his Soho home (represented in the background of the print).'⁷⁶⁴ This gives a different message, not necessarily one of which Boulton would have disapproved, he did have a reputation as a generous host. It also suggests someone who could afford a house much grander than the one he actually had, again probably not something to which he would have objected, but not the main message the portrait was intended to convey. The manufactory building did not appear in any subsequent paintings of Boulton but did continue to be used as a symbol of Boulton's businesses in contexts where it could be clearly labelled as such, in magazines, directories and books with accompanying texts.

Matthew Boulton by William Sharp after Sir William Beechey, 1801

Boulton's portrait was also painted by the fashionable painter, and favourite of the Royal family, Sir William Beechey, in 1798 and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1799 (figure 40).⁷⁶⁵ This marked a further advance in Boulton's status, that he could command a portrait by, and the friendship of, an artist of

⁷⁶⁴ Deuchar, pp.43-4. Whitfield also misunderstands, referring to 'a distant view of his Birmingham works, Soho, fronted by the main building which was also his home.' Whitfield, pp.178, 185.

⁷⁶⁵ Graves. This portrait was exhibited as 'Mr Boulton of Soho Staffordshire'.

the calibre of Beechey.⁷⁶⁶ Once again Boulton was portrayed seated, holding a medal in his left hand and a magnifying glass in his right. The medal stood for the products of the manufactory and the mint. The magnifying glass again suggested that his medallic output could withstand close scrutiny, was of high quality, and that Boulton was a connoisseur as well as an industrialist.⁷⁶⁷ Behind him is an alcove with a mineral specimen under a glass dome. Unlike the von Breda, there is no direct reference to the industrial building as opposed to its output. Here the mineral is more overtly a specimen than in the von Breda portrait, suggesting Boulton the collector and intellectual. Beechey also painted James Watt in 1801. John Phillip, on a trip to London in 1802, saw Beechey's exhibition room and the portrait of Watt at the Royal Academy. He thought it 'the finest in the Exhibition it is nature itself, I think without exaggeration there never was a better.'⁷⁶⁸ Although not painted as a pair, these two portraits came to be viewed as such and copies were later hung in this way at Aston Hall, the home of James Watt junior.⁷⁶⁹

Beechey's portrait of Boulton was reproduced in full size copies after Boulton's death by Beechey's studio, in miniature by Lady Beechey and William Grimaldi, and engraved by William Sharp (figure 41).⁷⁷⁰ Aware of his

⁷⁶⁶ For further discussion of this portrait see Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.63-76. The connection with Beechey, a senior member of the Royal Academy would have been advantageous at this time. The Privy Council committee, considering a new issue of regal currency in July 1798 decided to seek advice from senior Royal Academicians who presented designs to the committee in March 1799. Those designs were rejected and the Privy Council handed the project over to Boulton, Clay in Clay and Tungate, p.54.

⁷⁶⁷ Mount, 2006.

⁷⁶⁸ The location of John Phillip's journal of this visit is no longer known but transcripts of sections of it by Brian Gould are in the files at Soho House. This portrait was catalogued as 'Mr Watt of Soho, Staffordshire', Graves.

⁷⁶⁹ Sotheby's, 2003, Lot 43.

⁷⁷⁰ The copies produced by Beechey's studio in 1810 were one full size for James Watt junior, now BMAG2003.7.44 and a smaller copy for Miss Boulton. The total cost for both was £147.

growing renown, Boulton felt able to encourage the production of this print, which was distributed far more carefully than the Reynolds mezzotint after the von Breda had been. It was used by Boulton as an affectionate gift to family and friends, a symbolic gift to those he wished to impress, and as a status symbol. The production and distribution was organised by Matthew Robinson Boulton as a present for his father. This was to be a line engraving, a slow and expensive form to undertake, but one which was considered more prestigious than mezzotint. A line engraved plate could withstand the printing of around two thousand copies but needed very high sales to make it commercially viable.⁷⁷¹ This print of Boulton was never intended as a commercial venture, but as a mark of respect and a gift which could be given to friends and business associates. The costs of production and distribution were borne by M.R. Boulton, a method of funding a print which was relatively common practice, particularly for portraits, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and was known as a 'private plate'.⁷⁷² The most sought after practitioner of the line engraving, William Sharp, was asked to undertake the commission. He was the son of a gunmaker who began as a writing engraver and moved on to line engraving, producing plates for the *Novelists Magazine*.⁷⁷³ Sharp was conscious of the status of line engraving and proud of the skill required to undertake it, criticising other forms, which he argued could be carried out without extensive training, and refusing to undertake

Lady Beechey's miniature is truncated and is NPG1595. Grimaldi produced two miniatures, one priced at fifteen guineas, the other at thirty. Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.60-1; W. Roberts, *Sir William Beechey RA*, London, 1907, p.231.

⁷⁷¹ Tim Clayton, 'Figures of Fame: Reynolds and the Printed Image' in Postle (ed.) *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, London, 2005, p.50. Sharp suggested that this plate would withstand 2000 copies, see p.214 below.

⁷⁷² The customer would commission the engraver privately and pay an outright fee. The image would be printed and distributed at the cost of the client. Griffiths, 2004, p.149. Alexander, 1986, p.27; Nenadic, 1997, p.214.

⁷⁷³ Richard Sharp, 'William Sharp' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 29 August 2008.

other kinds of engraving.⁷⁷⁴ Boulton was aware of Sharp as early as 1791 when a note on the end paper of his diary gives Sharp's name and address at No 8 Charles Street Middlesex Hospital.⁷⁷⁵ Beechey is likely to have been involved in the selection of Sharp and the fact that the print appeared as published by a skilled independent engraver gave it additional status.⁷⁷⁶

Boulton's friends encouraged the production of this print, Charles Dumergue (1739-1814), dentist to the Royal family and close friend of Boulton wrote to M.R. Boulton in June 1799:

Your good Father was with me a week ago & gave me to understand that he believed you had desired Mr Sharp to Engrave his portrait & that you would make him a present of it. My answer was simply that I did not know. If you are wishing to have it done or not no matter. I have seen Mr Sharp & ask his terms: the size of J Hunter is from 3 to 500 Pounds; but will Engrave your Father for 300 Guineas half to be paid in beginning & the other half when finished.⁷⁷⁷

Boulton had purchased a copy of Sharp's 1788 engraving of the surgeon John Hunter (1728-93) after Joshua Reynolds in 1790.⁷⁷⁸ This print was very well thought of, Gainsborough being among its admirers.⁷⁷⁹ Hunter had for some years been consulted about Anne Boulton's problems with her leg and hip.⁷⁸⁰

A few months later, family friend and banker, Charlotte Matthews wrote urging

⁷⁷⁴ David Alexander, 'William Sharp' in *Grove Art Online*, accessed 24 July 2008; David Alexander, ' "Alone worth treble the price": illustrations in 18th-century English magazines', Myers and Harris (eds.) *A Millennium of the Book*, Winchester, 1994, p.123; Susan Lambert, *The Image Multiplied: Five Centuries of printed reproductions of paintings and drawings*, London, 1987, p.77.

⁷⁷⁵ BAH3782/12/107/19 MB diary 1791, p.5.

⁷⁷⁶ Alexander, 1986, p.27.

⁷⁷⁷ Mason, pp.87-91; BAH3782/13/9/103 Charles Dumergue to MRB 17 June 1799.

⁷⁷⁸ BAH3782/6/194/20 26 Jul 1790. 'A proof of Her Majesty; one each of Dr. John Hunter, Dr. Graham, Elliott, and Macklin; two proofs of Sir Joseph Banks and Sir William Chambers and a framed proof of an 'Angelic Child' cost £4 9s 6d in total.

⁷⁷⁹ Ingamells, pp.175-6.

⁷⁸⁰ Mason, 2005, pp.21-2, 34, 53.

Boulton junior to call on Beechey to discuss engraving the portrait.⁷⁸¹ M.R. Boulton agreed terms with Sharp and made an initial payment in February 1800, writing to ask Charlotte Matthews to advance him one hundred guineas. He expressed concern that 'As artists are not in general men of business or accurate accomptants' the money should be handed over in person and a receipt obtained immediately.⁷⁸² These misgivings were perhaps due to M.R. Boulton's knowledge of the financial affairs of the artist who had produced the last print of his father, S.W. Reynolds.⁷⁸³ They proved justified when Sharp wrote in November 1800 that he had 'immediate occasion for money' and asked for a further hundred guineas although he had not yet been able to show Boulton a print. Anne Boulton had also been in touch with Sharp, 'Miss Boulton has promised me a Lamp (which I am to chose from your Manufactory) on seeing her Father's Head.'⁷⁸⁴ Sharp worked from Beechey's portrait and his sketch after the portrait, gridded for transfer to the plate, survives.⁷⁸⁵ Sharp was soon able to send a framed print for Anne Boulton and two others for M.R. Boulton's inspection. He continued:

If it meets your approbation I propose printing 100 prooves [sic]⁷⁸⁶ first, then examine the Plate and in a few days order 100 more, again examine the Plate, then another 100 in all 300 Prooves afterwards put what writing you may determine on, which I will get done, then Print off 200, there finish for the present – I have secured 500 sheets of French paper for the purpose, the dutys laid on during the last parliament amount to a prohibition. I propose this progressive mode of printing to

⁷⁸¹ BAH3782/13/13/21 Charlotte Matthews to MRB 20 Sep 1799 [catalogued incorrectly as 1797].

⁷⁸² BAH3782/13/13/116 MRB to Charlotte Matthews 23 Feb. 1800.

⁷⁸³ See note 869 below.

⁷⁸⁴ BAH3782/13/15/32 Wm Sharp to MRB 25 Nov 1800. This is too late to have been an Argand lamp, an innovative form of oil lamp developed by Aimé Argand and produced at Soho in the 1780s but may have been a steady light intended for use while Sharp was working.

⁷⁸⁵ Purchased from A.E. Evans (Art Dealers) in 1852, presumably having been sold as part of Sharp's estate, see p.229. BM 1853,1210.492 British Museum Collection Database, www.britishmuseum.org/collection, British Museum, accessed 24 April 2010.

⁷⁸⁶ Sharp is referring to proof prints, see discussion above.

check the carelessness of Printers, who, often like to make quick work to earn their money the more easy and many impressions are often spoil'd, render it necessary for me to have time to watch the Printing. I suppose the Plate may stand 2000, but at this time there cannot be a demand for a fourth part, the Publick of England like to have their passions and imagination effected Philosophers, connoisseurs and others who have money don't mind two Guineas, but these I am afraid are few in Number, in foreign parts they sell 10 to 1 more than England – in time the Print may be productive but this uncertain there is still war. [...]

You will have the goodness to convey to me instructions about Printing & the Inscription at the bottom in the meantime.⁷⁸⁷

The fact that Sharp secured 500 sheets of paper suggests that proofs and ordinary prints were to be on the same quality of paper.

Sharp concluded this letter with a postscript, 'The prints ought not to be sold for less than One Guineas, proofs two Guineas.' He was conscious of the limited market for the print, proposing to print only about five hundred copies, although the plate was capable of far more. He was anxious to ensure that the status of the print (and the art of line engraving) was not compromised by setting a low price. Although he had no financial interest in its sale since it was a private plate, the status of the print was directly linked to Sharp's own status and vice versa. He aimed to sell to the 'Philosophers, connoisseurs and others who have money', rather than in large quantities. Like Josiah Wedgwood, he set his price at what he thought the market could bear and had little interest in selling large quantities.

Sharp wrote asking for instructions regarding printing in January 1801. M.R.

Boulton replied in September,⁷⁸⁸ explaining that he had been occupied with

⁷⁸⁷ BAH3782/13/15/33 Wm Sharp to MRB 7 or 8 Jan 1801.

⁷⁸⁸ The date of publication on the print is 1 May 1801, but such dates are not always accurate, pers. comm. Antony Griffiths. Some copies had been sent to Soho in January as discussed

the useful arts 'almost to the exclusion of their fairer sisters towards whom I feel myself guilty of a culpable neglect in deferring so long to answer the letter of one of their greatest favourites.'⁷⁸⁹ He agreed to the proposals for printing and asked for twenty copies to be sent to him for distribution among his friends in the midlands. He proposed providing a list of those in London who were to receive copies and asking them to call on Sharp. This would make the distribution easier and allow his friends the opportunity to view Sharp's 'other productions of which I know several of them are desirous to become purchasers'. With regard to the inscription he wished to avoid being verbose, believing that

A man must not effect to live in the memory of posterity by his titles but by his deeds & if the print is not sufficiently recommended by the names of the subject & the artists, with its own intrinsic merit as a specimen [...] I should despair of adding to its value by a string of titles however long.⁷⁹⁰

He felt F.R.S. (Fellow of the Royal Society) could be added and that Esqr was a 'valuable appendage', although he was prepared to defer to Sharp's 'better judgement and taste upon this point.'⁷⁹¹ This is an uncharacteristic letter with verbose language, which, along with the long delay in replying perhaps indicates that M.R. Boulton was uncomfortable making such decisions, that he was more used to dealing with practical matters. His business acumen came to the fore, seeing the possibilities for Sharp to make additional sales alongside distributing the prints of Boulton. He recognized the importance of

above and Miss Dumergue showed it to Chippindall in March, see p.218 below, but the main print run cannot have taken place until M.R. Boulton had confirmed the details in this letter. The long lead in time was not unusual, the 1793 proposals and conditions for Sharp's engraving of the *Sortie of Gibraltar* agreed that Sharp would complete the engraving within four years. The price to subscribers was to be three guineas with no separate price given for proofs, Peter Cunningham, 'English Engravers', *The Builder*, 29 Aug 1863, p.616.

⁷⁸⁹ BAH3782/13/15/148 MRB to William Sharp 19 Sep 1801.

⁷⁹⁰ BAH3782/13/15/148 MRB to William Sharp 19 Sep 1801.

⁷⁹¹ Others in Boulton's immediate circle had been labelled as FRS in prints, Clay, 2008, p.587.

the title, the way in which the sitter was named could immediately impart information which could anchor the impression of him given by the image. Reynold's mezzotint had been titled *Matthew Boulton Esquire*, signifying that he was a gentleman but leaving further information, such as manufacturer or connoisseur, to be interpreted graphically or through prior knowledge of the sitter. The Sharp print, which depicted Boulton as a connoisseur, would be titled *MATTHEW BOULTON / F.R.S. & F.S.A.* The inclusion of reference to his fellowship of both the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries signalled his interest and achievements in science his acceptance by the London establishment and his move away from manufacturer towards gentleman, a statement of how far he had come.⁷⁹² There is no indication in the inscriptions on the print that it was produced as a private plate, it appears to be published by Sharp, Boulton looks to be considered sufficiently famous and important to be worthy of a commercially viable print. It is only the archival evidence that makes the true position clear. This raises the issue that other prints previously assumed to be produced as commercial ventures could similarly be private plates.⁷⁹³

M.R. Boulton agreed that the price of the print should not be any lower than Sharp had suggested and that he would reimburse the cost of paper and other advances with regard to printing if an account was provided. A postscript asked that Sharp exercise his judgement to select two of the best proofs for M.R. Boulton's own collection. This letter was brought to town by

⁷⁹² Boulton, Watt and Withering were all elected to the Royal Society on the same day in 1785, David Philip Miller, 'The Usefulness of Natural Philosophy: The Royal Society and the Culture of Practical Utility in the Later Eighteenth Century', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol.32, No.2, June 1999, p.192.

⁷⁹³ I am grateful to Antony Griffiths for discussion on this.

Matthew Boulton who was to consult with Sharp regarding the inscription and disposal of prints.⁷⁹⁴ The Printers Account was submitted and £32 paid. M.R. Boulton said that he would take 'an early opportunity of writing to Sharp about the additional £60 mentioned by him'.⁷⁹⁵ Some agreement must have been reached as Sharp was paid thirty pounds, the balance of his account, on 30 January 1802.⁷⁹⁶

The print was considered one of Sharp's best. W.S. Baker compiled a descriptive catalogue of Sharp's work in 1875, noting that the prints of John Hunter and Boulton were frequently 'quoted as fine examples, both of the art and the artist.' He wrote of the Boulton print that it

is engraved with a broader line, and in a more vigorous manner than the former [Hunter], eminently adapted to the character and personality of the successful manufacturer and active partner of James Watt, the distinguished improver of the steam engine. As in the John Hunter, every part of the plate is carefully engraved and skilfully managed, conveying the idea of a strong, healthy organization, coupled with the markings of firmness and self-reliance, traits of character which he must have possessed. Well do these works deserve the esteem in which they are held, each different, yet each remarkable in its own way.⁷⁹⁷

Sir Joseph Banks also admired it, suggesting in 1808 that Sharp should engrave his portrait by Thomas Phillips as he had 'engraved Boulton & John Hunter admirably'.⁷⁹⁸ Although the print was nominally arranged by M.R. Boulton, Boulton senior was clearly involved in the choice of engraver and discussions on distribution, and probably asked his friends to encourage the

⁷⁹⁴ BAH3782/13/15/148 MRB to William Sharp 19 Sep 1801.

⁷⁹⁵ BAH3782/13/15/149 MRB to William Sharp 15 Jan 1802.

⁷⁹⁶ BAH3782/13/37/30 Receipt from William Sharp 30 Jan 1802.

⁷⁹⁷ W.S. Baker, *William Sharp Engraver with a descriptive catalogue of his works*, Philadelphia, 1875, pp.23-5. Note that by this date Boulton had become the 'partner of James Watt', by 1875 Watt was the more famous.

⁷⁹⁸ Patricia Fara, 'The Royal Society's Portrait of Joseph Banks', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Jul 1997) p.206; Chambers, 2000, pp.287-8.

project. He had succeeded in arranging a print which was highly regarded and discussed by connoisseurs, linking his own name with a high quality product by the finest line engraver of his time, which, although not of his own making, would help associate his own products with taste and excellence. However, this was a privately funded venture, not one which made a profit.

The print was shown to Boulton's friends and acquaintances at an early stage. Richard Chippindall, a Soho agent in London was shown it by Miss Dumergue and wrote to Boulton in March 1801, asking who the artist was and 'whether or not the plate was his property, so that I cou'd by any means procure a good copy to be in my possession and remind my children of their father's best friend.'⁷⁹⁹ Boulton and his son began drawing up lists of people to receive copies. Boulton drafted lists in his 1801 diary, one of which is only three names and was probably a note to remind himself following a discussion of the print with friends.⁸⁰⁰ In January 1802 M.R. Boulton drew up a more comprehensive 'List of Persons to whom Mr R Boulton wishes Prints of his Father to be delivered' with another for prints to be sent to M.R. Boulton for distribution.⁸⁰¹ A summary of these lists and brief biographical details of recipients where they can be identified is given in table 1 (overleaf). This process of categorising friends and acquaintances, not just into those who were to receive prints and those who were not, but also into those to receive the (apparently but not actually)⁸⁰² rarer proof prints and those to receive

⁷⁹⁹ BAH3782/12/59/101 Richard Chippindall to MB 13 Mar. 1801.

⁸⁰⁰ BAH3782/12/107/29 MB diary 1801 pp.6,10-11.

⁸⁰¹ BAH3782/13/41/114 MRB to Richard Chippindall 3 Feb 1802. In order to avoid confusion with his father MRB was often known as Robinson Boulton, hence the omission of the M.

⁸⁰² See p.221.

Table 1 Intended distribution of Sharp's print of Matthew Boulton after Sir William Beechey, 1801

Unless otherwise indicated sources are the GtoP&F and *Oxford DNB* online.

	MB diary 1801, p6 ¹	MB diary 1801, p10-11	MRB list for Sharp to distribute, 12 Jan 1802. ²	MRB to distribute ³	Other sources	Notes	
Amelia Alston			?P				(d.1833) Friend of Anne Boulton, daughter of James Alston, Birmingham button maker, known as Emily. ⁴
?Ancor Xtiana		x				It is not clear what Ancor stands for but it is associated with the places listed below. ⁵	Xtiana probably stands for Christiana, the old name for Oslo, 1625-1925. ⁶
Dronthem		x					Dronthem is an alternative spelling of Trondheim, Norway.
Amsterdam		x					
Paris		x					
Naples		x					
Palermo		x					
Madras		x					
Bengall		x					
Philadelphia		x					
New York		x					
Sir Joseph Banks		x	1P			Likely that Banks would also have received a copy for his sister, Sarah Sophia Banks.	(1743-1820) Botanist, President of the Royal Society 1778-1820. Visited Boulton at Soho in 1768, worked with Boulton equipping Cook's second voyage (from which Banks withdrew) and on improvements to coinage.

Sir Wm Beechey			2P			(1753-1839) Painter, RA, painted portrait from which the engraving is taken. Likely one copy would have been kept in his studio for viewing by prospective clients. ⁷
Bownas			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses. One of the Bownas family who ran J. Bownas & Co., the steel firm at Soho which was run under agency.
William D. Brown			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses. Worked for William Matthews, Boulton's London banker, came to Soho as a cashier. His wife Sarah Brown made plaster medallions of Boulton (NPG1451) and John Woodward (private collection).
Busch Hambg		x				Probably George Henry Busch, merchant in Hamburg, possibly some kind of agent, 3782/12/75/171 ZW to MB 6 Oct 1803. ⁸
Petersberg		x				from layout, this entry is associated with Busch Probably relation and business colleague of above.
Copenhagen		x				ditto Probably relation and business colleague of above.
Dr John Carmichael				?		illegible Physician at the General Hospital, attended Boulton, his family and various workmen at the manufactory. Engaged to Anne Boulton c.1803-4 but broke it off. Continued as family doctor. ⁹
William Cheshire			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses. Confidential clerk and bookkeeper to Boulton.
Richard Chippindall			P	?		crossed out, illegible record of numbers of prints and proofs for sale. (1751-1825) London agent for Boulton. Dealt with the London distribution of the Sharp print.
Andrew Collins			P			French secretary and confidential agent to businesses.
Dr Darwin		x		P		died 1802 – double check date Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) Friend and member of the Lunar Society.
Mr Dias					1P	chip acct per MB order 10 Aug 1806 Probably Richard Dayus or Dyas (d.1834) engine erector for Boulton and Watt, from late 1790s, B&W London agent.
Dickson			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses. Probably George Dixon, employee of Matthew Boulton and Plate Co. who went on to manage it in 1818.

Duncan St Petersburg				6P	chipp acct per MB order 28 July 1802. Presumably he was intended to distribute these.	James Duncan, employee of Soho Mint, sent to St Petersburg to superintend the erection of the Mint and settled there. ¹⁰
Mrs Dudley	x					Wife of Sir Henry Bate Dudley, Himley Hall. 3782/12/47/80 Henry Bate Dudley to MB, 6 March 1802 – ‘Mrs Dudley is much indebted to you for a striking resemblance of one we both so highly esteem.’
Dumergue		x	2P	1P	chipp acct per MB order 21 Aug 1802	Charles Dumergue (1739-1814), dentist, close friend of Boulton.
Francis Eginton				C	possibly altered – illegible	(1737-1805) artist and designer, former Soho employee, see p.76.
Peter Ewart				P	altered from common	(1767-1842) Millwright and engine erector, worked at the Albion Mill.
Flaxman	x					John Flaxman (1755-1826) Sculptor, commissioned by M.R. Boulton to make a memorial bust of Boulton for Handsworth Church.
Foreman			?*		* one of a group listed under ‘query’ many of whom are clerks at the various businesses.	William Foreman, head clerk of the engine works.
Miss Fothergills		x	C			Daughters of Boulton’s former business partner John Fothergill
Samuel Galton				C		(1753-1832) Quaker merchant and gunsmith, member of the Lunar Society.
Samuel Garbett				C		(1717-1803) Birmingham manufacturer.
Lord Glenbervie				1P	chip acct per MB order 26 May 1805	Sylvester Douglas 1 st Baron Glenbervie (1743-1823) Vice president of committee for trade, Lord of Treasury.
Amos Green				x	letter AG to MB 3782/12/47/163 6 June 1802, see ch.4	(1735-1807) Artist who had known Boulton when they were young men, see catalogue 24.
John Hodges				C		(d.1808) Manager of silver and plated departments at Soho.
Ann Holbrook			?P			(b.1763) née Mynd, Boulton’s niece, daughter of his sister Catherine.
Mr Home				x	chip acct 22 Feb 1802	
G ?Jeffrys				1P	chip acct per MB order 29 Sept 1802	
Francis Jukes				x	chip acct 22 Feb 1802	Aquatint engraver. Boulton and Fothergill appear to have leant him money. Dedicated etching and aquatint of a view of the Thames after Sarjent to Matthew Boulton ‘Patron and Promoter of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce’, 1804.

Mrs Mary Keen			?P				Widow of William Keen, an attorney at law and clerk of the peace in Stafford. Boulton regularly stayed with the family when he was Sheriff of Staffordshire and had to attend assizes.
Kellet			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses.	Thomas Kellet, clerk at Soho.
James Keir				C			(1735-1820) Chemist, member of the Lunar Society.
Mr Lane		x					Probably rector of Handsworth Church, Thomas Lane.
Richard Lawrence				2 P 3 C		'3 Common with 2 proofs for himself'	Veterinary surgeon in Birmingham. Friend of M.R. Boulton. May have been a brother of the painter Thomas Lawrence, letters mention Thomas coming to visit his brother in Birmingham but no brother called Richard has been identified in Lawrence biographies.
James Lawson				P		altered from common	(c.1760-1818) Engine erector.
George Lee				P			Manchester mill owner (Phillips, Wood and Lee), friend of James Watt junior.
Mr Legge		x		C			Heneage Legge of Aston Hall from whom Boulton rented land, trustee of Boulton's legacies to General Hospital and Dispensary.
Lodge			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses.	James Lodge, clerk at Boulton, Watt & Co. and James Watt & Co.
Longastre					P	chip acct per MB order 29 Oct 1805	(c.1747-p.1806) Pastel artist, produced portraits of Watt, Watt junior, Keir and Galton. ¹¹
Mrs Matthews		x				She died on 9 Jan 1802 so appears on Boulton's preliminary list but not on M.R. Boulton's of 12 Jan 1802	(c.1720-1802) Widow of William Matthews, Boulton's London banker who continued the business after his death. Close friend of Boulton.
Moor		x					Probably Joseph Moore, a Birmingham manufacturer of gilt and plated buttons who had worked with Boulton on the committee about deceptions in button manufacture.
William Murdoch				C			(1754-1839) Engineer, Boulton and Watt's Cornwall agent.
George Mynd		x	P*			*altered to proof in a different hand	(d.1813) Boulton's nephew, son of his sister Catherine. ¹²
Robert Mylne			P				(1733-1811) Architect and engineer.

Nelson			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses.	William Nelson, Boulton's partner in the gilt button trade. ¹³
Richard Phillips					1P	'for advertising' chip acct March 1802	Publisher of <i>Monthly Magazine</i> and <i>Public Characters</i> .
John Phillp			?*			* one of a group listed under 'query' many of whom are clerks at the various businesses.	(c.1778-1815) Artist and designer for various Soho firms, discussed in chapter two.
Mr Pierse	x						Possibly James Pearson or 'Pierson', cashier and bookkeeper at Soho Manufactory 1776-1817.
Dr Priestley		x				Emigrated to U.S. in 1794 so presumably the print was being sent there.	(1733-1804) Joseph Priestley, scientist and dissenting minister, member of the Lunar Society.
John Rennie		x	1P				(1761-1821) Engineer, owned a painted copy of von Breda's portrait of Boulton, see p.201.
Mr Row					x	chipp acct 22 Feb 1802	Peter Rouw (1771-1852), wax modeller who modelled Boulton, Watt, Priestley and John Phillp. ¹⁴
William Sharp					6P 6C	Twelve proofs and twelve prints were also left with him on sale.	Engraver of the Plate.
Simcox		x					Probably George Simcox, Birmingham manufacturer who had worked with Boulton on discussions on the state of the Copper Trade.
John Southern				P		altered from Common	(1761/2-1815) Assistant to James Watt.
Miss Tennant					1P	chip acct per MB order 10 Aug 1805	
John Tuffin or Tuffen			P		x	added to Sharp's list as he had been missed off a transcribed version 3782/13/15/149 MRB to William Sharp 15 Jan 1802	(d.1820) Quaker wine merchant and banker, close friend of the Watt family.
Zack Walker senior				P			(d.1808) Boulton's brother-in-law, married to his sister Mary until her death in 1768/9. Senior clerk at the Birmingham warehouse.

Zack Walker junior			P	1P	chipp acct 'for Paris' 29 Sept 1802	(1768-1822) Boulton's nephew, son of his sister Mary and Zaccheus Walker, became one of Boulton's continental travellers.
Gregory Watt			P			(1766-1804) son of James Watt.
James Watt junior	x		P			(1769-1848) son of James Watt.
James Watt senior	x		P			(1736-1819) engineer, partner in Boulton and Watt.
Ambrose Weston		1C				(d.1810) London attorney who acted for the Soho businesses as well as the Boulton and Watt families.
James Weston		1C				London attorney, brother of Ambrose.
Thomas Wilson		P				Boulton and Watt's agent in Cornwall.
William Withering jun		?P				Son of Boulton's friend Dr William Withering, member of the Lunar Society who had died in 1798/9.
John Woodward				2P	chipp acct per MB order 19 April 1802	(d.1810) Boulton and Watt's senior London agent.
Woronzow				1P 3C	chipp acct per MB order 5 April 1802 for distribution in Russia, see p.223	Alexander Woronzow (1741-1805) Russian Ambassador to England.
James Wyatt	x					(1746-1813) Architect, worked on designs for Soho House.
Samuel Wyatt	x					(1737-1807) Architect, brother of James, completed remodelling of Soho House, designed Livery Street warehouse.
Mrs Vere	x	C				Widow of banker Charles Vere, close friend of Boulton.
For sale:						
Chippindall		9C 3P				
Boydell		x				
Ryland		x				
Sharp						

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- ¹ 3782/12/17/29. Just three names are on this small list which was perhaps jotted down following a meeting at which the prints were discussed.
- ² 3782/13/37/29 pp.1-2. These were mostly people based in London.
- ³ 3782/13/37/29 p.3.
- ⁴ Mason, p.124. The print is mentioned in her will and was left to her brother, PROB 11/1866 1833. I am grateful to Shena Mason for this reference.
- ⁵ I am grateful to various people who have also attempted to decipher this including Shena Mason, Sian Roberts and Sue Tungate.
- ⁶ See for example 3782/12/71/74 John Motteux to MB regarding Motteux's son making a tour to Norway as far as Christiana.
- ⁷ Reynolds is known to have kept such a portfolio of prints in his studio, Marcia Pointon, 'Portrait-painting as a business enterprise in London in the 1780s', *Art History*, Vol.7, No.2 June 1984, p.193.
- ⁸ Jones in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.75.
- ⁹ Mason p. 127-9.
- ¹⁰ Doty, p.76; 3782/6/138/- William Cheshire to Robert Duncan 17 Nov 1809.
- ¹¹ Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*, online edition, 2008 www.pastellists.com
- ¹² The print is mentioned in his will and was left to his nephew George Holbrook or if he had predeceased to Richard Evans of Ross, PROB 11/1548 1813. I am grateful to Shena Mason for this reference.
- ¹³ Goodison, 2002, p.254.
- ¹⁴ Ingamells, p.557.

'common prints' was clearly a difficult one as some decisions were altered and others, mostly staff at Soho, were marked 'Query'.

Some decisions are surprising, why did Mrs Vere, a close friend who would presumably be considered capable of appreciating the difference between a proof and a print apparently only get a print? Perhaps it was felt that there was limited potential for influencing her further and that she was of little use in business terms. Alternatively, she might have been so closely involved in the production process that she already had a better copy. Boulton had long been in the habit of categorising potential customers in order to determine how much attention they should receive, John Hodges wrote of spending time with a visitor he perceived to be a gentleman even though he was not sure of his name.⁸⁰³ At the time of the sale at Christie's Keir wrote of sending one letter only to 'such lords, &c., as have, or pretend to have, taste' and a shorter letter to others.⁸⁰⁴ Time should be spent with people who were most likely to generate a profitable return or exert their influence in Boulton's favour.

Those to be given copies of the print included close friends like Charlotte Matthews and Charles Dumergue who had helped its production, family like George Mynd and Ann Holbrook and Lunar men like Darwin, Galton, Keir and Priestley for whom the prints would be a token of affection and friendship.⁸⁰⁵

The print was considered sufficiently important that it was specifically

⁸⁰³ BAH3782/12/63/5 John Hodges to MB 9 May 1778 I am grateful to Barbara Fogarty for discussion on this.

⁸⁰⁴ BAH3782/12/65/2 James Keir to MB [1 April 1771].

⁸⁰⁵ Nenadic notes a similar type of gift when the Archbishop of York gave James Beattie, poet and Professor of moral philosophy at Marischal College, Aberdeen engraved portraits of himself and members of his family in recognition of their friendship and his interest in Beattie's poetry, Nenadic, p.214.

mentioned in the wills of Amelia Alston and George Mynd.⁸⁰⁶ Long-term business associates or staff like Watt, Murdoch, John Southern, John Hodges and many of the Soho clerks were also listed, for many of them it was a token of a man who had started them on their careers. Birmingham men like Dr. Carmichael, Samuel Garbett, Richard Lawrence and Heneage Legge were also to be given copies as a mark of respect, friendship or a business relationship. Established artists like Beechey, Flaxman, Longastre, Peter Rouw, and James and Samuel Wyatt were given copies, both through friendship and to enhance Boulton's status as a man who recognised and commissioned high quality art. Members of the London establishment like Lord Glenbervie and Sir Joseph Banks were given copies, once again through friendship, but also to reinforce that view of Boulton as someone who mattered to important men. Copies were sent abroad, to Russia, the United States and Europe, associating Boulton's name with a high quality product across the world.

In spite of M.R. Boulton's suggestion that allowing people to collect their copies of the print direct from Sharp would generate additional sales, Sharp argued that this would interfere with his professional engagements. Richard Chippindall, the Soho agent who had asked where to obtain a 'good' print handled distribution instead. Chippindall makes no mention of this role in an 'apology' for his life written in 1824 which is surprising because the distribution and documentation of the prints was time-consuming and complicated and

⁸⁰⁶ Amelia Alston left her copy to her brother, Public Record Office, PROB 11/1866 1833; George Mynd to his nephew George Holbrook or if he had predeceased to Richard Evans of Ross, PROB 11/1548 1813. I am grateful to Shena Mason for these references.

much of the document is critical of M.R. Boulton as an employer.⁸⁰⁷ M.R. Boulton wrote to Chippindall to confirm this role and to explain that 300 proofs and 139 prints had been taken, some of which had already been distributed. Chippindall was to supply prints to Sharp to sell. Sharp was to pack the plate and the prints for Soho for Chippindall to send on.⁸⁰⁸ He sent a tin case with eight proofs and sixteen common prints and the plate in a separate box on 5 February.⁸⁰⁹ For a commercial print the plate would have stayed with the artist or publisher who could organize the production of further copies as they were required.⁸¹⁰ Sending the plate to Soho meant that the Boultons could control the number of prints pulled and be certain that no others were taken without their knowledge. Sharp had received his one-off fee and had no commercial interest in the print, although as indicated above he did want to ensure that it was not sold at a price likely to damage his reputation or make purchasers query the prices of his other prints.

By 22 February Chippindall was confused; he sent an account, complaining that Sharp had made no distinction between prints and proofs so he gave the aggregate. He continued

You will observe the modesty of Engravers by his informing me of its being the custom of the 'Trade to leave with the Engraver 6 proofs & 6 prints as a present for himself & Friends' This I could do no other than Comply with – saying that it would be left for your Consideration whether they were presents or not.⁸¹¹

⁸⁰⁷ Kenneth Quickenden, 'Richard Chippindall and the Boulton family', *Silver Studies: The Journal of the Silver Society*, 22, 2007 pp.51-66. I am grateful to him for checking the manuscript and for discussion on this subject.

⁸⁰⁸ BAH3782/13/41/114 MRB to Richard Chippindall 3 Feb 1802.

⁸⁰⁹ BAH3782/13/41/52 Richard Chippindall to MRB 8 Feb 1802; BAH3782/13/37/31 Richard Chippindall to MRB 22 Feb 1802.

⁸¹⁰ Griffiths, 1980, p.140.

⁸¹¹ BAH3782/13/37/31 Richard Chippindall to MRB 22 Feb 1802.

Sharp retained twelve proofs and prints for sale as well as his 'presents'. As Chippindall suggested, there was confusion between the prints and the proofs.⁸¹² It is possible that Sharp's figures quoted to M.R. Boulton are inaccurate. Recordkeeping with regard to this print was confused from the outset, another indication that the primary motive was not to make a profit.

People who do not appear on the distribution lists were also sent copies, the artist Amos Green wrote to thank Boulton, saying that he would 'never look at it but with pleasure, or without a pleasant recollection'.⁸¹³ This print had multiple authors in Beechey, Sharp, Boulton and M.R. Boulton, all of whom shaped its production in some way. Green was a further author of one particular copy; he returned 'Miss Boulton's print of you' to which he had evidently been making some additions, 'I think you will approve of the lines round her Portrait of you; I have not wrote your name underneath thinking she might add some lines appropriate to her own feelings'.⁸¹⁴ The fact that Boulton's name was absent suggests that this was a printer's proof before lettering, possibly the one Sharp had sent her in January 1801. Green had taken an already exclusive copy of the print and added to it to make a unique and sentimental version, arranged by Boulton for his daughter. The work he did is not clear, presumably there was some kind of artistic work, perhaps hand colouring. He also added some lines of text and left the option for Anne

⁸¹² Chippindall accounted for 399 copies 'which is the number you suppose aft yr favour of the 3d', M.R. Boulton's letter suggesting that 278 proofs and 121 prints remained available. Chippindall does indeed account for 399 copies but the common prints he outlines (98 with him, 12 with Sharp for sale, 6 with Sharp as a gift, 16 he sent to Soho on 5 Feb) total 132 which when combined with M.R. Boulton's account of 18 (5 delivered to his order in London and 13 sent to Soho) make a total of 150 which is more than the 139 common prints M.R. Boulton suggests were struck, BAH3782/13/41/114 MRB to Richard Chippindall 3 Feb 1802.

⁸¹³ For Amos Green see catalogue 24.

⁸¹⁴ BAH3782/12/47/163 Amos Green to MB 6 June 1802.

Boulton to add a title or inscription of her own about her father, personalising it even further. Something that had been used to raise Boulton's profile nationally and internationally, as a branding exercise, was also used to create something highly personal.

Chippindall was told to pack a tin case with four copies of the print interleaved with cambric paper, one of which was to be a proof with the word 'proof' written on the back. The case was to be wrapped in strong paper, secured with string and sent to the residence of the Russian Ambassador, Count Simon Woronzow (1744-1832).⁸¹⁵ These prints were for Woronzow to distribute when he travelled to Russia to meet the new Emperor Alexander I. There was a great deal of anxiety as the Count was due to leave soon and Cheshire wrote again from Soho to make sure that this was done.⁸¹⁶ A slightly indignant Chippindall replied that it had been delivered to the house in Harley Street last Tuesday.⁸¹⁷ Boulton told Woronzow:

1. I am not so vain or presumptuous as to offer one to the Emperor; but if his Imperial Majesty should have any collection of prints in his library I should feel myself highly honoured by having that print which is marked on the back side (a proof) placed among them merely as a Specimen of good engraving.
2. I wish to show some mark of respect to Count Samoilov.
3. Also to Mr Schnese who sent me a silver medal of his father who was master of the Imperial Mint.⁸¹⁸

Count Samoilov was the manager of the St Petersburg Bank.⁸¹⁹ This was not just about the recipients of the prints, Boulton would have been conscious that the print could have been seen in the collections of important men like the

⁸¹⁵ Obituary *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1832, pp.78-80.

⁸¹⁶ BAH3782/6/131/- Copy letter William Cheshire to Richard Chippindall 9 Apr 1802.

⁸¹⁷ BAH3782/12/59/109 Richard Chippindall to William Cheshire 10 Apr 1802.

⁸¹⁸ BAH3782/12/47/112 MB to Count Woronzow 6 April 1802.

⁸¹⁹ Olga Baird 'His Excellency Count Woronzow the Russian Ambassador and the Hardware Man: The History of a Friendship' in Dick (ed.), 2009, p.102.

Emperor of Russia and that this would provide status and encourage business.⁸²⁰

These lists and evidence from letters provide an idea of how the print was distributed but cannot tell the full story; other prints were undoubtedly given away which do not appear on the lists. Prints were also to be made available for purchase, copies were left with Sharp for this purpose and it was proposed that they would also be made available through the printsellers John Boydell and Ryland. No evidence has been found for Birmingham printsellers carrying the print, indeed one wrote to ask where he could obtain a copy; perhaps they were expected to be purchased direct from Soho.⁸²¹ Chippindall was surprised to find that Boydell expected to take them on M.R. Boulton's account and to return any copies not sold. Boydell indicated that Sharp had been aware that this was the case and he would not take them under any other terms, suggesting he did not believe the print would sell in any quantity.⁸²²

In order to publicise the print more widely, Chippindall 'addressd in all the papers agreed on & likewise in the Repository & Monthly Magazine for the present Month – in the first it will be on the wrapper - & in the latter as an Article in the body of the pamphlet'.⁸²³ Advertising twice in unspecified

⁸²⁰ There is a copy of this print in the Royal Collection RCIN 651222 but there is no record of its provenance so it is not known if it was given by Boulton or acquired later. There is also a copy of the Reynolds mezzotint after the von Breda in the Royal Collection RCIN 651220. I am grateful to the staff of the Royal Collection for their assistance.

⁸²¹ BAH3782/12/47/171 John Lowe to Z. Walker 14 June 1802. There were several printsellers who could have sold it and booksellers also stocked prints, Clay, 2008, p.588.

⁸²² BAH3782/13/37/32 Richard Chippindall to MRB 25 Feb 1802.

⁸²³ BAH3782/13/37/31 Richard Chippindall to MRB 22 Feb 1802.

newspapers cost £3 13 6 and once in the *Repository* 7/6.⁸²⁴ The *Monthly Magazine* does not appear in Chippindall's accounts unless it was included in his figures for newspapers so it is possible that the sum was paid direct by Boulton or a friend. A copy of the print was provided to Richard Phillips, publisher of the *Monthly Magazine* for 'advertising'.⁸²⁵ Phillips and the *Monthly Magazine* were known to Boulton as they had previously printed a description and image of Soho (discussed in chapter three) and had recently included a short paragraph on the 1801 robbery at Soho in which they inaccurately elevated Boulton to Sir Matthew Boulton.⁸²⁶ Phillips had also produced the *Public Characters* volumes which included Boulton and is considered below. The *Monthly* is unlikely to have been read by the connoisseur collectors who would have been interested in the quality of the print, but rather by scientists and engineers who would be more likely to buy it for who it depicted. Not many of them did, based on Chippindall's figures, presumably they were put off by the price. John Lowe, a Birmingham 'Bookseller, Print & Music-seller, and Medicine Vender' with a circulating library of about 8000 volumes told Zack Walker in June 1802 that a customer 'wishes me to procure him a Print of Mr Boulton, I shall be obliged to you to inform me if the Print is to be had and the price – also when I can procure it.'⁸²⁷ People outside Boulton's immediate circle were being made aware of

⁸²⁴ BAH3782/13/41/74 Richard Chippindall to MRB 12 March 1810. No adverts have been found, but which newspapers were selected would give an indication of the intended audience. It does not seem to have been advertised in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, perhaps to avoid being seen as a provincial print. It is not clear what the *Repository* is, it cannot be *Ackermann's Repository* which did not start until 1809. The print is dated as published May 1 1801 which may have made it seem old by the time it was advertised in Feb 1802.

⁸²⁵ BAH3782/13/41/74 Chippindall to MRB.

⁸²⁶ See catalogue 6. For the robbery see catalogue 12 to 14, *Monthly Magazine*, Feb 1, 1801, p.88.

⁸²⁷ Pye's *Birmingham Directory* 1797; BAH3782/12/47/171 John Lowe to Z. Walker 14 Jun. 1802.

the print and actively seeking to obtain a copy. Lowe's customer could have known of the print through the press advertising or through word of mouth, it is likely that the print was being discussed, particularly in the midlands, by those who knew Boulton personally and those who knew of him, perhaps through owning something made at Soho.

Boulton was very ill during 1802 and confined to his bed from March until Christmas Eve so it is likely that less work was undertaken to promote and distribute the print than had originally been intended.⁸²⁸ He told William Hamilton who intended bringing Lord Nelson to Soho that he had been confined to bed since the beginning of March and doctors had told him to lie in a horizontal position 'living as motionless as possible and free from all agitation arising from either business or pleasure'.⁸²⁹ Distribution of the print did continue, but in a haphazard manner. William Cheshire asked for another six prints to be sent to Boulton in 1805.⁸³⁰ In 1808 it was offered to Lord Muncaster (bap.1741-1813)⁸³¹ for his Library at Muncaster Castle, Cumberland as an alternative to a painted portrait. Muncaster was

placing around my Library, which is an octoagon of forty feet, the Portraits of several of those most worthy Persons who have done Honor to their country by their Examples, Exertions, Ingenuity or Abilities, distinguishing themselves in their different [illegible] life, as ye real Patriots of it by promoting to a very great degree the Industry, & Comfort & encreasing the Riches welfare & Happiness of the whole Community. In this point of view it is not possible but to divert one's Eye to you Sir, to whose powers of mind the nation owes so much. If

⁸²⁸ Dickinson, p.191 suggests Boulton was confined to Soho House from March to Christmas Eve 1802.

⁸²⁹ BAH3782/12/47/264 MB to Sir William Hamilton, 27 Aug 1802. Nelson did come and was received by Boulton in his bedchamber, Mason, 2005, p.125.

⁸³⁰ BAH3782/6/134/- Copy letter William Cheshire to Richard Chippindall 28 Aug 1805.

⁸³¹ Roland Thorne, 'John Pennington, first Baron Muncaster', *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 Feb 2010. P. Frost-Pennington and A. Chatburn, *The Architectural Heritage of Muncaster Castle: Phase One Research Report*, August 2005 suggests his dates are (1737-1813).

therefore you will have the goodness to let your portrait be placed among this collection I shall consider it as a favour personally conferr'd upon myself.⁸³²

He asked for a portrait of bust size, two and a half feet by two feet 'to suit with those of Mr Howard, the Man of [?Ross]⁸³³, Mr Wedgewood, Brinley, Sr Rd Arkwright &c.'⁸³⁴ The library was the centrepiece of a remodelling of Muncaster which he had inherited from his father in an extremely dilapidated state.⁸³⁵

By the time of this request, Boulton was so ill that he was not able to answer the letter or sit for a portrait. William Cheshire suggested Sharp's print as an alternative, 'which independently of its being esteemed a likeness, it is considered to be a very good engraving.' It was smaller than requested but Cheshire hoped that framing could remedy this.⁸³⁶ Muncaster's reply apologised for his letter having 'arrived at Soho at so very critical & alarming moment' and added that he did not wish to give any further trouble to Boulton's friends but did not indicate if this compromise was acceptable.⁸³⁷ It is not clear if the print was sent, but some representation of Boulton was included as it was seen by Farington a few days later, 'In Library distinguished men of modern times – useful to the Country – man of Ross – Brindley –

⁸³² BAH3782/12/53/23 Lord Muncaster to MB 23 Sept 1808.

⁸³³ This word is illegible but based on Farington's description below is likely to refer to the philanthropist John Kyrle (1637-1724), known as the Man of Ross. The others mentioned are prison reformer and philanthropist John Howard (?1726-90), Josiah Wedgewood, civil engineer, James Brindley (1716-72) and the cotton manufacturer Richard Arkwright (1732-92), all of whom were dead.

⁸³⁴ BAH3782/12/53/23 Lord Muncaster to MB 23 Sept 1808.

⁸³⁵ Roland Thorne, 'John Pennington, first Baron Muncaster', *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 Feb 2010. He had previously erected a pyramid at Muncaster in 1789 to mark the King's recovery from illness.

⁸³⁶ BAH3782/6/137/- Copy letter. William Cheshire to Lord Muncaster 27 Sep. 1808.

⁸³⁷ BAH3782/6/137/- Lord Muncaster to William Cheshire 3 Oct. 1808.

Arkwright -- Howard – Wedgwood – Boulton to [illegible] also Cranmer & Gilpin [...]’⁸³⁸

There was a long tradition of portraying a number of admired figures together, often as busts in libraries or gardens. More often this was philosophers, writers, composers, thinkers or religious figures and could include contemporary figures as in the Temple of Worthies at Stowe.⁸³⁹ This example was more unusual in that it included a number of manufacturers who had indeed increased the riches of the country. The end of the eighteenth century had seen various plans commemorating dead heroes, particularly naval heroes.⁸⁴⁰ There was a growing realisation of the importance of manufacture to the country and a sense of pride in the accomplishments of British manufacturers such as Boulton and Wedgwood. Elizabeth Montagu had identified it in 1771 and by the time of Boulton’s obituary in 1809 it was expressed even more forcefully:

His memory will ever remain dear to the British nation, whose glory was advanced in proportion to his own fame. While we commemorate those great men who have sought their country’s honour in the fields of war, we ought not to omit paying a just tribute of applause to those who have promoted arts, industry, and commerce and diffused plenty and comfort through the realm, by cultivating science, and applying it to the useful arts of peace.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁸ Garlic and Macintyre (eds.) *The diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven and London, 1982, Vol IX p.3361 Friday 14 October 1808. In addition to those outlined above Farington noted Archbishop Cranmer (1489-1556) and ‘Gilpin’. Ingamells, p.207 lists this as a doubtful portrait of Sawrey Gilpin (1733-1807) but it seems more likely to have been his brother, the more famous William Gilpin (1724-1804) of the Picturesque considered in chapter two. Again, all subjects other than Boulton were already dead. Muncaster Castle have been unable to provide any information on objects in their collection.

⁸³⁹ West, 2004, p.87.

⁸⁴⁰ Alison Yarrington, ‘Popular and imaginary pantheons in early nineteenth-century England in Wrigley and Craske (eds.), *Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea*, Aldershot, 2004, pp.107-8.

⁸⁴¹ For Elizabeth Montagu’s letter see p.75. *Monthly Magazine*, 1 Oct 1809, p.330.

In January 1809, Chippindall moved to Soho to become manager of the Matthew Boulton Plate Company following the death of John Hodges. He recommended that the former clerk John Glynn should become the new London agent.⁸⁴² Chippindall produced an account of the copies of Sharp's print he had disposed of, from 1802 to 1808 three proofs and forty three prints had been sold. Two hundred and forty-four proofs and twenty-one prints were handed over to Glynn 'with which he is now chargeable'.⁸⁴³ So, if Sharp and Chippindall's figures were correct, eighty-one percent of the proofs and fifteen percent of the prints remained undistributed.⁸⁴⁴

In October 1809, following Boulton's death in August, William Cheshire wrote to Glynn to let him know that M.R. Boulton had asked John Phillip to send him fifteen copies of Sharp's print which Glynn was to dispose of, together with any others in his possession, 'in the way already intimated'.⁸⁴⁵ No record of what this was has been found, but the letter suggests that most of the remaining stock had been transferred to Soho by then. A Miss Bracken was lent a 'Print of Matthew Boulton' from the library at Soho House on 20 February 1822 and returned it on 10 June.⁸⁴⁶ There is no indication of the purpose of this loan; presumably she copied the print in some form. Sharp died in 1824, leaving no descendants, and his effects were auctioned by

⁸⁴² Quickenden, 2007, pp.51-66.

⁸⁴³ BAH3782/13/41/74 Richard Chippindall to MRB 12 Mar 1810.

⁸⁴⁴ The figures suggest 53 proofs and 75 prints were given away or sold through suppliers other than Chippindall.

⁸⁴⁵ BAH3782/6/138 William Cheshire to John Glynn 24 Oct 1809.

⁸⁴⁶ BAH3782/21 Acc 2009/168 Soho House Library Loan book. Miss Bracken borrowed a number of books from the library including Madame de Stael's works in three volumes. It is not clear who she was but Agnes Anne Bracken of Sutton Coldfield asked MRB to support an admission to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum thirteen years later, BAH3782/13/18/153 AA Bracken to MRB 20 Oct 1835.

Christie's in 1825.⁸⁴⁷ His copies of the print were made available to M.R.

Boulton in 1839 through R. F. Davis, a financial agent in the London office:

Chance has thrown into my way some prints of your father: they belonged formerly to Sharp the engraver & his representatives have disposed of them. From what I can learn the party who possesses them has 3 or 4 engravers proofs before letters; one or two open letter proofs & 3 or 4 copies of the print the prices asked are 7/- 10/- & 25/-. I have thought it best to inform you of this; deeming perhaps you may desire to possess some copies: such as Sharp would retain for himself.⁸⁴⁸

A few days later Davis wrote that he had thought of sending the prints for inspection but hoped to see Boulton in London instead.⁸⁴⁹ It is not clear if these prints were purchased. The prices now asked were much lower than had originally been charged, probably due to a perceived lack of interest in Boulton.⁸⁵⁰ Sharp had been given eighteen prints and eighteen proofs, six of each as gifts, the remainder for sale. These figures make it clear that he had also had copies of the earlier proofs before letters and may well have had additional copies of the proofs and prints. It appears that he disposed of at least fourteen copies of both proof and print although it is not known when or at what price.⁸⁵¹

M.R. Boulton and to a lesser extent his son, Matthew Piers Watt Boulton continued sending out these prints for years, probably partly because they had so many copies remaining. Sir George Chetwynd of Grendon Hall in Staffordshire wrote in 1838 to acknowledge receipt of a

⁸⁴⁷ Baker, p.34. Peter Cunningham, 'English Engravers', *The Builder*, 29 Aug 1863, p.616. The auction was 18-19 Feb 1825.

⁸⁴⁸ BAH3782/13/28/82 R.F. Davis to MRB 23 Apr 1839.

⁸⁴⁹ BAH3782/13/66/38 R.F. Davis to MRB 27 Apr 1839.

⁸⁵⁰ By this date Boulton's profile was much lower than that of his former business partner James Watt, partly due to James Watt junior's efforts to ensure that his father remained in the public memory, Miller, 2004, pp.83-99.

⁸⁵¹ However, these quantities were offered to MRB fourteen years after Sharp's death and may not represent all the copies he had at the time of his death.

Print of your late highly talented, and much respected, Father. It is not only an important addition to my Collection of "Staffordshire Worthies," but most interesting with reference to my Cabinet of Gems from Soho Mint, of which I have just cause to be proud, and which could only have been obtained thro' your munificence.⁸⁵²

Miss Anne Keen, the daughter of the Mrs Keen who had received a copy in the original distribution lists wrote after a visit to Soho, 'I also hope you will accept my grateful thanks for the portrait of your revered father, which will be to me an invaluable treasure, as I truly venerate his memory, and one of the most gratifying recollections of my life is having been honored by his regard.'⁸⁵³ M.R. Boulton's son, M.P.W. Boulton sent a copy to Birmingham Assay Master in 1892.⁸⁵⁴ Lionel B.C.L. Muirhead, M.R. Boulton's grandson, offered copies to the National Portrait Gallery and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. He stated that they had been taken from a private plate which had subsequently been destroyed by fire. He believed it was a rare print as he had not seen it in any dealer's catalogues and the copy offered to the NPG had been damaged by damp.⁸⁵⁵ This suggests that he did not have access to the large stock of prints and raises the possibility that they too were destroyed in the fire.⁸⁵⁶ Another branch of the family retained some copies; four were sold at auction in 1987.⁸⁵⁷

⁸⁵² BAH3782/13/28/42 Sir George Chetwynd to MRB 19 Sep. 1838.

⁸⁵³ BAH3782/13/23/82 Miss Anne Keen to MRB 3 Feb. 1831. It is likely, but not certain that this refers to Sharp's print.

⁸⁵⁴ BAH3782/misc documents added by the assay office [formerly MBP291/83] MPWB to the Assay Master, 8 Mar. 1892.

⁸⁵⁵ LBCL Muirhead was descended from MRB's second daughter, Katherine who married James Patrick Muirhead. BMAG files, letter from LBCL Muirhead, 20 Dec 1907. BMAG 164'08 was given by Muirhead. National Portrait Gallery, London (RP1532, NPG Archive) LBCL Muirhead to Cust, 10 Feb 1909.

⁸⁵⁶ No direct reference to such a fire has been found, there was one in a store room at Soho House in 1843 but it is not clear what was damaged, Katherine Boulton to M.P.W. Boulton 16 Jan 1843, private collection.

⁸⁵⁷ Christie's, *Great Tew Sale*, 27-29 May 1987, lots 538-541. Material from this sale largely consisted of items inherited by Matthew Ernest Boulton (1870-1914), MRB's grandson and the last direct male descendant. Following the death of MEB's sisters the estate at Tew

This was a print with limited sales potential, particularly at the prices Sharp suggested. Boulton's closest friends and acquaintances would have expected to be given a copy; those who were not may have been sufficiently offended not to consider the purchase of a copy. While those of the middle rank often collected and displayed prints of those they admired, but did not necessarily know, this was a print for connoisseurs, by the best line engraver and priced accordingly.⁸⁵⁸ It was priced on a par with other such prints, but was a considered purchase; a customer would have been wealthy or particularly interested in Boulton, Beechey or Sharp to make a purchase. Chippindall's figures for the print of Boulton show that he sold only three proofs and forty three common prints from 1802 to 1808. Boydell's reticence in carrying them suggested that he felt they were unlikely to sell well and he had no wish to incur any risk if he stocked them, even if it meant offending Boulton. By this time his firm was in serious debt so he would have been cautious.⁸⁵⁹ There would have been a market for the print in Birmingham and the Midlands through local pride.⁸⁶⁰ Chippindall's account suggests he sold the proofs at thirty-two shillings each and prints at sixteen, less than Sharp had suggested and M.R. Boulton had agreed (two guineas and one guinea) with an income of £39 4s. The full print run of 300 proofs and 139 prints would have had a retail value of over 500 guineas at these prices which would have covered costs,

passed to a male descendant of MRB's daughter, Mary Anne Robb, so material inherited via that line would also have been included in the sale.

⁸⁵⁸ Nenadic, p. 214.

⁸⁵⁹ Timothy Clayton, 'John Boydell' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007.

⁸⁶⁰ Similarly Stana Nenadic has argued that Allan Ramsey was able to find a market for prints after his London painted portraits of Scottish subjects in the Edinburgh bookshop of his father, and that there was a particular interest in Scottish contemporary subjects in Scottish homes. She also notes the localised demand for prints of Joseph Black, the Edinburgh chemist in Biggar. Nenadic, pp.207-8, 213, 216; Fawcett, p.55

but the number of copies given away meant that this print could never recover the expenditure on its production.

The cost of producing the print cannot be accurately determined, Dumergue outlined a fee of 300 guineas for Sharp with half in advance but Sharp was paid 100 guineas in November 1800 which may suggest a fee of 200 guineas was agreed. He asked for a further 100 guineas in November 1800 and was also paid £32 for the printers and a further £30 in final settlement.⁸⁶¹ It is not clear if any payment was made to Beechey to allow the use of his painting, no evidence has been found of one and as Beechey's records do not survive for the time of the original painting it is not clear how much he was paid for that and if the right to produce an engraving was included.⁸⁶² Further expense was incurred in advertising so the venture undoubtedly made a large loss. However, it was never intended to be a commercial venture but a mark of respect, an indication of Boulton's importance and a way of highlighting that importance to a wider audience. The exhibition of Beechey's portrait at the Royal Academy in 1799 had brought it to notice. The production, circulation, sale and advertising of the print made a wider audience aware of Boulton and the fact that he had had his portrait painted by such a significant artist and engraved in such high quality. Offering the print for sale was more to do with extending awareness of its existence and making it accessible than generating income. Selling copies provided a reason for advertising that such

⁸⁶¹ See p.217.

⁸⁶² Blaine, writing in 1853 cited in Deazley, forthcoming, suggested that copyright control over paintings was largely based on control over access to the painting and that the presumption was that when a painting was sold the copyright for the purpose of engraving passed to the purchaser unless the artist reserved the right of copyright at the time of the sale but that this had never been tested in court.

a high quality print had been produced and offered the possibility of display in printshop windows. Boulton would have been highly conscious of the potential the print offered and he encouraged its production by mentioning it to Dumergue and Charlotte Matthews so that they encouraged M.R. Boulton.

High quality prints of manufacturers like Boulton were unusual, particularly expensive line engravings; subjects like royalty and actors provided more popular subjects for portrait prints.⁸⁶³ Paintings of manufacturers were more common, they were commissioned as signs of status to hang in homes of family and friends, or in factories. They were duplicated for inclusion in books and magazines, but these were small, lower quality reproductions.⁸⁶⁴ Prints of other manufacturers were commissioned, for example, a mezzotint of the cotton manufacturer Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-92), was published on 5 May 1801 after Joseph Wright's portrait of 1790. It showed Arkwright seated next to a table on which stands a set of spinning rollers, the source of his wealth. The mezzotint is reversed and was produced after the deaths of both Arkwright and Wright. Clayton suggests that that Arkwright's son, who had commissioned the portrait, also sponsored the mezzotint.⁸⁶⁵ This print is likely to have been produced as a memorial to be given to friends and acquaintances but was produced in the cheaper and quicker mezzotint form.

Beechey's portrait of the brewer Samuel Whitbread I (1720-1796) was similarly engraved in mezzotint by William Ward in 1797 shortly after

⁸⁶³ See p.204.

⁸⁶⁴ Such reproductions of Boulton are considered below.

⁸⁶⁵ Ingamells, 17; Tim Clayton, 'A Catalogue of the engraved works of Joseph Wright of Derby' in Judy Egerton, *Wright of Derby*, London, 1990, pp.256-7.

Whitbread's death, commissioned by his son.⁸⁶⁶ S.W. Reynolds, who had produced the mezzotint of Boulton after von Breda in 1796, also created mezzotints of Samuel Whitbread I after Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1803 and Samuel Whitbread II (1764-1815) after John Opie in 1804.⁸⁶⁷ The younger Whitbread was a major patron of British art, in particular of S.W. Reynolds, encouraging him in various activities including engraving, painting, architecture and landscape gardening, and it is likely that these mezzotints were commissioned because of that interest.⁸⁶⁸ By the time these prints were commissioned the younger Whitbread had moved away from direct involvement with the business, having appointed partners to manage it, and was more active in politics so could not really be considered a manufacturer.⁸⁶⁹

Most manufacturers did not need to prove that they could understand, display and influence taste and fashion. It was men like Boulton and Wedgwood who needed to be able to do this in order to suggest that their products were also tasteful and fashionable. Both men had experience of using classical and contemporary heads on cameos or medals which would have enhanced their understanding of portraiture. Fewer printed images of Wedgwood were

⁸⁶⁶ Deuchar, p.36

⁸⁶⁷ Deuchar, pp.8, 44-5, 50-1.

⁸⁶⁸ It has been suggested that Reynold's mezzotint of Boulton and the associated one of Watt may have been what brought Reynolds' work to Whitbread's attention; Whitbread knew both Boulton and Watt, having had the steam engine installed by his father, the subject of a Royal visit in 1787, upgraded in 1795. Reynolds' association with Whitbread began around 1800 and lasted for fifteen years. When it began the artist's financial affairs were in disarray and Whitbread spent more than two years trying to extract Reynolds from 'a series of complex and disadvantageous arrangements with publishers, print-sellers, and miscellaneous creditors.' It seems likely that his work on the prints after von Breda were part of this muddle, Deuchar, 1984, pp.21, 43, 72. BAH3219/4/124/464 JW to R Phillips 16 May 1796 You may see a very complete one [engine] at Mr Whitbreads brewery Chiswick Street

⁸⁶⁹ D.R. Fisher, 'Samuel Whitbread (1764-1815)', *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 19 Feb 2010.

produced than of Boulton, but Boulton had more interest and contacts in the print trade.⁸⁷⁰ The print by Sharp can be read as Boulton looking to show that he understood, could identify, appreciate and commission high quality work. Prints of manufacturers would not be expected to have high sales to collectors and connoisseurs but more often would have been given to friends. However, the high status of this line engraving may have meant that it was a print that was sought after by collectors.⁸⁷¹ It was also acquired by those who collected the output of the Soho Mint as a supplement to that collection, like George Chetwynd cited above. Having explored the market for single sheet prints of portraits with Reynolds' mezzotint after von Breda, Boulton and his son considered the distribution of Sharp's print much more carefully. It also suggested taste and high-quality in his manufactory and its products by association, it enhanced the whole Soho enterprise and not just Boulton's standing. It was produced and distributed as a status symbol, a means of anchoring Boulton's assertions of taste. Each viewer creates their own meaning for such an image by bringing their own semiotic ground to the subject; the audience are authors too. By influencing the distribution as strongly as they did for this print the Boultons were also controlling its meaning.

⁸⁷⁰ Wedgwood's 1782 portrait by Joshua Reynolds had been engraved by W. Flaxman in 1783 which may have been for a magazine. Other engravings were also made of this portrait after Wedgwood's death including Condé in 1796 and S.W. Reynolds in 1841, Ingamells, p.480. A stipple engraving by George Townley Stubbs (c.1756-1815) after George Stubbs' portrait of 1780 published by G.T. Stubbs, dated 10 February 1795, just over a month after Wedgwood's death, Ingamells, p.480, 565 NPG D18969; Wedgwood, p.104; Vincent-Kemp, pp.22-27. See pp.76-81 for Boulton and links to print artists and processes.

⁸⁷¹ Nenadic, p.209.

Magazine and book illustrations

Illustrative prints for magazines or books were a different matter. They portrayed a much broader spectrum of people and had a higher circulation to a more diverse audience than that for single sheet prints. They were often of considerably lower quality as they had to be produced quickly and cheaply.⁸⁷² Purchase of such volumes was a cheap way for people to own prints of those in the news as they were produced in large print runs.⁸⁷³ As Boulton became better known there was a move towards portraying him rather than the Principal Building in magazines and books, accompanied by biographical text explaining his business interests and contribution to society. Boulton was one of the *Public Characters of 1800-1801* which was printed for Richard Phillips of the *Monthly Magazine* in 1801.⁸⁷⁴ It cost Half a Guinea in boards and was his third annual volume of contemporary biography.⁸⁷⁵ Phillips wrote of 'Impartiality, whether political, moral, or personal [...] fair and free scope to every man's feeling and opinions; and without opposing ourselves to any of them, have afforded a liberal space to all.' He considered the work a patriotic enterprise, a form of memorial created before the subject was dead, a similar enterprise to Muncaster's gallery in his library some years later.⁸⁷⁶

Boulton is the first entry in the book whose text is not arranged in alphabetical order (there is no obvious reason for the order of arrangement). Other entries

⁸⁷² Lippincott, p.52.

⁸⁷³ Alexander, 1994, pp.107-33; Clay, 2008, pp.587-8.

⁸⁷⁴ For Phillips see p.146 and the distribution of Sharp's print above.

⁸⁷⁵ Editions for 1798-9 and 1799-1800 had already been published.

⁸⁷⁶ *Public characters of 1800-1801*, London, 1801, frontispiece, Preface, pA2, iv. Phillips also published *The Annual Necrology; or Biographical Register* which contained memoirs of distinguished persons who had died throughout the world.

in this edition included Sir William Beechey and Sir Joseph Banks. Various friends and acquaintances had been featured in the earlier editions; 1798-9 included Erasmus Darwin, the Earl of Dartmouth, William Herschel, Anna Seward, Sarah Siddons, Joseph Priestley, John Boydell and Lord Nelson; James Watt appeared in 1802-3.⁸⁷⁷ Each volume consisted of a series of essays, the one on Boulton was eight pages and covered his early years, the development of the site at Soho, the mechanical paintings, steam engines, 'the art of coining', the Soho Foundry, patents, his importance as an employer, his family and membership of various scientific societies.⁸⁷⁸ The volume included a folded plate inserted into the front with small etched outline sketches of twenty-four of the forty-one subjects, signed by J. Owen. A key was provided for these portraits, the earliest version of which spelt Boulton's name incorrectly, and asserted that most of the portraits were 'striking likenesses'. The Dublin edition placed this key with the list of contents at the beginning of the volume rather than opposite page 600. It offered more explanation:

We have as usual inserted some outline sketches of those Persons of whom we could readily procure correct Portraits. We offer these to the Public simply as rude characteristic sketches, conveying only general ideas, and probably not in every instance equally fortunate. We flatter ourselves, however, that in most instances these outlines will be readily recognized by those persons who know the parties, and to posterity and those who do not know them, will convey an impression sufficiently accurate.⁸⁷⁹

⁸⁷⁷ *Public Characters of 1798-1799. A new edition. Enlarged and corrected to the 25th March. To be continued annually*, London, 1799. As David Miller notes, the fact that Boulton was included before Watt suggests Boulton was the better known at the time, Miller, 2009, p.61.

⁸⁷⁸ See appendix 1.7 for this text.

⁸⁷⁹ *Public Characters of 1800-1801*, Dublin, p.vii.

This addition implied that there had been criticism of some of the likenesses. The image of Boulton shows him from the opposite side to his other portraits and does not appear to be after any of the known portraits.⁸⁸⁰

A review of the volume in *The Critical Review* stated ‘the life of Mr. Boulton is what such lives should be – a faithful narrative of facts, not leaning either to extravagant panegyric, or to oblique censure.’ A section of the text was reprinted ‘though the facts be generally known’.⁸⁸¹ The text from *Public Characters* was reprinted with an acknowledgement in the *Philosophical Magazine* in 1803.⁸⁸² This was an almost exact reprint with some typographical errors and the deletion of one paragraph about Boulton’s most recent patent for a ‘Method of raising Water and other Fluids’ an ample description of which was apparently to be found in the *Monthly Magazine*, ‘a publication which is in every body’s hands’.⁸⁸³ It is possible that Tilloch deleted this paragraph as he did not wish to advertise a rival magazine. The reprint was accompanied by a different image of Boulton from the one in *Public Characters*, a stipple engraving by K. Mackenzie (fl.1801-10) after the von Breda portrait of Boulton.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸⁰ See below for consideration of why Boulton was generally portrayed with the right-hand side of his face towards the viewer.

⁸⁸¹ *The Critical Review or Annals of Literature*, May 1803, p.81.

⁸⁸² *Philosophical Magazine; comprehending the various branches of science, the liberal and fine arts, agriculture, manufactures and commerce* Vol. XV, 1803, frontispiece of bound volume, pp.59-63. David Miller has noted a continuing reliance on this text well in to the nineteenth century, Miller, 2009, p.62.

⁸⁸³ Phillips, p.7. There was also an additional footnote about being unable to ascertain the exact number of hands ‘employed by Mr. Boulton at this time’.

⁸⁸⁴ Ingamells, pp. 65, 562. The NPG database gives Mackenzie as fl. 1799-1810. Roberts, p.68 suggests this was included in the *Union Magazine* of August 1802. It has not been possible to locate a copy of this magazine so it is not clear what accompanied it but it is likely to have been the text of *Public Characters*.

Various other versions of this print in different borders and frames are known, now removed from their original context.⁸⁸⁵ It is not an accomplished engraving, the eyes, nose and wig differ from von Breda's portrait. Mackenzie specialised in these small stipple engravings in ovals or frames for magazines.⁸⁸⁶ The von Breda portrait was then over ten years old but was presumably more accessible to Mackenzie, it is unlikely that Beechey would have wished his portrait to be associated with a low quality engraving, particularly as Sharp's line engraving had just appeared.⁸⁸⁷ The close frame of Mackenzie's engraving excludes the Principal Building, but does include the buildings of the 1791 Mint, suggesting that he did not understand the relevance of the Principal Building. This was perhaps an indication that by this date Boulton the man was more widely recognised than the form of the Principal Building. The image is cropped so as to include only Boulton, the drape in the background and a hint of buildings beyond them. The minerals, medal and magnifying glass are all omitted with the result that Boulton's right hand looks awkward as you cannot see that it is holding a magnifying glass. The image is credited as 'CF de Breda R.A. of Stockholm pinxt K Mackenzie sculp' and was bound into the front of the magazine. It was titled 'Matthew Boulton Esqr.' but the accompanying text draws attention to Boulton's fellowship of 'the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh, and of the Free Economical Society of Petersburg, as well as many other foreign

⁸⁸⁵ Various examples are to be found in the Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, icon boxes, Matthew Boulton. Benton letters in RP1532 suggest a McKenzie version with a date of 7 Sept 1802 which may be the version in the *Union Magazine*.

⁸⁸⁶ For instance Joseph Black after a Tassie profile, 1801, Elizabeth Carter after wax cameo by Joachim Smith, Elizabeth Griffith, actress and playwright 1801 for *Ladies Monthly Magazine* after Rev J Thomas, Adam Smith after Tassie, 1809, Ingamells, pp.56, 94, 218, 441. Lady Hamilton after W.M. Bennett, 1803 NPG D23540; Princess Sophia after W. M. Craig, 1806 NPG D23522.

⁸⁸⁷ Although the von Breda was over ten years old, it had been engraved in 1796 which ought to have provided it some copyright protection.

institutions.⁸⁸⁸ Inclusion in *Public Characters* had meant that there was readily available biographical information which was reprinted in magazines, sometimes accompanied by Mackenzie's engraving.⁸⁸⁹ Interest was shifting away from images of the manufactory to those of Boulton himself, as he became more famous; the facts of his life were 'generally known'.⁸⁹⁰ These magazines reached huge and diverse audiences, but Boulton and those around him were able to exercise less control over the magazines that reprinted the biographical material and the quality of the accompanying images. The magazines in which the material appeared and the audiences they reached also contributed to the authorship and meanings of these images.

Boulton died in August 1809 and the earliest obituaries featured only text.⁸⁹¹ The September edition of the *European Magazine* had a two page obituary of Boulton as the first piece in the magazine, accompanied by a head and shoulders engraving by W. Ridley after Beechey titled Mathew [sic] Boulton Esqr F.R.S (figure 42). This plate was bound into the front of the volume and highlighted on the contents page, the volume 'embellished with, 1, a portrait of the late Matthew Boulton Esq.; and, 2, and a view of the New Theatre Royal at Covent Garden.', the only plates in that edition.⁸⁹² The accompanying text mentioned national pride at adding Boulton to the list of British worthies whose

⁸⁸⁸ *Philosophical Magazine*, Vol. XV, 1803, p.63.

⁸⁸⁹ These included *The Monthly Visitor*, Number XIII, 1802; *Philosophical Magazine*, Vol. XV, 1803, p.63 and probably *Union Magazine*, August 1802.

⁸⁹⁰ *The Critical Review or Annals of Literature*, May 1803, p.81.

⁸⁹¹ Obituaries without portraits included *Monthly Magazine* 1 Oct 1809, pp.328-330, *The Caledonian Mercury*, 4 Sept 1809, *The Lady's Magazine*, Sept 1809, pp.397-400. The latter did include plates of Covent Garden theatre, London fashionable full dress and a new pattern for the bottom of a dress.

⁸⁹² *The European Magazine*, September 1809, contents page.

portraits had adorned the volume. It outlined Boulton's life and accomplishments and ended with a description of his funeral which they reported had been calculated at £2000 'and in this instance, if ever, the expenses of funeral honours was well bestowed.'⁸⁹³

A previously unknown print of Boulton has recently come to light in a pamphlet entitled *Memoirs of Matthew Boulton Esq. F.R.S. Late of Soho, Handsworth, Staffordshire*, Birmingham, 1809 (figure 43).⁸⁹⁴ Printed by T. Chapman in Birmingham in 1809 it contains an outline of Boulton's life and an engraving by Francis Eginton junior. The text was reproduced in the *Caledonian Mercury* of 4 September 1809 and the September issue of *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, but neither publication used the print and it is likely that the text was made available before the pamphlet was printed. The pamphlet may also have been issued to friends as a gift, a memorial of Boulton, the copy which survives at Yale belonged to Maria Edgeworth whose father Richard Lovell Edgeworth was a member of the Lunar Society. It was presumably printed in a very small quantity as so far only one copy has been located.

The print is a frontispiece to the pamphlet and is a stipple engraving with some hatching, a form in which Eginton junior was practised.⁸⁹⁵ It must have

⁸⁹³ 'The Late Matthew Boulton Esq of Soho [...]', *The European Magazine*, September 1809, p.164.

⁸⁹⁴ *Memoirs of Matthew Boulton, Esq. F.R.S. Late of Soho, Handsworth, Staffordshire*, Birmingham, 1809, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Maria Edgeworth Collection Gen Mss 330 Series II Box 4 Folder 131. This pamphlet was discovered by Rita McLean and I am grateful to her for letting me know of its existence.

⁸⁹⁵ BMAG 1997v10 is an album of engravings by Eginton junior which includes a number of small sentimental stipple subjects.

had to be produced very quickly and this is apparent in the quality of the image, particularly the treatment of the eyes, nose and mouth. It shows Boulton at half length, seated in front of a curtain. The jacket and shirt are based on Beechey's portrait, the face and wig are probably also based on this portrait, although this is less certain. Behind him is a draped curtain lifted to reveal the manufactory building as in the von Breda, not the mineral specimen in an alcove of the Beechey. However, the buildings have been adjusted to show part of the Principal Building immediately next to the drape, making the most of the limited space available in the pamphlet. It is likely that this alteration took place in order to show at least a part of the Principal Building which had come to symbolise Soho, a building that Eginton junior had already illustrated.⁸⁹⁶ How recognisable the building was to a wider audience with less than half of it visible is debatable, but if the pamphlet was intended for circulation to close friends they would undoubtedly have understood what it showed.

Conclusion

The printed portraits produced of Boulton are strikingly different in their handling. Sharp's was a line engraving, a technique where parallel lines and cross-hatching were used to build up the picture. This was a more prestigious and expensive technique than mezzotint (used for Reynold's engraving after

⁸⁹⁶ See catalogue 8 and 10.

von Breda) as it took longer and required more skill to execute. Sharp's work, and in particular this engraving, were considered outstanding examples of the technique. In contrast the illustration for *Public Characters* was a swift line sketch which would have been executed quickly and was intended only to give a 'general idea' of the subject.⁸⁹⁷ Eginton junior and Mackenzie's engravings would also have been executed quickly in order to meet deadlines. The prints were produced for different reasons and different audiences. Reynolds' was produced at the request of von Breda, flattering to Boulton and intended initially to raise the status and awareness of the artist rather than the sitter. Sharp's was meant as a celebration of the sitter, a mark of respect for an audience of friends, admirers and useful contacts, Eginton's to serve as a reminder for an audience already familiar with Boulton, and the others as an illustration for magazine readers.

Each of the portraits of Boulton was a product of multiple authorship and it is difficult to determine the degree of influence of each of those authors upon the final image. Boulton grew in status and confidence over the time the portraits were produced and would have wanted a significant input into how he was portrayed. Each artist would have brought their own ideas of composition and style, particularly the high status painters such as Beechey. The artists would also have brought their expectations and understanding of the character of Boulton to the sitting, as well as knowledge of how Boulton and his manufactory had been depicted in the past.⁸⁹⁸ Beechey knew Boulton well, having stayed at Soho for a month and Millar was an old family friend. The

⁸⁹⁷ *Public Characters of 1800-1801*, Dublin, p.vii.

⁸⁹⁸ West, 2004, p.22.

other artists would have had less personal knowledge of their sitter. Boulton was also involved in authorship in that he selected the artist, he would have known each artist's earlier works and selected an artist with an idea of the kind of portrait they were likely to produce. In each of the instances considered, Boulton or a member of his family probably paid for the portrait and, therefore, had a greater degree of control over the artist and, as such were significant potential authors. If the portraits requested by John Rennie or Lord Muncaster had been painted, those men could have had an influence on the finished portrait although it is likely that Muncaster would have been able to exercise considerably more authority than John Rennie. The multiplication of the original portrait, whether as a painted copy, a miniature or an engraving brought the hand of another author to the production. The importance of the engraver is evident from the very different images produced by Mackenzie and Reynolds after the von Breda. Francis Eginton junior combined elements of von Breda and Beechey's portraits and was probably working for M.R. Boulton, bringing yet more people to the production of the image. These portraits and their derivatives all clearly display multiple authorship, Boulton did not have full control over how he was depicted, although he was able to exert influence to varying degrees.

The conventions of depiction, such as the hand in waistcoat of the Schaak, would also have affected the layout of each image. As Wolff argues, 'using existing codes and conventions more or less uncritically or unconsciously, the author/artist is nevertheless reproducing aspects of ideology encoded in

these.⁸⁹⁹ Those who participated in the evolution of such practices are also authors of the works influenced by those conventions. The two best known portraits show Boulton holding a medal and a magnifying glass; established artistic practices would have influenced this selection, but Boulton is likely to have been instrumental in depicting such a clear emblem of his Mint.

Between the von Breda and the Beechey there was a shift from the portrayal of mineral specimens as ambiguous and possibly connected to manufacture, to the clear depiction as a collector's item, a scientific specimen, by the addition of a glass dome. This could have come about through the influence of the higher status Beechey, or through a growth in Boulton's understanding of the interpretation of such items, perhaps resulting from discussion of the von Breda portrait, or a combination of both. L.F. Abbott's portrait of Boulton does not use a medal but still signifies Boulton's main interest by showing him with his hands folded over one of his notebooks titled 'Mint' (figure 44). Abbott does not portray Boulton in the sombre black of the Beechey and von Breda, but adds pink and yellow waistcoats and gilt buttons, which is probably more like Boulton's wardrobe.⁹⁰⁰ Most portraits show Boulton in three-quarter profile with the right side of his face towards the viewer, even the Abbott, where the left-hand side of his body is closest to the viewer still places the right-hand side of his face towards the viewer. This was probably to give less emphasis to his weaker eye. His left eyelid is shown as drooping slightly in the later portraits, it is depicted, not hidden or ignored, but it was important

⁸⁹⁹ Wolff, p.126.

⁹⁰⁰ For further consideration of this portrait including Boulton's taste in waistcoats see Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.74-5.

that the eye closest to the viewer could appear to gaze out confidently.⁹⁰¹

The only illustration which shows Boulton's face from the other side is the one in *Public Characters* which appears to be an amalgamation of different sources.

Each of the printed images of Boulton considered in this chapter is associated with some text, sometimes only a title and the names of the associated artists, sometimes with an essay on his life and achievements or the personal lines added to Anne Boulton's copy of Sharp's print. Each of the authors of text anchored or relayed meanings of the images and as such, were also authors of the images. The recognition of the importance of such text is apparent in M.R. Boulton's deliberations on the best way to caption Sharp's print. The Reynolds mezzotint was simply captioned *Matthew Boulton Esqr.*, while the Sharp image used the addition of F.R.S. and F.S.A. to signpost Boulton's membership of London institutions and his movement towards gentleman status. The magazine articles, book and pamphlet were able to use accompanying essays to expand on the information they could include on Boulton and, therefore, were not so reliant on the image alone for conveying appropriate messages about the sitter; they could more fully guide the viewer's interpretation of the image. These texts could relay Boulton's membership of various societies, including foreign institutions which could not be condensed into captions. Thus the texts could outline the variety of his enterprises and his national significance. *Public Characters* reduced the input of the image to the bare minimum, admitting that they were intended only to

⁹⁰¹ NPG 1532, the von Breda and Beechey all show it drooping slightly. It is even more marked in some of the derivatives of these portraits, particularly the Reynolds mezzotint and Lady Beechey's miniature, NPG1595, see Ingamells, p.65.

convey 'general ideas' and relying on the text to convey information.⁹⁰²

Audiences were also authors, generating their own meaning for each image at each viewing and the accompanying text guided that interpretation.

Audiences could also influence the way an image was read. Anne Boulton had a unique print of her father, specially added to and annotated to make it a sentimental and affectionate piece. Lord Muncaster hung an image of Boulton in his pantheon where the close association with other portraits suggested a very particular reading of the image; it depicted Boulton as a 'worthy', a man who had done great honour to his country.⁹⁰³

As Boulton became better known, partly as the result of acquiring the contract for the national coinage, it became possible to rely on his image to signify the products of his manufactory. This move towards depicting Boulton rather than the building chimed with an increasing public interest in personalities, fuelled by the growth of portraiture and increased availability of printed books and periodicals which made images and biographies of people more accessible.⁹⁰⁴ Different portraits could signify different meanings dependent on various factors, including setting, title and medium. With the Sharp print Boulton was able to organise a high status image, associated with the academy and an outstanding practitioner of line engraving. That exercise linked with the exhibition of Beechey's portrait at the RA and raised Boulton's profile further, creating demand for additional images of him. Inclusion in *Public Characters* provided readily available biographical information and this

⁹⁰² *Public Characters*, London, 1801, frontispiece.

⁹⁰³ BAH3782/12/53/23 Lord Muncaster to MB 23 Sept 1808.

⁹⁰⁴ Nenadic; Martin Postle, 'The Modern Apostles': Joshua Reynolds and the Creation of Celebrity' in Postle (ed.) *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*, London, 2005, pp.17-33.

text, sometimes accompanied by Mackenzie's engraving was published in a wider range of magazines than images of the manufactory had ever been. While the products of Soho may have been of interest to readers of *The Monthly Visitor and New Family Magazine*, a picture of the factory was not. 'Fine Portraits and Biography' were regular features of the magazine and Boulton was included in June 1802.⁹⁰⁵ The availability of images and text on Boulton cemented his place as the figurehead at the top of the Soho brand, but also meant that they were circulated to an even larger audience than the images of the manufactory had been; his portraits brought him to an even wider recognition.

⁹⁰⁵ Advertisement for *The Monthly Visitor and New Family Magazine*, bound into William Falconer, *The Shipwreck: A Poem*, London, 1803.

CONCLUSION

As this thesis has shown, by the last years of his life Boulton had succeeded in clearly linking the names of Boulton and Soho with the products of his manufactory. His active promotion of the entire output of Soho, the drawing together of the various products together under one name and one symbol, the elegant Principal Building, undoubtedly contributed to this growing recognition of Soho. In later years, particularly with the success of the Mint, a business which was Boulton's alone in contrast to earlier partnerships with Fothergill and Watt, images of Boulton too came to stand for the site and its output. The terms and images became interchangeable, each signified the other. When captions were being considered for a medal to commemorate a royal visit to Soho in 1805, J.F. Tuffen told M.R. Boulton 'Even Mr Boulton is designated by 'Soho', of which all the World knows already, & will always know he was the founder [...]'.⁹⁰⁶ Ambrose Weston, solicitor to the businesses and the family, wrote:

The name of Boulton will accompany Soho to the end of Time. And will not Soho be known without adding Staffordshire. This would be vile Taste; you might as well put in 'in the parish of Handsworth'! – and if that is not enough [...] near Birmingham in Warwickshire [...] this would do if you were advertising a New Quack Medicine. For the honour of Mr Boulton and Soho let *Soho* speak for itself as Rome or Athens would do.⁹⁰⁷

Boulton and James Bisset had seen the physical presence of Soho as standing as a long-term memorial to Boulton.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁶ 3782/13/39/186 JW and John Furnell Tuffen to MRB 27 Jun 1805. The medal was never produced, Pollard, 1970, p.302.

⁹⁰⁷ 3782/13/48/51 Ambrose Weston to MRB 1 July 1805.

⁹⁰⁸ See pp.102 and 195.

There were times when it was intended to use images of Boulton and the manufactory together, emphasising the link between them. They both appeared in von Breda's portrait which was exhibited at the R.A, and in S.W. Reynolds' mezzotint after that portrait (figures 37 and 38). However, Mackenzie's engraving cropped the von Breda portrait in such a way that the link between the manufacturer and his recognisable manufactory was lost, a link which Eginton junior reinstated in his posthumous engraving (figure 43). Stebbing Shaw had suggested including Sharp's engraving (figure 41) in his *History of Staffordshire* (1801), alongside the views of the manufactory and house (figures 32 and 33). This did not happen, probably because of a wish to maintain the status and exclusivity of the engraving.

In 1802 Myles Swinney, the Birmingham printer who had produced the *Directory* that included Soho in 1773, passed on a letter asking for 'a likeness of Mr Boulton with his Concurrence to have it copied for my Friend Mr GR Ward [...] any other print of his extensive Manufactory, will be very acceptable'. Swinney reassured that Ward 'will not be niggardly in the Introduction of any Plates in such works as he may publish.' Ward himself had explained 'I am concern'd in a Magazine & wish to give in the next number a Head of Mr Boulton in your neighbourhood.'⁹⁰⁹ He asked for a sketch of Boulton's life and a drawing of any piece of useful machinery of his invention, 'either steam or anything else' suggesting that it 'wou'd serve as a Medium of exhibiting any

⁹⁰⁹ It is noteworthy that the name of the periodical is not mentioned so unless the reader was able to deduce it from its association with Ward he had no means of knowing how the account would be handled. A G.R. Ward appears on the frontispiece of Rupert Green, *A Brief History of Worcester*, Worcester, 1806 as a bookseller in Paternoster Row, London but that is the only reference to Ward that has been found. No coverage of Boulton and Soho in a magazine that fits this description has been found. The request arrived when Boulton was very ill so may not have been taken further.

thing he may wish to promote the Sale of'.⁹¹⁰ Ward asked only for an image of Boulton and a piece of machinery, again suggesting that Boulton was well enough known by now to stand for the whole business. Swinney extended the request to include the 'extensive Manufactory', linking the man and the place once again. The longest lasting links between the images of Boulton and Soho are carved in stone and stamped in copper. The façade of the Principal Building was included on Boulton's memorial at St. Mary's, Handsworth and a medal was produced c.1809-10, showing a bust of Boulton and the Principal Building, based on the memorial (figure 45).⁹¹¹ The inscription on that monument mentioned his 'application of a Taste correct and refined' and his 'Leaving his establishment of Soho a noble Monument of his Genius, Industry and Success.'⁹¹²

Boulton's son did not continue to use the Principal Building or his own image to the effect that his father had. Initially he did follow a similar approach, using a stylised Principal Building to represent the celebrations for peace in 1814 (figure 35). In 1835 he commissioned the architect Richard Bridgens to make two Pencil drawings of 'the front of Soho' for use on a card and a bill head, continuing to use this as a symbol of the firm on business stationery.⁹¹³ However, the published views of Soho produced during M.R. Boulton's time depicted the site from the rear, showing only the back of the Principal Building

⁹¹⁰ 3782/12/47/244 Myles Swinney to unknown, 7 August 1802.

⁹¹¹ This was not struck at Soho but elsewhere, David Symons, catalogue entry 391 in Mason (ed.), 2009.

⁹¹² See appendix 1.8 for full text.

⁹¹³ 3782/13/18/143 R.Bridgens to MRB 26 Jul 1834.

with the remainder of the manufactory set out in front (figures 46 and 47).⁹¹⁴ This was a significant departure from Boulton senior's strategy of consistent views of the Principal Building to reinforce its status as a symbol. By the time of Boulton's grandson the businesses were moved from Soho and the manufactory demolished as the surrounding area became increasingly gentrified.⁹¹⁵ It looked for a while as if the Principal Building would survive, converted into 'four first-rate dwellings' by removing internal walls, preserving 'the principal elevation of the well-known building' and making it into the housing it had been designed to resemble, although not a single grand residence.⁹¹⁶ However, for reasons that are unclear this did not happen and it was pulled down in 1863 and the materials from which it was built were sold.⁹¹⁷

The use of prints to promote a location with an iconic symbol was not unique. The Iron Bridge at Coalbrookdale (1779) was depicted in widely circulated prints, and the complex at Coalbrookdale had also been illustrated.⁹¹⁸ What was different about Soho was the consistency of the viewpoint, the repeated reinforcement of the same building from the same angle and the suppression of alternatives, Boulton's control over access to the site and the people who depicted that site. Boulton created a brand identity of Soho, its image and

⁹¹⁴ William West, *Picturesque Views, and Descriptions of Cities, Towns, Castles, Mansions [...] in Staffordshire and Shropshire [...]*, Birmingham, 1830, informed similar image in William Hutton rev James Guest, *An history of Birmingham*, 6th edition, Birmingham, 1835; *The Penny Magazine*, No.220, 5 September 1835.

⁹¹⁵ Demidowicz, forthcoming.

⁹¹⁶ 'The end of the Soho Works', *The Engineer*, 2 July 1858, p.17.

⁹¹⁷ Demidowicz, forthcoming.

⁹¹⁸ Barrie Trinder, *The Most Extraordinary District in the World: Ironbridge & Coalbrookdale*, Chichester, 2005 (3rd edition), p.1; Whitfield, p.219.

output, although he would not have recognised the term.⁹¹⁹ This supports the increasing recognition in the wider literature of this early emergence of branding by men like Wedgwood, Chippendale and Crowley.⁹²⁰ What was particularly interesting about Boulton's approach was the use of printed images as part of this construction. It is, however, unlikely that there was an overall plan to achieve this and, like so much at Soho, it probably happened on an ad hoc basis, guided by Boulton and his intimate circle, businessmen like Keir and Garbett, artists like the Egintons and Phillip, and influential friends and patrons like Mrs Montagu and Joseph Banks.

My archival research has clearly demonstrated that the images of Boulton and Soho were collective productions with Boulton and his circle, artists, publishers, printers and authors among those influencing the final form of the images considered. The audience that was expected for each of the images also affected its appearance; this is shown by the differences between images. When a picture of Soho was required for a publication it was not simply a case of reusing an existing example, new works were created with adjustments, to ensure that the image was as effective as possible for its anticipated audience. The research has provided previously unknown material on the commissioning, production and reception of these images by drawing on the vast archives of Soho and sources beyond. This has allowed informed discussion about possible intentions, the meanings and messages

⁹¹⁹ The *OED* gives 1854 as the earliest use of brand as a 'particular sort or class of goods, as indicated by the trademarks on them' and 1927 for brand identity, 'a set of attributes designed to distinguish a particular firm, product, or line, with the intention of promoting awareness and loyalty on the part of consumers', "brand, n⁶", *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, *OED online*, accessed 27 May 2010; "brand identity, n", *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, *OED online*, draft additions November 2004, accessed 27 May 2010

⁹²⁰ See pp.59-61.

Boulton and the other authors hoped to convey, whilst remaining aware of the problems with the notion of intention outlined in the introduction. The research has also highlighted the polysemic nature of such images, the way in which one image such as the *Insurance Society Poster* (1792) could mean different things to different audiences (figure 12). The importance of understanding the semiotic ground of images' production and reception has been made clear, especially the different aesthetic codes and representational conventions audiences apply to the interpretation of images and the implications for meaning making around the images.

The ways in which these images were reproduced and distributed, and how this affected potential audiences has also been considered. In order to become a recognisable symbol, images of the Principal Building and Boulton needed to be widely reproduced and accessible to potential customers. Some images were made to be reproduced while for others like the portraits, consideration of reproduction came some time after the original, and that reproduction was undertaken in a different format. Boulton recognised the importance of dissemination of the images so careful planning went into the distribution of the Sharp engraving to ensure that people were made aware of this print with its associations of high-quality and membership of the establishment.

My research has reconnected some images with their original settings, the volumes in which they were situated and restored the link with accompanying text. This has highlighted the extent to which images and text anchored and

relayed each other's meanings, guiding viewers towards particular readings. However, it has been argued that part of the reason that many of the images have remained so powerful is that, although originally accompanied by text, they were always designed to work alone as it was recognised that image and text could be separated and viewed independently. The images have outlived the text; they are frequently reproduced while the accompanying descriptions are used less often. Modern writers more often turn to the descriptions of the visitors to the site, perhaps believing them to be more impartial. In fact, they echo many of the themes of the accompanying text, giving a flavour of the information that was imparted during a guided tour of Soho. The images and texts were highly partial representations of reality, elements of the factory not yet built were depicted and undesirable elements were excluded. These absences, notably including depiction of the workers who were removed in favour of images of glamorous visitors, help us to understand which audiences Boulton was targeting and the messages he wished to communicate.

The thesis has highlighted the validity of a multi-disciplinary approach, of the combination of archival with visual evidence and theoretical methodologies borrowed from a range of disciplines. This approach has provided a great deal of insight into possible motivations and intentions for the production of these images. It has also emphasised the importance of the hermeneutic problem, however hard we may try, we cannot think ourselves back into the semiotic ground of an eighteenth-century viewer; we cannot abandon our own semiotic ground. It has demonstrated that such images are indeed a social

production, and that there is much to be gained from considering them as such. By avoiding thinking of them in isolation, and instead by gaining an awareness of the conditions of their development, production and reception much more can be gained from such images.

CATALOGUE

This catalogue covers objects from the collections of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG). Some relevant material in Birmingham Archives and Heritage (BAH) housed in Birmingham Central Library is also included and where associated material exists in other collections this has been noted. The material within the catalogue has been added to BMAG's collection management system and will be added to BAH's in due course, making the results of this research available to curators, archivists and researchers. The catalogue is arranged largely chronologically with the exception of images from the Phillip album which have been placed together to allow discussion of the material as a group. As this album covers such a wide date range it has been placed at the end of the catalogue. In order to avoid duplication some material is cross referenced to the discursive text of the thesis's chapters and vice versa.

All measurements are in millimetres with height given before width. In some instances multiple copies of images survive on different sized sheets as some examples have been cut down. Where this is the case the size of the image is given, rather than the size of the paper and this is indicated.

1. *BATIMENT VÛ PAR DEVANT* and *BATIMENT VÛ PAR DERRIERE*

unknown artist, c. 1769

(figure 8)

Pair of views of Soho Manufactory

left: view from the front with Principal Building in the foreground

right: view from the back with the housing of Brook Row in the foreground and rear of the Principal Building in the background.

etching

inscr left: above 'BATIMENT VÛ PAR DEVANT.' below 'La manufacture de Boulton & Fothergill de Birmingham Fait des Chaines de montres de different metaux des Boucles, Boutons & en general toutes sortes de Quinquilleries.' [Building seen from the front. The Manufactory of Boulton and Fothergill of Birmingham Manufacturers make watch chains of different metals buckles, buttons and all sorts of hardwares.]

inscr right: above 'BATIMENT VÛ PAR DERRIERE', below, 'Die Fabrick von Boulton & Fothergill zu Birmingham Verfertiget alle Sorten von Uhrkellen, Schnallen, Knopfe, un andere kurtze Waaren.' [Building seen from behind. The Manufactory of Boulton and Fothergill in Birmingham manufactures all kinds of watch chains, buckles, buttons and other small wares.]

paper size: 70 x 179

BAH82934, *Timmins Collection of original letters, newspaper cuttings, portraits, views etc. relating to Matthew Boulton, James Watt and Soho, [1760-]* Vol. 1 p.59.⁹²¹ There is no earlier provenance for this item and it is currently the only known copy.

Lit: Loggie in Mason (ed.), 2009, p.24; Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.118-119.

Work on the development of the buildings at Soho by Demidowicz has dated these views to not earlier than 1765-6 when the Principal Building was built and not later than 1775 when the first engine house was built.⁹²² They appear to have been cut from a larger sheet as the edges are not square; this may

⁹²¹ Material collected by Samuel Timmins in the nineteenth century and mounted in scrapbooks. He collected from a variety of sources and some of his material would have originally formed part of the Matthew Boulton Papers (now MS3782), Quickenden, 1990, p.361, n.11. Timmins had edited *Birmingham and the Midland Hardware District* (1866), was the Chair of the Birmingham Library Committee in the 1890s and had worked with George Tangye to ensure the preservation of the Boulton and Watt Collection, Tim Procter, 'MS3147 Administrative History', Archives of Soho Catalogue.

⁹²² Demidowicz, forthcoming; Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), pp.118-9 dates them to 1768 on the basis of William Jupp's bill, see p.69.

have taken place when they were pasted into the scrapbook. They are printed side by side and there is a fold line between them but there is no way of ascertaining when this was made, it may be contemporary with printing or use, or much later. The French and German captions suggest they were intended for distribution on the Continent.⁹²³ They are likely to have been carried by continental salesmen or to have been part of one of the sheets of engraved patterns sent abroad as part of Boulton's drive to avoid using factors.⁹²⁴ This ephemeral and disposable use could account for the lack of survival of other examples.

The left-hand view shows the Principal Building in the foreground with the courtyards and other buildings behind. It shows the Beauty of the Principal Building, its regularity and smoothness conforming to Burke's definition.⁹²⁵ The image also highlights the scale of the enterprise behind, the working areas that supported the 'front face'. The roofs of the buildings at the back of the Great Court and the courtyard immediately behind the Principal Building are shown, and beyond them are the other courtyards surrounded by buildings. The 1761 water mill is visible with a Dutch-gable and the waterwheel in the shadow.⁹²⁶ The 'canal' is shown in the foreground with two vases on pedestals opposite the front entrance.⁹²⁷ These were immediately alongside the canal and were a decorative feature rather than acting as gateposts, they framed the entrance to the Principal Building when looking

⁹²³ See p.71

⁹²⁴ See pp.65-66.

⁹²⁵ Burke, [1757], 1990.

⁹²⁶ Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.118-9.

⁹²⁷ Although referred to as the canal this water formed part of the system to circulate water to the mill and was not a navigable waterway, see Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.116-120.

from the other side of the canal and were a feature when leaving through the main entrance. They are not visible on any of the later images and were presumably removed.

The artist has misunderstood or deliberately misrepresented the function of the entrance to the Principal Building, showing a carriage and team of horses with wheel ruts as if they had just emerged from the entrance. It has been interpreted, and drawn, as if it were an archway leading into the courtyard behind. In fact, these large double doors led into the building which suggests that the engraver had never visited the site or wished to emphasise the grand entrance.⁹²⁸ One of the carriages in Eginton's 1773 aquatint (figure 9) can also be read as if it has just emerged from that entrance.⁹²⁹ Eginton knew the site very well, so he is likely to have been using this as a device to make the building appear grander than it actually was. The similar view in Swinney's Directory (figure 10, catalogue 2) has had this carriage turned around so it no longer reads in this way as it would have been seen by other Birmingham manufacturers, people who knew that this was not a carriage entrance.

Figures are visible in the front view, both on the forecourt of the Principal Building and in the courtyards beyond. In the courtyards a man is pushing a barrow, another carries a bundle on a stick across his shoulder and other groups of people appear to be in discussion. Outside, a laden coach is driven

⁹²⁸ The layout can be seen in plans and elevations drawn up in 1858 when there were proposals to convert the Principal Building into four houses, *The Engineer*, 2 July 1858, p.17. The current location of these drawings is unknown but they are reproduced in Eric Deleib with Michael Roberts, *The Great Silver Manufactory: Matthew Boulton and the Birmingham Silversmiths 1760-1790*, London, 1971, pp.30-31. Photographs in the files at Soho House include the date 1858 which has been cropped in Deleib.

⁹²⁹ For this aquatint see p.76.

on, a man with a bundle on a stick may be meant to represent a chapman, and another figure walks down the side of the Mill Pool. The figures shown in this image are those that would be associated with a working factory suggesting a well-ordered, productive site. They contrast markedly with the grand visitors who would appear in later images of the site. In further reference to the working factory, smoke and the waterwheel are depicted. The building at the back right, a workshop, has more windows than any of the others suggesting it was built for an activity which required good light.

The rear view, with a German caption, looks from the housing of Brook Row across the other buildings to the back of the Principal Building (see figure 3). The back of the Principal Building shows four storeys plus the higher central section while that of the front shows three. The building was built into a slope and did have more storeys at the back than the front.⁹³⁰ Again, irregular windows give clues to where additional light was required for specific tasks. A clock is visible on the courtyard side of the Rolling Mill Office building. This could be intended to signify order and a regulated workforce but is in shadow and not immediately obvious. By the time of Eginton's aquatint the clock had been moved and was depicted more clearly in order to indicate these attributes.⁹³¹ This rear view does not include any figures at all. The relevance of this is not clear, but they may be intended to show different moments in the day.⁹³²

⁹³⁰ The 1858 plans show that ground level at the back was more than a storey lower than the front as steps lead up to the doors in the rear elevation, Delieb, pp.30-31.

⁹³¹ See p.83.

⁹³² I am grateful to Richard Clay for discussion on this. The clock does not show a clear time.

Some detail of the surrounding landscape is shown in front and to the right of, the buildings in each view. There is room to show the landscape to the back and left, and it would have been visible from the viewpoint used but it is not shown, probably to avoid detracting from the prominence of the buildings. These are axonometric views from an aerial viewpoint. The parallel lines remain parallel without diminishing to create perspective; they are constructed from theoretical principles rather than from direct observation. The aerial viewpoint was a popular method of depicting estates or towns, it emphasised the number of buildings and offered privileged access to those buildings behind the impressive frontage. Later views of the Principal Building would look to emphasise scale differently, in line with contemporary practice, by using a low viewpoint and illustrating the size of the site by including the buildings of Rolling Mill Row, to show it went back beyond the Principal Building.⁹³³

The small size of these images means they are unlikely to be the works prepared for Feilde's book on Staffordshire. The drawings undertaken by the surveyor William Jupp in 1769 which were used as source material for Rooker were likely to have been intended for this volume.⁹³⁴ As suggested above it is likely that the engraver of these small views did not visit Soho but used either Jupp's drawings or Rooker's engravings after them as source material. The engraver has made extensive use of parallel lines to create shade, to show water and to imply form. A similar technique was used to an even greater extent in the illustration in Swinney's Directory (figure 10) so they may be by

⁹³³ For this shift in styles see p.82.

⁹³⁴ See p.69.

the same artist. The only known example of these views is not well printed; it has some lines breaking up. In places the construction of the image is crude and there are problems with the three dimensional rendering. The cupola of the Principal Building is offset, the junction between the main roof and that of the left hand pediment is problematic (partly to do with trying to represent shadow) and the back left building of Brook Row looks very flat. This suggests the work was not undertaken by a specialist in architectural engraving such as Edward Rooker. They would date to about the same time as his set of six London scenes including Blackfriars Bridge under construction which are far more sophisticated representations.⁹³⁵ Benjamin Green had contributed twenty-five plates of architectural subjects to Robert Dodsley's *London and Its Environs Described* in 1761 so he is also unlikely to have been the engraver of these small views.⁹³⁶

2. A Perspective View of Soho Manufactory near Birmingham

unknown artist, 1773
(figure 10)

View from road showing Principal Building and Rolling Mill Row with Mill Pool.
Etching

Folded into the frontispiece of *The New Birmingham Directory, and Gentleman and Tradesman's Compleat Memorandum Book*.

Published by Myles Swinney

For accompanying text within directory see appendix 1.1.

Second edition, c.1776 also including plate of Soho.⁹³⁷

Third edition advertised *Aris' Birmingham Gazette* 26 May 1783, no copies known to survive.

⁹³⁵ Conner, 1984, p.22.

⁹³⁶ Clayton, 'Benjamin Green' in *Oxford DNB online*. See p.65 for Benjamin Green's links with Boulton and Fothergill.

⁹³⁷ See note 364 for dating issues.

BAH, Birmingham Assay Office Library.

Lit: Loggie in Mason, (ed.), 2009, pp.24-5.

The view is unsigned but is likely to have been executed by Francis Eginton or be strongly influenced by his earlier aquatint as details such as the figure holding open the gate are very similar.⁹³⁸ Like the aquatint (figure 9), this view depicts the Principal Building from the approach road, including the buildings of Rolling Mill Road to make the scale of the site clear. It also shows fashionable visitors in their carriages alongside the working figures.⁹³⁹

Vegetation is depicted in the foreground, to the left of the Principal Building and in the distance on the right, all of which is given more definition than in the aquatint. Line engraving and etching required more detail than aquatint which could imitate the washes of watercolour. In the distance hills can be seen with what appear to be the tops of the post and rope arrangements for the animals shown in the aquatint.⁹⁴⁰ The surrounding land is shown as heathland because it had not yet been enclosed. This image makes extensive use of parallel lines to show form; some areas, particularly the far end of Rolling Mill Row use little outline, but show form and shadow through the use of parallel lines of different weight and running in different directions. Limited use of stipple is also visible, particularly in the sky and the distant hills.

The plate of Soho was an important feature of this directory, it was mentioned in the advertisements Swinney placed in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* and the

⁹³⁸ See p.76 for the aquatint which is not included in this catalogue as neither BMAG nor BAH hold a copy.

⁹³⁹ See p.87 for discussion of the figures.

⁹⁴⁰ See p.84.

title page specifically noted the plate (see figure 10). A page-and-a-half description of Soho was also included.⁹⁴¹

3. RULES for Conducting the SOCIETY, BELONGING TO THE SOHO MANUFACTORY.

unknown artist, 1792
(figures 12-14)

Member of Soho Insurance Society attended by Art, Prudence and Industry in front of the Principal Building.
Etching and engraving.

inscr bottom centre on all versions: 'From Art, Industry and Society, Great Blessings Flow'

inscr below, only on versions with rules:

A Member of this Society with his Arm in a Sling, is seated on a Cube, which is an Emblem of Stability, as the Dog at his Feet is of Fidelity; he is attended by Art, Prudence, and Industry, the Latter of whom raiseth him with one Hand, and with the other sheweth him Plenty, expressed by the Cornucopia lying at the Feet of Commerce, from whence it flows. Art resteth on a Table of the Mechanic Powers, and looks up to Minerva, Goddess of Arts and Wisdom, who, descending in the Clouds, directs to the SOHO MANUFACTORY, near which are little Boys busy in designing &c., which shew that an early Application to the Study of Arts, is an effectual Means to improve them; the flowers that are strewd over the Bee-Hive, represent the Sweets that Industry is ever crowned with.

image size 227 x 336

Image only:
BMAG1996V115 (not seen)
BAH3147/5/1475

With rules:
BMAG, James Watt Collection, Aston University loan.
BAH3147/8/47 bottom portion with name of printer missing.
Birmingham Assay Office, Thomas Knott version (cut down prior to framing, text and image printed out of alignment)

⁹⁴¹ See appendix 1.1 for transcription of this text and p.88 for discussion of the key features.

associated material:

copper plate, image only, without explanation or rules, Science and Industry Collection of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery 1951S88.36 transferred from Birmingham Central Library, Boulton and Watt Collection, 249 x 354.

Lit: Eric Roll, *An Early Experiment in Industrial Organisation being a history of the firm of Boulton and Watt 1775-1805*, London, 1930, p.225; Loggie in Mason (ed.), 2009, pp.25-6; Mason (ed.) 2009; Clay in Clay and Tungate, pp.48-9; Dick and Watts, 2008, p.510.

Some form of insurance society was in existence at Soho since before 1782 when Dr. Thomas Percival enquired about its operation. John Hodges sent a printed sheet of the rules of the Soho Club and explained that it had 'been found to answer the chief intent, i.e., that of being a sufficient support for any of its Sick Members during the time of illness.' Contributions were made weekly by workmen and by visitors to the manufactory. Hodges noted that the growth of the manufactory had meant the number of people living in the parish had increased but the Poor Rates had decreased. For the past several years four to five hundred people had been employed and the annual payments into the scheme had been about £90, around a sixth of which was donations made by visitors. Hodges concluded that he would be happy if this information helped with the establishment of a similar plan elsewhere.⁹⁴² Various similar enquiries followed over a number of years.⁹⁴³ This is thought to have been one of the earliest examples of such a society, although the Crowleys had

⁹⁴² BAH3782/2/14, p.48, John Hodges to Dr Thomas Percival, 16 Nov. 1782. I am grateful to Shena Mason for drawing this reference to my attention. Prior to the discovery of this letter it had been thought that the society was established in 1792, see for example Dickinson, p.179.

⁹⁴³ For example BAH3147/3/387/22 John Cartwright to B&W 2 Nov 1789; BAH3147/3/418/8 Parkes's Brookhouse & Crompton to B&W 25 Feb 1797, BAH3147/3/418/9 Parkes's Brookhouse & Crompton to B&W 5 Mar 1797.

established a compulsory contributory scheme in the early eighteenth century.⁹⁴⁴

Boulton's motives for establishing the society are likely to have been several; the ironmaster John Wilkinson admitted in a petition to Parliament in 1788 that each time his works expanded he had to pay more Poor Rates, so he petitioned to be excused if he set up a sick club.⁹⁴⁵ Hodges' mention of the Poor Rates suggests that Boulton was also concerned with this issue, but other motives may have included a desire to retain staff and to be seen by potential customers as a good employer.⁹⁴⁶ The society would have helped to bind staff into a community who felt they were better looked after than those of other employers. The fact that contributions were made by what Hodges described as 'people who frequent or visit Soho' indicates that visitors were made aware of the scheme. Exactly what Hodges sent to Thomas Percival is not known, it may simply have been a printed list of rules, but by 1792 a poster was in existence which included the rules and an illustration of the manufactory. This illustration was also printed as the image alone, with the title but without the rules or explanation of the plate. This is likely to have been intended for an audience other than members of the society.⁹⁴⁷

Various editions of the poster with the rules for the society were printed by different printers as the rules changed. Known versions are:

⁹⁴⁴ Roll, 1930, p.228, see p.42 for Crowley.

⁹⁴⁵ Roll, p.226.

⁹⁴⁶ Clay, in Clay and Tungate, p.49 makes the point that until 1804, staff could not withdraw funds from the scheme if they left, so the scheme would have helped with staff retention.

⁹⁴⁷ See p.95 for further consideration of this theory.

1. The only known dated example, printed by Thomas Pearson (d. 1804) in 1792.⁹⁴⁸ Pearson was a printer, bookseller, stationer who printed *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* and *The Tablet* (catalogue 4). He also undertook a variety of printing for Boulton.⁹⁴⁹
2. Knott and Lloyd, successors to Pearson, operating 1800-1811.⁹⁵⁰
3. Thomas Knott, Roll suggests this is Knott junior (1790-1839) so it is likely to date to the later 1830s.⁹⁵¹

An annotated copy of the third version was prepared with alterations to the rules, implying that a further edition was planned.⁹⁵²

The image shows an injured member of the society with his arm in a sling and a bandaged head seated on a cube. This signifies stability and the dog at his feet fidelity. The plate explicitly links mechanical and liberal arts; to the worker's right is the figure of Art, resting her hand on a table of mechanic powers, 'balance, lever, wheel, pulley, wedge, screw' are legible, the entry below this has been altered and the one below that is hidden by vegetation. In front of this are a cog and auger, a palette and brushes, a book open at pages of calculation and mathematical diagrams and a sheet of paper. To the

⁹⁴⁸ Reproduced in Roll, frontispiece.

⁹⁴⁹ G to P&F, Thomas A Pearson.

⁹⁵⁰ Roll p.229; G to P&F Knott and Lloyd, Thomas Beilby Jr. & Co; BBTI, Thomas Knott I, Knott & Lloyd. They were succeeded in turn by Thomas Beilby Jr & Co. around 1812, by Beilby and Knotts in 1815 who were succeeded by Beilby, Knott & Beilby in 1828. The latter were dissolved in 1835.

⁹⁵¹ Copy at Birmingham Assay Office, Roll, p.229; BBTI, Thomas Knott II.

⁹⁵² Thinktank photograph 450. I am grateful to Jim Andrew for drawing this to my attention.

worker's left are Prudence, holding a mirror as a symbol of foresight and signifying wise conduct, and Industry who has taken the worker's hand and is pointing to the cornucopia which signifies plenty.⁹⁵³

Commerce is represented by a cherub also sitting on a cube, writing on a page which is turned towards the viewer. The little boys showing the importance of an early application to the study of arts also take the form of cherubs. One, with a pot at his feet, is engraving, he holds a burin to gouge metal, another is sharpening at a circular stone. Two others appear to be discussing a serpentine line, a Hogarthian line of beauty.⁹⁵⁴ Minerva, the Goddess of Arts and Wisdom, patroness of institutions of learning and the arts, floats on a cloud above all of this, gesturing towards the manufactory. She has a spear and a shield decorated with an owl, a symbol of wisdom and one of her attributes.⁹⁵⁵ These main elements are explained in the explanation which appeared on the poster. Other elements such as the crane and the beehive are not explained and are left for the viewer to interpret or not as they were able. As previously noted, such symbols were used in celebrations, on the products of the manufactory, and in the frontispieces of Pye's directories.⁹⁵⁶ John Phillip's designs for the bookshelves at Soho House included an owl, a beehive and musical instruments above the shelves.⁹⁵⁷

Classical architecture appears in the insurance poster in the form of the Principal Building, the column on the left hand side and the statuary on which

⁹⁵³ Hall, pp.244-5, 75.

⁹⁵⁴ William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, [1753], New Haven and London, 1997, pp.48-9.

⁹⁵⁵ Hall, p.209, 231.

⁹⁵⁶ For further consideration of these symbols and the ability of the workers to interpret them see p.96. For Pye's directories see pp.92 and 192.

⁹⁵⁷ BMAG2003.31.66.

the worker is sitting. The artist has employed repoussoirs; trees and the column act as framing devices. The plate is unsigned but could be argued to bear some resemblance to Pye's directory frontispieces (figures 11 and 28). The production of an image of this quality and sophistication strengthened Boulton's claims to quality and to his manufactory as a seminary of the arts, producing high-quality design.

4. Soho House and Park

engraved by Morris after Joseph Barber, 1795
(figure 18)

Soho House (prior to 1796 alterations) with Hockley Pool.
etching

Appears above the left hand page of the double page spread for October 1796 in *The Tablet, or the Polite Memorandum Book. Containing an Almanac, The Sovereigns of Europe, Lists of both Houses of Parliament, Officers of State, Navy & Army. Embellished with elegant engravings of Gentleman's seats.*

Printed by Thomas Pearson.

Price 3/6.

image size 28 x 60, double page 143 x 118

BAH3782/12/107/24 MB diary 1796, October.

This view concentrates on the landscape and on the pool; it shows Soho House on the top of the hill with a glimpse of the manufactory buildings on the hillside for those who could recognise them.⁹⁵⁸ *The Tablet* was produced annually from 1796 to 1803 as a diary or memorandum book. This edition was published on 17 November 1795.⁹⁵⁹ The publishers planned to produce accurate views of the principal seats in the country, starting with the midlands.

⁹⁵⁸ See chapter two for a consideration of the landscape depicted and the reasons for focussing on that landscape.

⁹⁵⁹ Victoria Osborne, 'Cox and Birmingham' in Scott Wilcox, *Sun, Wind and Rain: The Art of David Cox*, New Haven, 2008, p.82 n.20; *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 26 Oct 1795.

The engravings were placed to allow for their removal at the end of the year without damaging the entries made in the volume. The plates are identified in a list at the beginning of the volume but not on their individual pages. The other plates were a S.W. view of Worcester, Warwick Castle, Elmdon in Warwickshire, Edgbaston Hall, the Leasowes, Packington Hall, Moseley Hall, Four Oaks, Little Aston, Great Barr, Aston Hall, Sandwell Hall, a title page and memorandum headings. At the end of the list it was noted that the engravings were by Mr Morris after the original drawings of Mr Joseph Barber.⁹⁶⁰

Joseph Barber (1757-1811) was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the son of a copperplate printer, print-seller and publisher. He came to Birmingham, probably in the late 1770s, to work as a painter of papier-mâché and japanned wares.⁹⁶¹ He was the first professional drawing master in Birmingham, although his was not the first drawing school.⁹⁶² He advertised himself in the *Universal British Directory* of 1795 as a painter and drawing master while a design for an advertisement described him as teaching painting in oil, water, crayons, miniature and drawing in all its branches.⁹⁶³ Among the others he later taught were David Cox, and the engravers John Pye and William Radclyffe. Barber produced a sketch of Boulton in chinese ink in 1785, the purpose and current whereabouts of which are not known.⁹⁶⁴ Barber had

⁹⁶⁰ BAH3782/12/107/24 MB diary 1796, p.4.

⁹⁶¹ C.E. Dawkins, rev. R.J. Lambert, 'Joseph Barber' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 26 Nov 2008.

⁹⁶² Stephen Wildman, *The Birmingham School*, 1990, Birmingham, pp.37-39.

⁹⁶³ Kim Sloan, *'A Noble Art': Amateur Artists and Drawing Masters c.1600-1800*, London, 2000, p.164; Wildman, p.37.

⁹⁶⁴ BAH 87716 *Album of drawings and sketches by Joseph Barber and Joseph Vincent Barber 1803-08*. Presented by a dealer, Mr Harvey; inserted in the front of the album is a page of his promotional material in which he outlines purchasing a parcel of works including 'sketch of M Boulton in Chinese ink by J Barber Senr 1785.' This is not in the album so

taught drawing to someone at Soho House, probably Anne Boulton, in 1792, he also taught the Watt children and is likely to have taught John Phillip.⁹⁶⁵

5. *Matthew Boulton Esqr.*

S.W. Reynolds after C.F. von Breda, 1796
(figure 38)

Three-quarter length seated portrait.

Mezzotint

Published by S.W. Reynolds, 6 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane.

Inscr: Painted by C.F. de Breda, R.A. of Stockholm & Painter to the King of Sweden London: Published March 1st 1796, by S.W. Reynolds No 6 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane Engraved by S.W. Reynolds. / Matthew Boulton Esqr.
image size 352 x 250

BMAG477'33

BMAG2006.1329

Associated material: BMAG1987 F106 is a painted copy of Matthew Boulton by C.F. von Breda, made by von Breda for William Withering in 1793 or 4. Other copies were made for Watt and John Rennie, the location of Boulton's own copy is not known.⁹⁶⁶

Lit: A. Whitman *Catalogue of the Mezzotints by Samuel William Reynolds and his Son*, London, 1903; Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009.

This mezzotint was produced in 1796 at von Breda's instigation; a print of von Breda's portrait of James Watt was produced at the same time. There are also references to prints of the portrait of William Withering that von Breda painted on the same visit to Birmingham. Asplund indicates that all three paintings existed as contemporary mezzotints and there is a suggestion of a copy in the hands of the Galton family in the early twentieth century, but no

presumably he sold it on. He also argues that the contents of the parcel suggested that Boulton and Watt designers studied under Barber but does not explain why.

⁹⁶⁵ BAH3782/7/10/549 Joseph Barber's bill, 1792; BAH3219/7/1/4 Jessy and Ann Watt to Gregory Watt, 1 Mar. 1793. For Barber and Phillip see p.113.

⁹⁶⁶ BAH3219/4/112/29 C.F. von Breda to JW 10 May 1794; Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.66-9.

copies are known.⁹⁶⁷ O'Donoghue does not record it so, if there was one it was probably produced in smaller quantities.

Boulton is shown looking directly at the viewer with a medal in his left hand and a magnifying glass in his right. There are minerals on a table to his side and the Principal Building is shown in the background.⁹⁶⁸ The mezzotint technique has forced Reynolds to firm up detail left vague by von Breda such as the buildings to the left of the Principal Building. For details of the production of this print see p.201.

O'Donoghue identifies three impressions but does not explain how to distinguish them; he is probably including a proof without letters.⁹⁶⁹

Whitman identifies two, one with fine and open lettering, and the other with retouching on the chair, the waistcoat and elsewhere.⁹⁷⁰ The plate was republished 1835 by John Weak, Architectural Library 59 High Street Holburn reusing plate.⁹⁷¹ Von Breda's portrait of Boulton was also engraved by MacKenzie for the *Union Magazine*, 1802, which was subsequently published in other magazines.⁹⁷²

⁹⁶⁷ Asplund p.300; BMAG Boulton family file, reference to copy owned by E.G. Wheeler.

⁹⁶⁸ See p.202 for further visual analysis of this image.

⁹⁶⁹ Freeman O'Donoghue *British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits*, London, 1908.

⁹⁷⁰ A. Whitman *Catalogue of the Mezzotints by Samuel William Reynolds and his Son*, London, 1903.

⁹⁷¹ BAH 82934 Timmins Vol 2 p.5.

⁹⁷² See p.239.

6. The SOHO MANUFACTORY near BIRMINGHAM, belonging to Messrs Boulton & Watt

unknown artist, 1797
(figure 26)

View from access road, Principal Building, Rolling Mill Row and part of Latchet Works.

line engraving

The Monthly Magazine and British Register, No.XVII Vol.III, May 1797, folded into front of magazine.

Published by Richard Phillips

inscr: 'Monthly Magazine No 17' top left, 'The SOHO MANUFACTORY near BIRMINGHAM, belonging to Messrs Boulton & Watt' bottom centre.⁹⁷³

image size 164 x 258

For accompanying text within magazine see appendix 1.2.

Image only, no longer with magazine:

BMAG1965v221.81; BMAG1996v145.79

For the background to the inclusion of this image in the magazine see p.149.

It shows the Principal Building from the usual viewpoint, but sets it back, with park and vegetation in the foreground to emphasise the landscape setting.

Two groups of figures are shown in the middle ground, a couple with a child, visitors strolling in the park, and a pair of males on forecourt with one bowing to the other. These figures are small; the eye is not drawn to them immediately. Unlike the earlier images there is little evidence of the workforce, see p.186 and 154 for further consideration of this.

As in earlier images the building has light falling on it to ensure it is the focus of the image but here it is placed at an angle which creates a greater sense of depth than the earlier views. The Mint is not included but part of the Latchet Works (the curved building to the left of the Principal Building) is visible in the

⁹⁷³ The manufactory did not belong to Boulton and Watt but to Boulton alone, see p.155.

middle ground.⁹⁷⁴ In fact this is not a true depiction as this building was built in stages, the south section (the left-hand side when looking at the building and not shown in this view) was built in 1794, the central section in 1798 and the north wing in 1824-6, so the portion shown in this image had not yet been built. When the central section was constructed it had a pitched roof rather than the domed roof originally intended and shown in the earlier views.⁹⁷⁵

The rerouting of the approach road is apparent in this view; the curving track visible in figure 20 has been replaced. An isolated pair of gateposts is shown as the track curves to meet the forecourt. These had been associated with the fence and pedestrian gate also shown in the anonymous watercolour (figure 20).⁹⁷⁶ The change in level created by forming a terrace at the front of the Principal Building is clear in the *Monthly Magazine* image. There is a retaining wall at the front of the forecourt and the family group in the park are at a lower level.⁹⁷⁷ The forecourt is more open and welcoming than in the earlier views, the high wall visible in figures 9 and 10 has been removed, as has the fence and gate perpendicular to the façade of the Principal Building in figure 20. The published views of the late 1790s (the magazines) depict the forecourt as open, while the views in Bisset (1800) and Shaw (1801) show a high wall to the side with metal gates and piers. The robbery drawing of 1801 (figure 24) shows the high wall with closed panelled gates, added by another

⁹⁷⁴ The Latchet Works were also known as the Crescent Building. Latchets are shoe buckles, Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.125-6.

⁹⁷⁵ Demidowicz in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.125-6; Demidowicz in Mason (ed.) p. 104, figures 82-3. The *Monthly Magazine*, Walker, the anonymous watercolour and Phillip's similar view all show a domed roof (figures 26, 27, 20 and 19). Bisset and Stebbing Shaw both show the pitched roof (figures 29 and 32).

⁹⁷⁶ The fence can be seen in figure 54. The isolated posts appear in figures 19 and 27.

⁹⁷⁷ See p.106 for the terrace.

hand.⁹⁷⁸ However, the high wall and panelled gates appear in Phillip's side view of 1796 and his undated design for a medal (figures 54 and 56), this time open, making the site appear less closed off. It seems likely that the wall and gates were in place by 1796, but a conscious decision was taken to eliminate them from the published views to make the site appear open and accessible. When the wall was included in Bisset and Shaw's volumes attractive metal gates were shown to fit better with the display of taste that these volumes required.⁹⁷⁹

The *Monthly Magazine* image is unsigned but it is possible that if a sketch was supplied from Soho it was by John Phillip, his unfinished view (figure 19) may have been an initial draft of such a sketch. The inscription 'Monthly Magazine' on the plate suggests it was expected to be removed from the volume and placed in collections. See p.155 for consideration of the title of the plate.

7. Soho, Staffordshire

engraved by John Walker after an unknown artist, 1798
(figure 27)

View from access road, Principal Building, Rolling Mill Row and part of Latchet Works.

line engraving

Published in *The Copper-Plate Magazine, or, Monthly Cabinet of Picturesque Prints*, 1798 with one page description 'SOHO'. See appendix 1.3 for this text.

⁹⁷⁸ Perhaps it was felt important to emphasise the security of the site on a drawing prepared to inform a trial.

⁹⁷⁹ The depiction of the piers associated with the gates also varies, Phillip showed them with simple pyramid tops as did the illustration in Stebbing Shaw. In Bisset they were shown with recessed panels and topped with urns which probably did not exist, later images show the pyramids, see BMAG 1996v145(81).

Retouched and republished in *The Itinerant: A Select Collection of Interesting and Picturesque Views in Great Britain and Ireland: Engraved from Original Paintings and Drawings. By Eminent Artists.*, London, 1799.

Published by Harrison & Co., 18 Paternoster Row, London, republished by John Walker (fl.1784-1802), Rosoman Street, Finsbury.

inscr:

Copper Plate Magazine: 'Vol. IV. PL160.' top right 'Engraved by J. Walker from an Original Drawing', bottom left 'Publish'd Sepr 1st 1798 by J. Walker No 16 Rosoman Street, London', bottom right 'SOHO, Staffordshire'

The Itinerant: 'The Itinerant' top left and 'STAFFORDSHIRE' top right, inscriptions below remained the same, including the date.

image size 106 x 165

Image only,

BMAG1984P50.84 (not seen)

BMAG1997V1.9, *Copper Plate Magazine*

BMAG1965V221.80 192 x 233, *Copper Plate Magazine*

BMAG1965V221.80.1 catalogued as associated label, presumably the associated text (not seen)

This view once again shows the Principal Building from the approach road, like the *Monthly Magazine* (catalogue 6) it sets the building well back, with park and vegetation in foreground to emphasise the landscape setting. Again the Principal Building is at an angle to allow it to recede further into the image, creating an appearance of depth. The light is from the left, highlighting the main front. The whole of the Latchet Works are depicted with a domed roof although they had not yet been built.⁹⁸⁰ The Mint buildings are visible to the extreme left of the image, but little detail can be seen.⁹⁸¹ In the foreground are a fashionably dressed couple in a carriage with a pair of horses, the male with a whip in motion framing their heads. A rider behind them is close enough to be an associated servant, but it seems more likely that he was

⁹⁸⁰ See catalogue 6.

⁹⁸¹ The Mint buildings did exist so the artist had to place a planned building in an existing landscape and work out what could be seen on either side of the Latchet Works. It would have been simpler not to show the Mint like the image in the *Monthly Magazine*.

squashed into this space to make the factory seem busy without obscuring any part of the Principal Building. Two figures and a dog are in the middle ground, and two figures in the gateway at the far end of the forecourt. Both of these groups are in a similar position to those in the *Monthly Magazine*, but are doing different things. None of the figures are workmen and no smoke emerges from any of the chimneys.⁹⁸² Greater detail of vegetation appears in the foreground than in the *Monthly Magazine*.

The accompanying text was a summary of that in the *Monthly Magazine*. The image cannot have been based on that in the *Monthly Magazine* as it shows more of the Latchet Works and Mint, but the placing of the smaller figures is very similar. Again it may have been based on an original drawing by Phillip and is also very similar to the unfinished view, catalogue 24.⁹⁸³ It was engraved by the publisher John Walker, nephew of Anthony Walker (1726-65), a highly regarded etcher and engraver who produced work for magazines.⁹⁸⁴ John Walker made many claims for the quality of his magazine, but this is not an accomplished image.⁹⁸⁵ The perspective of the figures in the foreground is particularly problematic; the horses pulling the carriage are improbably small.

The volume and plate numbers of the magazine are misleading: Soho is captioned Vol. IV, Plate 160 but is from the eightieth issue so is only the one

⁹⁸² See pp.159 and 189.

⁹⁸³ Phillip's drawing also includes the Mint which means the *Copper Plate Magazine* image is perhaps the more likely to have been based on this work.

⁹⁸⁴ Laurence Worms, 'Anthony Walker, etcher and engraver' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007; Alexander, p.113.

⁹⁸⁵ See p.161 for further consideration of this.

hundred and sixtieth print. The inclusion of 'Vol. IV' may be intended as a continuation of the original *Copper Plate Magazine* or may be an attempt to make the publication look more established than it actually was.⁹⁸⁶ The image and text were clearly intended to be closely linked but the layout may have varied. Individual sheets from *The Itinerant* exist, with the image above the text and out of alignment, so the sheet must have gone through two presses (figure 48).⁹⁸⁷ Other copies of the image alone exist which mostly seem to come from the magazine so it seems likely that for the magazine, text and image were printed on separate sheets, or were frequently separated when integrated into collections. More copies from the magazine appear to survive which suggests it was printed in larger quantities. These have generally lost their accompanying text.⁹⁸⁸

Some experiments with colour printing were undertaken. Abbey listed in his collection what he believed was a unique 'special copy', printed in colour with smaller details coloured by hand.⁹⁸⁹ However, a copy at Cambridge is listed as 'two-colour green and brown printed engraving'.⁹⁹⁰ A single sheet of Soho at Stafford is printed in blue, green and brown inks, *à la poupée* (figure 48).⁹⁹¹

⁹⁸⁶ See note 584 for the original *Copper Plate Magazine*.

⁹⁸⁷ For example WSL, SV-VII.26, University of Birmingham Special Collections and other copies in private collections. See p.94 for printing text and image together. The copy of *The Itinerant* at the University of Cambridge also has image and text on a single sheet. However, the copy of *The Itinerant* in the British Library (which has been rebound so may no longer be in its original format), places image and text on opposite pages. The title page and list of images are folded in half horizontally to fit the current binding which does suggest that the layout of image above the text was the main format of *The Itinerant*.

⁹⁸⁸ Of the copies of this plate in the BMAG collections only one still has the associated text and several copies in private collections are image only. When copies are found for sale they are usually the image only.

⁹⁸⁹ J.R. Abbey *Scenery of Great Britain and Ireland in Aquatint and Lithography, 1770-1860*, London, 1952, pp.4-6. Abbey's collection is now at the Yale Center for British Art.

⁹⁹⁰ Waddleton Chronology online <http://linux02.lib.cam.ac.uk/~cjs2/vw.cgi?s=WAD+1799.2>

⁹⁹¹ WSL SV VII.26.

8. SOHO MANUFACTORY under the Annex'd Firms

engraved by Francis Eginton junior, 1800
(figure 29)

View from access road. Principal Building, Rolling Mill Row, part of Latchet Works, Soho House stables.

Line and stipple engraving.

Bisset's Poetic Survey round Birmingham with a brief description of the different curiosities and manufactures of the place, accompanied with a magnificent directory, with names and professions, &c., superbly engraved in emblematic plates, Birmingham, 1800.

Printed by Swinney and Hawkins.

Expanded edition, *Bisset's Magnificent Guide, or Grand Copperplate Directory, For the Town of Birmingham, Comprising the Addresses of the most eminent Public Companies, Bankers, Merchants, Tradesmen, and Manufacturers, in the TOY-SHOP OF EUROPE. [...]*, 1808.

Published by James Bisset (?1762-1832)

inscr: 'T' top left; 'F. Eginton Sculp^t' below centre; 'SOHO MANUFACTORY under the Annex'd Firms' below centre; '*M. Boulton & Butt.*ⁿ C^o _ Buttons in General. *Boulton & Smiths* _ Buckles, Latchets &c. *M. Boulton & Plate C.*^o _ Silver & Plated Goods. *M. Boulton* _ Mints for Governm.^t ♀ [copper] Coin.' below left; '*M. Boulton* _ Medals Roll'd Metals & c. *D.o* _ Mercantile Trade in Birmingham. *Boulton, Watt & Sons.* _ Iron Found.^y & Steam Engine *J.Watt & C.*^o _ Letter Copying Machines.' below right; '*Published by J. Bisset Museum Birmingham for his Magnificent and Grand National Directory 1800.*'

versions: 1800: standard, 6s; proof plates, 10s 6d; coloured, one guinea; printed in colours; 2L 2s printed in colours.⁹⁹²

1808: ordinary, 5s and proof copies, half-a-guinea.⁹⁹³

BMAG Library 00188 (1800 edition) Plate T

BMAG Library 00186 (1808 edition) Plate T

BMAG 1997v1.32 (single sheet), 127 x 199

Again the Principal Building is depicted from the usual approach but this view is taken from slightly further left than figures 26, 27 and 19, meaning there is less foreshortening of the Principal Building and this allows it to occupy the centre of the image. The main light source is from the left, illuminating the main façade, but the difference between light and shade is greater than in

⁹⁹² Bisset, 1800, frontispiece, see p.163 for further discussion of these formats.

⁹⁹³ Bisset, 1808, frontispiece.

previous images and there is no hatching on the stonework so that façade stands out to an even greater extent. The Latchet Works are shown with a pitched roof to the central section and a pediment to the end section (rather than the dome and hipped ends of the earlier views) as one wing and the central section had by now been built.⁹⁹⁴ The left hand end of the Latchet Works is masked by the Soho House stables, built by Benjamin Wyatt between 1798 and 1800, hiding the Mint beyond.⁹⁹⁵

Pairs of figures occupy the middle ground, a couple strolling on the path, and others on the forecourt and in front of the worker's entrance. The approach road has again been rerouted to run closer to the mill pool. Figures 26 and 27 show an unfenced track with a single curve running uphill away from the Mill Pool and the viewer standing in or alongside the roadway as if they were arriving at the manufactory. Later publications including this one (figures 29 and 32) take a viewpoint slightly squarer on to the main façade of the Principal Building with the viewer standing on a grassed area separated from the traffic of the manufactory. They show a fenced walkway beyond which is the carriage track and Mill Pool. The gates to the forecourt are shown with urns on the piers which may not have existed as they are not shown in figure 32. Eginton junior has introduced sophisticated artistic techniques to this image such as the use of chiaroscuro and repoussoir, the picturesque trees on the left acting as sidescreens. A depiction of these same trees appears in his view for Stebbing Shaw (figure 32) and in Phillp's view, added by Amos Green (figure 19).

⁹⁹⁴ See catalogue 6 for the development and depiction of this building.

⁹⁹⁵ Ballard et al, p.33.

For Bisset, Eginton junior and the *Directory* see catalogue 9 and p.162.

9. *Adjacent to Birmingham*

engraved by Francis Eginton junior, 1800
(figure 30)

Scroll listing businesses adjacent to Birmingham leant against tree stump, view of Hockley Abbey to left, Soho House and Pool to right. Half page. line and stipple engraving

Source, publisher, versions, associated items, associated text as catalogue 8.

inscr: Adjacent to Birmingham Beach Thos. Spark Hill; Boulton Matthew Soho; Coates Robt. Bordesley Grange; Ford Richd. Hockley Abbey; Galton Saml. Duddeston Hall; Green Thomas Harborne Hutton Wm. Bennets Hill.; Lloyd Sampn. Junr. Small Heath; Lloyd Saml. Crescent East Wing; Owen David Selly Grove; Spooner Isaac Elmdon; Stokes Benjn. Hagley Row; Taylor John Moseley Hall; Watt James Heathfield F. Eginton Sculp Publish'd by J Bisset Museum Birm for his Magnificent Directory. Signed bottom left of scroll. 'F. Eginton Sculp.'

BMAG Library 00188 (1800 edition), Plate A.
BMAG Library 00186 (1808 edition), Plate A.

This small image takes the viewpoint across the pool towards the front elevation of Soho House used by Barber and in the anonymous watercolour (figures 18 and 22). It emphasises the open parkland in front of the house as well as the elegant façade. It is not identified as Soho on the plate; the viewer is expected to recognise it or to consult the list of plates for further information.⁹⁹⁶

For associated text and poem, see appendix 1.4.

⁹⁹⁶ Bisset, 1800, 'Bankers, Birmingham, and Gentlemen, adjacent, Emblems of Stability; View of Mr. Ford's, Hockley Abbey, and M. Boulton's Esq. Soho.'; Bisset, 1808, p.iv listed 'a distant view of Matthew Boulton's, Esq. Soho' but not Hockley Abbey. See catalogue 50 for Hockley Abbey.

James Bisset (?1762-1832) was from Perth and it was there that he had learnt drawing, writing and accounting. He moved to Birmingham to help his brother who was a merchant and continued to attend a drawing academy. He was apprenticed to Thomas Bellamy, painting flowers, fruit, landscapes and general fancy work on waiters and snuff boxes. Bisset then worked as a miniature artist and fancy painter, including producing paintings on ivory and glass for Boulton, some of which were set in steel for court buttons. He opened a museum and shop in New Street, Birmingham, from which he published verse, pamphlets and the *Magnificent Directory*.⁹⁹⁷ Layton-Jones has described this publication as a 'kind of emporium in which the manufactures of the great toy shop of Birmingham are displayed for appraisal and purchase.'⁹⁹⁸ Bisset hoped it would be 'A work of novelty, and general use'.⁹⁹⁹ In July 1799, he asked to show Boulton the intended designs and sent a prospectus. This advertised 'BIRMINGHAM: A Poem' which would describe the manufactories in and around Birmingham, stating that those who wished to have their names, professions, trades or place of residence recorded should let him know as soon as possible. Compartments, the subsections of pages in which Gentlemen could have their names engraved, cost from 6s to 10s 6d each. The publication was intended for the 'Use of Strangers or Travellers, who occasionally visit Birmingham, and who wish to see the most noted manufactories of the Place.' Bisset intended 'embellishing

⁹⁹⁷ T.B. Dudley (ed.) *Memoir of James Bisset by himself*, Leamington Spa, 1904, p.76; T.F. Henderson rev. Michael Marker 'James Bisset, artist and writer' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 11 July 2007; Berg, 1998, pp.28-30; Wildman, p.6.

⁹⁹⁸ Layton-Jones, p.79.

⁹⁹⁹ James Bisset, *A Poetic Survey round Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1800, Address to the Reader.

the Work with a few elegant Designs' and clearly considered his poem the main attraction with the plates as decoration.¹⁰⁰⁰

A second printed notice was enclosed in Bisset's letter to Boulton, dated 25 July 1799. It respectfully informed the public that the designs for the plates were now in the hands of the most eminent artists and that '[...] many of the Designs are emblematic of the different Professions or Trades.' It would cover a wide range of occupations from artists to sword cutlers and would show some of the principal buildings in the town. As the publication would combine elegance and usefulness, no expense or pains would be spared to make it worthy of the Attention of the Public. Any gentleman wishing to place his own Plate could do so free of charge or pay a fee to have a plate produced for him 'but any indigent or ingenious Artist or Manufacturer' who could not afford to pay would be given a free place. A second series of advertisements noted that as Merchants, factors and other Gentlemen might have been on 'journies' he would extend the deadline until November.¹⁰⁰¹

Bisset intended the *Directory* to replace trade cards, one plate actually showed trompe l'oeil cards.¹⁰⁰² He wrote

[...] it is meant to supersede the Necessity of Gentlemen, &c. issuing their own Cards, as by this mode they will be disseminated not only over the whole Kingdom, but will in Time, find their Way to the first Cities in the Universe, and will (doubtless) be sought with Avidity by all Encouragers of the Liberal Arts.¹⁰⁰³

The use of these small engraved sheets or cards was well established by the early eighteenth-century, initially showing decorative cartouches, but with a

¹⁰⁰⁰ BAH3782/12/44/211 James Bisset to MB, 30 July 1799.

¹⁰⁰¹ Bisset, 1800, 'To the Public'.

¹⁰⁰² Bisset, plate L.

¹⁰⁰³ Bisset, 1800, 'To the Public', p.vi.

move towards depicting the individual's products or premises in the second half of the century.¹⁰⁰⁴

A second, enlarged edition appeared in 1808 as *Bisset's Magnificent Directory or Literary & Commercial Iconography*, dedicated to the Prince of Wales. It reused many of the original plates, including the two featuring Soho, and added a number of new ones. An ordinary copy cost 5s, less than the smaller 1800 edition, perhaps an indication that the earlier version had been considered overpriced or that a larger print run was planned for the 1808 edition.¹⁰⁰⁵ Coloured copies were no longer offered, suggesting that they had not been popular. Gentlemen, merchants, tradesmen and manufacturers were again invited to have their names inserted at 10s 6d each or free of charge if they supplied their own plate. Bisset hoped it would be 'both useful, elegant and ornamental' but felt the need to justify the selection of names included in case the public felt it was a 'partial undertaking'. He reprinted the text of newspaper advertisements and handbills, arguing these showed that his only motive was to promote the interests of Birmingham and to extend its manufactories. These stated that he was seeking no patronage for the venture and that the 'discerning public' would notice it if it so deserved. He emphasised that he had 'no view of pecuniary advantage, but a desire of promoting the interest of individuals in particular and the town in general.'¹⁰⁰⁶ The directory was not a financial success and Bisset wrote in his memoir of 'a very grand copper-plate Directory of the town of Birmingham, the engravings

¹⁰⁰⁴ Berg and Clifford, 2007; Layton-Jones, 2008a, p.81.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Reuse of a number of original plates would have helped to reduce costs of the new edition.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Bisset, 1808, 'To the Public', p.vi.

of which cost me five hundred guineas. I lost by the undertaking at least £200.¹⁰⁰⁷

Maxine Berg has described Bisset's *Directory* as 'a guide to a new kind of grand tour' and 'a public exhibition of the new manufacturing town'.¹⁰⁰⁸

Having dealt with Birmingham, Bisset intended to go on to 'collect' the whole country as he planned a Grand National Directory. This was advertised in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* on 27 January 1800, to be dedicated to the Prince of Wales and published in parts at 2s 6d each, the first appearing in May of that year.¹⁰⁰⁹ Some plates in the 1800 edition of his directory were labelled as published for both the *Magnificent* and *Grand National* Directories.¹⁰¹⁰ An advertisement in the back of his *The Peace Offering*, 1801 detailed what had been in the fourth part. The 'MINT and SOHO MANUFACTORY, &c.' were specifically mentioned as a forthcoming highlight.¹⁰¹¹ In the 1808 edition of the Birmingham Directory there was a section on this *Grand National Directory or Literary and Commercial Ichnography* emphasising the 'six beautiful Prints' in each number and listing some of the plates that had already been included.¹⁰¹² The work caused cash flow problems from the start, Bisset writing to Boulton in February 1801 asking for a loan of fifty pounds 'in consequence of the great expenditure I am weekly at in paying for

¹⁰⁰⁷ Dudley, p.90. This implies sales of £325 but it is impossible to know how many of each version were sold and whether he is referring to one or both editions so numbers of copies sold cannot reliably be calculated.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Maxine Berg, 'Inventors in the World of Goods' in Bruland and O'Brien (eds.), *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism*, Oxford, 1998, p33, 37.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Walker, p.24.

¹⁰¹⁰ Bisset, 1800, e.g. Plates J, Henry Clay and artists in Birmingham and T, Soho (figure 29).

¹⁰¹¹ James Bisset, *The Peace Offering*, Birmingham, 1801.

¹⁰¹² Bisset, 1808, pp.vi-vii.

Engravings &c. for my Grand National work.'¹⁰¹³ Bisset continued to publish parts of the directory until 1808 but it was not completed.¹⁰¹⁴

The artist of the original drawing of both Soho plates within the Birmingham directories is not credited, but the engraver was Francis Eginton junior (?1775-1823), the son of John Eginton (d.1786) and nephew of Francis Eginton (1737-1805).¹⁰¹⁵ He became an accomplished engraver, working in aquatint and line, largely on locally published topographical works of the Midlands and *The New Bath Guide* (1807).¹⁰¹⁶ A number of small sentimental and portrait engravings are in a scrapbook at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.¹⁰¹⁷ He also engraved the plates for Stebbing Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*, discussed below, and a portrait of Matthew Boulton produced shortly after his death.¹⁰¹⁸ He later produced a pair of views of quarries based on drawings by William Creighton and paid for by James Watt junior.¹⁰¹⁹

Bisset's *Directory* was reviewed in contemporary journals, *The Monthly Review* commented:

[...] The writer has endeavoured to exhibit, as from the top of St. Philip's Church, *A Panorama* of Birmingham in verse; or to string together, in artless rhimes, the names of the different seats, manufactories, &c. in and round that town; followed by 'A Ramble of the Gods through Birmingham,' who are made to wonder at smelting-

¹⁰¹³ BAH3782/12/46/59 James Bisset to MB, 6 Feb 1801.

¹⁰¹⁴ Norton, pp.39-40.

¹⁰¹⁵ Timothy Clayton, 'Francis Eginton' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007; See pp.76- 77 for Francis senior and John.

¹⁰¹⁶ Timothy Clayton, 'Francis Eginton' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1824, p.94.

¹⁰¹⁷ BMAG 1997v10.

¹⁰¹⁸ See p.242 for this portrait.

¹⁰¹⁹ Sotheby's, *The James Watt Sale: Art and Science 20 March 2003*, London, Lot 486 wrongly attributed to Francis Eginton senior; BAH3219/6/2/E/5-8 Francis Eginton to James Watt junior, 1809-10.

mills and steam engines, and at the dexterity of pin and button makers, &c.

To the stranger who visits this astonishing place, Mr. Bisset's survey will be not only amusing but useful; and the elegant decorations which accompany it add considerably to its value. Yet we are of the opinion that his verse would have better suited these embellishments, and that it would in itself have been more gratifying, had he been more solicitous of the critic's approbation; instead of treating it with contempt, when he sets out proclaiming:

'Tho' critics may cavil *for ever and ever*,

I dread not their frown nor solicit their favour;'

and thus in this very act of rejecting critical aid, he manifests his want of it. We were therefore prepared to expect, if not 'for ever and ever,' at least the *frequent recurrence* of lines too lame, trite, and vulgar for poetry; and which a Muse chastised in the school of elegant criticism would never have adopted. We do not mean, however, to impeach Mr. B.'s capacity so much as his negligence; for there are many lines in this poem which are creditable to his talents.

The notes at the bottom of each page explain every allusion in the verse, and add greatly to the value of the Survey: but the circumstance which most distinguishes it from all similar *guides* is that it is accompanied by numerous well executed copper plates, forming what is called a Magnificent Directory. Here much taste is displayed; and we should hence infer that the artists of Birmingham could execute the shield of Achilles, though no poet may be found competent to a description of it.

Mr. Bisset is the owner of a museum and repository for toys, jewellery, drawings, &c. near the Theatre, New-Street, Birmingham; and we have no doubt that his spirit and taste will meet with all the encouragement which they appear to deserve.¹⁰²⁰

The consensus was that the plates were highly impressive and the poetry was not.¹⁰²¹

The copies of both editions of the *Directory* examined for this thesis are not bound in a consistent order; some have plates missing, some have additional material, others have plates bound in different orientation to the standard.¹⁰²²

¹⁰²⁰ *The Monthly Review or Literary Journal, Enlarged* Vol XXXIII, Nov. 1800, pp.319-20.

¹⁰²¹ See chapter three for other contemporary reviews.

¹⁰²² Copies have been consulted at BMAG, BAH, Birmingham Assay Office and the British Library.

Bisset's *DNB* entry suggests that the 1808 edition did not include the poetic survey, but it is present in some copies.¹⁰²³ More copies of Bisset's directories appear to have survived than the other Birmingham directories but this is probably more to do with its quality and attractiveness than with there having been more copies printed.

10. N.E. View of Soho Manufactory

drawn and engraved by Francis Eginton junior, 1801
(figure 32)

View from approach road, Principal Building, Rolling Mill Row, part of Latchet Works, Soho House stables.

Etching and engraving with aquatint. See below regarding colour.

Reverend S. Stebbing Shaw, *History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*, Volume II, Part I, 1801. Plate XVII.

inscr: 'XVII' top right; 'Drawn & Engrav'd by F. Eginton Ashted Birmingham' below centre; 'To Mathew [sic] Boulton Esq.' this N.E. View of SOHO MANUFACTORY is inscribed by his obliged Serv.[†] S. Shaw' below with Boulton family coat of arms

versions: Vol. II, Part 1 small paper with folded plates, £2 12 6; large paper, £3 15s; illuminated version for subscribers with additional plates, £8 8s.¹⁰²⁴

BMAG2003.31.89, included in the Phillip album 302 x 489

This image takes the familiar viewpoint of the Principal Building. The Latchet Works are shown with a pitched roof and the stables hide the buildings of the Mint. Eginton has again used chiaroscuro to emphasise the façade of the Principal Building and picturesque trees as a sidescreen. Four pairs of figures appear in the in the middle ground, two between the Latchet Building and the Principal Building, two in the open doorway of the Principal Building, a couple

¹⁰²³ T.F. Henderson rev. Michael Marker 'James Bisset, artist and writer' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 11 July 2007.

¹⁰²⁴ 'BOOKS printed for, and sold by, JOHN NICHOLS' in Rev. Samuel Pegge, *An Historical Account of Beauchief Abbey [...]*, London, 1801, p.267.

on a path, one pointing with a cane and two figures by the workers entrance. The latter are very small and it is not possible to tell what kind of figure they are meant to depict.

For further consideration of the plate and inclusion in the volume see below, catalogue 11 and p.173.

11. S.W. View of Soho

drawn and engraved by Francis Eginton junior, 1801
(figure 33)

Soho House on top of hill with Hockley Pool in foreground.
Etching and engraving with aquatint and hand colouring.
Source and versions as catalogue 10.

inscr: 'XVIII' top right; 'Drawn & Engrav'd by F. Eginton Ashted Birmingham' below centre; 'To Mathew [sic] Boulton Esq.' this S.W. View of SOHO is inscribed by his obliged Serv.^t S. Shaw' with Boulton family coat of arms.

BMAG2003.31.90, included in the Phillp album 312(max) x 489

For associated text see appendix 1.5.

This view shows the main elevation of Soho House on top of the hill, among trees with the lawn in front. Features of the parkland such as staked trees and a garden seat positioned to look out across the pool are included. The top of the smoking Mint chimney is visible part way down hill, signifying the industrial site which funded the parkland. Hockley Pool is in the middle ground with swans and a boat in sail; it is shown as an aesthetic feature, although it was an essential part of the power system for the Manufactory. Once again Eginton has added sophisticated artistic touches such as repoussoir with a picturesque tree, a rustic gate and the winding path,

foreground right. A proof of this print before lettering is recorded but its location is not known.¹⁰²⁵

The *History of Staffordshire* was compiled by Stebbing Shaw (1762-1802) who was the rector of Hartshorne, Derbyshire which he had inherited from his father. He attended Queen's College, Cambridge and published accounts of tours to Scotland (1788) and the West of England (1789). He was also involved in the production of a short-lived periodical called *The Topographer* (1789-1791) and a continuation, *Topographical Miscellanies* (1792), and assisted the British Museum with the cataloguing of the Harleian collection. In 1791 he began work on his history of Staffordshire which was to occupy him for the rest of his life. Three volumes were planned, but only volume one and volume two part one were completed.¹⁰²⁶ Soho and Francis Eginton senior's stained glass works were initially intended for inclusion in the first volume and discussion with Shaw about an image was underway in 1795.¹⁰²⁷ The account of Soho in the *Monthly Magazine* mentions a 'historical and minute account' of Soho with large engravings which was to appear in Shaw's first volume which would be published shortly.¹⁰²⁸ Boulton and Francis Eginton senior both subscribed to volume one of Shaw's *History*.¹⁰²⁹ Boulton's copy

¹⁰²⁵ BAH 87716 *Album of drawings and sketches by Joseph Barber and Joseph Vincent Barber 1803-08*, given by Mr Harvey, promotional leaflet in the front suggests he acquired this proof with the material now in the album. It was not given to BAH with the rest of the material. Why a proof of a work by Eginton junior was in an album of material by Barber is not clear.

¹⁰²⁶ M.W. Greenslade, 'Stebbing Shaw' in *Oxford DNB online* accessed 24 June 2007; *Monthly Magazine*, March 1803, pp.183-4.

¹⁰²⁷ See p.121.

¹⁰²⁸ *The Monthly Magazine and British Register*, No.XVII Vol.III, May 1797, p.372, see appendix 1.2.

¹⁰²⁹ Shaw, 1798, pp.xxi-xxiii. Boulton's was a large paper version, Eginton senior's an ordinary copy.

was delivered on 21 July 1798 and his expenses for the week commencing 20 August include 'Pd Mr Lane for one Volume of Mr Shaws Staffordshire 3 3 0'.¹⁰³⁰

Handsworth was deferred to the second volume and Shaw wrote to Boulton in 1798, sending proofs of 'what I have been able to put together on the subject' as he had promised not to publish anything without showing it to Boulton. He complained that Watt had not supplied the promised account of the steam engine, but offered to insert this material if it could be supplied and stressed that alterations were still possible. He also asked what plate or plates Boulton intended to supply.¹⁰³¹ By this time the approach road and the forecourt of the manufactory had been rearranged, the central section of the Latchet Works and the stables for the house built so the image could not be based on the material prepared by Riddell.¹⁰³² Francis Eginton junior was asked to produce several sketches and drawings so that Boulton could select the views to be included.¹⁰³³

Shaw visited Soho in September 1799 and arranged for Boulton to be sent twelve copies of the text on Soho.¹⁰³⁴ Boulton agreed to provide two plates, promised by September 1800. In November the other plates for the volume were being printed, but those of Soho had still not been supplied. However,

¹⁰³⁰ WSL SMS 342/5/160 deliveries volume one; BAH3782/12/107/26 MB diary 1798. This list of deliveries also show that Watt had a small copy and the printer Myles Swinney a large one. The list price for a large copy of volume one was £4 4s, so Boulton would have paid a deposit.

¹⁰³¹ BAH3782/12/43/257 Stebbing Shaw to MB 4 June 1798 [endorsed 'suppose Nov 1798].

¹⁰³² See p.127 for Riddell.

¹⁰³³ BAH3782/8/21/43 Bill Francis Eginton to William Cheshire 17 April 1805.

¹⁰³⁴ WSL SMS 342/5/172 S Shaw (Soho) to ---- 25 Sept 1799.

Shaw suggested additional text could still be provided for the Appendix, and proposed that Boulton's halfpennies and the steam engine were suitable topics.¹⁰³⁵ The plate showing the house and park finally arrived in February 1801. Shaw wrote 'it not only does credit to the artist & recompenses for the delay but will also be a great ornament to the next splendid portion' adding 'I shall give coloured impression of it & Soho Manufactory.' He hoped the second plate would follow in less than a month which would not cause problems as he had been 'accidentally disappointed by Mr Rickett's press' and was working with another printer on the illuminated copies. Shaw still suggested that Boulton or Watt could make alterations and asked for the exact words for the dedication to each plate.¹⁰³⁶ He also proposed the inclusion of Boulton's portrait engraved by Sharp after Beechey, if it was finished in time.¹⁰³⁷ The portrait was not included in the finished volume; it was intended as a high-quality, prestigious undertaking and its inclusion in this volume would have conflicted with this.

Enough plates for 250 large and 250 small volumes were printed, although not that many copies were completed as some plates were 'deficient'.¹⁰³⁸ Some plates in the special 'illuminated' copies were coloured. In the Soho plates this is restricted to a blue wash in the sky. It is very even and accurate around the intricate details of the trees which could suggest that it had been printed

¹⁰³⁵ BAH3782/12/43/378 Stebbing Shaw to MB 12 November 1800. There is an appendix of additions and alterations to the volume, the material relating to Soho concerns the mint and the robbery in 1800 (see catalogue 12-14).

¹⁰³⁶ In spite of all this checking the plates were dedicated to 'Mathew [sic] Boulton'. The dedication would have been added by a separate engraver, Eginton junior knew how to spell Matthew.

¹⁰³⁷ BAH3782/12/46/73 Stebbing Shaw to Francis Eginton senior 22 February 1801. This portrait is considered at length in chapter four.

¹⁰³⁸ WSL SMS 342/5/178 Vol II. It is possible that single sheets of some of the plates were also printed at some point.

rather than applied as a wash by hand. However, there is no indication of register marks which would allow a second plate to be correctly aligned with the first. It seems most likely that the coloured plates had a wash applied by hand: Eginton junior was asked to colour four copies for Boulton.¹⁰³⁹ Versions with hand colouring applied later can also be found.¹⁰⁴⁰

The text on Soho was reprinted in *The New Annual Register*, wrongly attributed to Shaw's *History of Staffordshire*, Vol. III. Part I, and in a review of the volume in *The Monthly Review*.¹⁰⁴¹ Boulton attempted to retrieve the copper plates for the Soho images on Shaw's death in 1802 to control any further production of the prints.¹⁰⁴² The Handsworth section was republished by Swinney and Ferrall in 1812.¹⁰⁴³ This reprint was repaginated but no alterations were made to update the text in spite of the deaths of Boulton and Francis Eginton senior who was also mentioned in the text.¹⁰⁴⁴ M.R. Boulton supplied copies of 'Soho plates' to the antiquary William Salt (1808-1863) in

¹⁰³⁹ BAH3782/8/21/43 Bill Francis Eginton to William Cheshire 17 April 1805. The greasy nature of printing ink means it repels such a wash, making highly accurate colouring easier than it looks. I am grateful to Ian Hunter for discussion on this. Shaw mentioned working with a new printer on the illuminated copies, but this does not necessarily mean colour printing, there were extra plates in the illuminated versions, BAH3782/12/46/73 Stebbing Shaw to Francis Eginton senior 22 February 1801. I am grateful to Gill Casson, Richard Clay, Sarah Lowengard, Victoria Osborne, Tessa Sidey and Paul Spencer-Longhurst for discussions on the colouring of these prints.

¹⁰⁴⁰ For example at Birmingham Assay Office.

¹⁰⁴¹ *The New Annual Register [...] For the Year 1801*, 'Biographical Anecdotes and Characters', London, 1802, pp.197-202; *The Monthly Review*, June 1802, p.158-164.

¹⁰⁴² See p.179.

¹⁰⁴³ It is not clear what happened to the Soho plates and how Swinney and Ferrall obtained them to reprint.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Stebbing Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Handsworth in the County of Stafford*, Birmingham, 1812.

1832 and it is likely that it was or included these images. Salt wrote to thank him for them, hoping he had not robbed Boulton by asking for so many.¹⁰⁴⁵

12. Plan of Soho Manufactory, section through houses and shops

unknown artist, 1801

(figure 23)

BAH3069 Matthew Boulton legal papers (originally part of MS3147 but separated prior to accession by library)

Plan and section showing the escape routes of robbers.

Pen and wash.

315 x 430

inscr: Section of the roofs of the houses & shops over which the little Devil escaped & on which Gibbons & J. Eginton were found – as denoted by the letters G and JE. Illegible pencil notes in top right hand corner.

13. View of the Front of SOHO MANUFACTORY

unknown artist, 1801

(figure 24)

BAH3069 Matthew Boulton legal papers, loose item

Principal Building and Rolling Mill Row annotated with names of those who worked in particular rooms and the route of the robbers on the forecourt.

pen and wash

107 x 341

inscr: View of the Front of SOHO MANUFACTORY; 1801 added in later hand.

14. View of BROOK ROW & the back of the MANUFACTORY

unknown artist, 1801

(figure 25)

BAH3069 Matthew Boulton legal papers, loose item

Manufactory site from the rear with dotted line showing where the robbers escaped across the roof of Brook Row.

pen and wash

230 x 296

inscr: View of BROOK ROW & the back of the MANUFACTORY The place over which the little Devil escaped is marked with a dotted line The place where J. Eginton was found is marked J.E. R. Boulton's Lodgings are marked R.B.

¹⁰⁴⁵ BAH3782/12/25/54 William Salt to MRB 4 Aug 1832, D.A. Johnson, 'William Salt' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 Feb 2010. Some of these copies are likely to be the ones now in the Staffordshire Views Collection at the William Salt Library, Stafford.

These images form part of the material produced prior to the trial of a group of men who attempted to rob the manufactory. A series of dotted lines shows the routes each man took in his attempt to escape and where those who were caught were stopped. The robbery took place on the night of Tuesday 23 December 1800 with Boulton and others lying in wait as they had received prior warning.¹⁰⁴⁶ John Fowles and Walter Eginton were caught in the courtyard behind the Principal Building, Thomas Gibbons and John Eginton were stopped as they attempted to escape over the roofs.¹⁰⁴⁷ The fifth member of the gang, William Fowles, a 'professional thief' from Manchester known as the 'Little Devil' managed to escape over the roofs, falling off and breaking his arm as he did so. A few days later Boulton wrote to his daughter from the office of Thomas Pearson, the printer of *Aris' Birmingham Gazette* where he was ensuring they did not publish erroneous accounts of the robbery as other papers had done. The guards were given a dinner as a thanks where 'many honest Songs & Toasts given'.¹⁰⁴⁸ The story of this robbery was widely reported and is reputed to have inspired Sir Walter Scott to base a scene in a smuggler's cave in *Guy Mannering* (1815) on the episode.¹⁰⁴⁹

The men were sent to trial at Stafford Assizes on 22 July 1801 and this plan and elevations seem to have been produced as part of the briefing process.

¹⁰⁴⁶ BAH3782/12/107/28 MB diary 1800, 7 to 23 December; BAH3782/14/76/39-42 MB to Anne Boulton, December 1800.

¹⁰⁴⁷ This is not John Eginton the engraver mentioned in Chapter 2 who had died in 1796. There is no apparent link between the Eginton brothers who undertook the robbery and the family of John and Francis Eginton who had worked at Soho.

¹⁰⁴⁸ BAH3782/14/76/43 MB to AB, 27 December 1800; Exaggerated accounts continued with the *Monthly Magazine*, Feb 1, 1801, p.88 publishing a reasonably accurate paragraph on the robbery but elevating Boulton to Sir Matthew Boulton.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Smiles, p.459.

They are by an unknown hand; the front view may be the work of more than one person with the wall and gates added later. The view of the front adds little to the story of the robbery, showing only a dotted line across the front of the building which is presumably where the robbers entered the site. It is a standard view of the Principal Building and Rolling Mill Row, and shows the uses of some of the rooms. The view of Brook Row and the back of the Manufactory also add little to the understanding of the robbery, showing only the place where John Eginton was captured, where the 'Little Devil' escaped, and M.R. Boulton's lodgings. It is the plan and section which give most detail of escape routes. Perhaps the views were provided more to give an idea of the Soho complex. The view of Brook Row was the first rear view of the manufactory since the views of the late 1760s. As they were not for anything other than a practical purpose they are likely to be accurate in terms of details such as building materials and were not altered for aesthetic purposes.

15. Matthew Boulton F.R.S. & F.S.A.

engraved by William Sharp after Sir William Beechey, 1801
(figure 41)

nearly whole length, seated, face turned to viewer.

line engraving and etching

Published by William Sharp (1749-1824)

inscr: 'Sir Willm. Beachey [sic] pinxt. / Published May 1. 1801 by Wm.

Sharp,¹⁰⁵⁰ London. / Willm. Sharp sculpt. / MATTHEW BOULTON / F.R.S. & F.S.A.'

lit: W.S. Baker, *William Sharp, engraver, with a descriptive catalogue of his works*, Philadelphia, 1875; Loggie in Dick (ed.), 2009, pp.73-4.

¹⁰⁵⁰ It was not published on this date, see note 789.

BMAG164'08 - by descent through Boulton family, given by Lionel BCL Muirhead;¹⁰⁵¹ BMAG2613'85; BMAG1996v128

associated material:

British Museum 1853,1210.492, pencil drawing by William Sharp after Sir William Beechey, head truncated, squared for transfer, purchased from A.E. Evans & Sons, 1853.

BMAG2003.7.44 Copy of portrait of Matthew Boulton by Sir William Beechey, undertaken by Beechey's studio in 1810 after Boulton's death for James Watt junior.¹⁰⁵² By descent through Watt family, Sotheby's James Watt Art and Science sale, 20 March 2003, lot 34.

On Loan to BMAG 1921-1951 Matthew Boulton by Sir William Beechey, from Miss G Boulton.¹⁰⁵³ This would have been the original, painted by Beechey in 1798 and the painting from which Sharp worked to create the print.

Sir William Beechey (1753-1839) had painted Boulton in 1798, showing him again holding a medal and a magnifying glass with a mineral specimen in a glass dome to his side. Multiple copies of the portrait were made with miniatures by William Grimaldi and Lady Beechey, and a full size and Kit Kat copy made by Beechey's studio after Boulton's death for James Watt and Boulton's daughter Anne.¹⁰⁵⁴ Boulton's own copy hung in the Dining Room at Soho House in 1811.¹⁰⁵⁵

See p.209 for the development and distribution of the print.

The printing sequence was likely to have been

¹⁰⁵¹ See p.231.

¹⁰⁵² Loggie in Dick (ed.) 2009, pp.72-4.

¹⁰⁵³ BMAG card indexes and Boulton by L.F. Abbott file. Miss G. Boulton was Clara Gertrude Boulton (1862-1954), Boulton's great-granddaughter.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Loggie, 2009b, p.74.

¹⁰⁵⁵ BAH3782/8/47/32 MRB to Zaccheus Walker Jr. 20 Dec. 1811.

1) Printers or engravers proofs before letters, various copies supplied to Soho, three or four of Sharp's copies offered to R.F. Davis in 1839.¹⁰⁵⁶

2) 300 proof copies taken off in batches of 100 with the plate examined and touched up if necessary after each batch in accordance with the the printing process outlined by Sharp.¹⁰⁵⁷ Davis was offered one or two open letter proofs.

3) 139 prints.¹⁰⁵⁸ Davis was offered three or four copies in 1839.

Beechey's portrait of Boulton was also engraved by

Ridley for Boulton's obituary in the *European Magazine*, 1809 (figure 42).¹⁰⁵⁹

A. Cardon for Cadell and Davies, *British Gallery of Portraits*, 1812.¹⁰⁶⁰

16. View of Mr. Boulton's Manufactory as illuminated at the Peace of 1802

unknown artist

(figure 34).

BAH3782/12/102/11

pen and ink with wash

286 x 465

17. Soho Illuminations, 15 June 1814

(figure 35).

BAH3147/10/31

printed circular

385 x 240

¹⁰⁵⁶ See pp.213 and 230. BM 1841,0809.152 is a proof before letters.

¹⁰⁵⁷ See p.213.

¹⁰⁵⁸ BAH3782/13/41/114 MRB to Richard Chippindall 3 Feb 1802.

¹⁰⁵⁹ See p.241.

¹⁰⁶⁰ BAH3782/13/8/55 Cadell & Davies to MRB 6 Feb 1810; BAH 82934 Volume 1.

Soho Manufactory was illuminated to celebrate peace in both 1802 and 1814. In 1802 Boulton was very ill and directed the illuminations from his bed.¹⁰⁶¹ It has often been suggested that William Murdoch undertook this illumination using gas lighting but there were only two Bengal lights, one at either end of the Principal Building, fed by a gas retort in the fireplace below. Coloured oil lamps were used for the remainder of the illuminations (figure 34).¹⁰⁶² The works considered here were produced to record the event and to provide sources for illustrations which could be included in newspapers. Both show the Principal Building only, square on, with no setting, so the focus is entirely on that building and its decoration. Catalogue 17 is more schematic and misses an entire storey from the building. The artwork for this was unlikely to have been by John Phillip who was still experimenting with artistic 'effects' and probably would not have shown the building with a storey missing. There was concern that public interest would have been lost by the time his drawing was ready to engrave so another artist is likely to have been used.¹⁰⁶³ This illustration had already been published, with a balloon shown behind the building, in the *Birmingham Commercial Herald & General Advertiser* on 13 June 1814.

¹⁰⁶¹ Dickinson, p.190.

¹⁰⁶² See for example Dickinson, p.190, Langford, vol. II, p.151. For accurate accounts see George Demidowicz, *The Soho Foundry, Smethwick, West Midlands: A Documentary and Archaeological Study*, Report for Sandwell Borough Council and HLF, 2002; Demidowicz, forthcoming; Samuel Clegg junior, *A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture and Distribution of Coal-Gas*, London, 1866, p.6.

¹⁰⁶³ For Phillip see pp.111 and 184, for the press coverage of the illuminations see p.183.

**COLLECTANEA DELINEATIONUM VARIARUM JOHANNE PHILLP
INVENTARUM.**

Collection of sketches, drawing and watercolours by John Phillp, c.1792-1854.
BMAG 2003.31

Passed by descent through the Phillp family.

Associated material:

Reverse (i.e. black on white) photocopy taken in 1930, BAH

This album, which was first loaned and then given to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery by a descendant of John Phillp (c.1778-1815), contains much of his known work and all of his currently known views of Soho.¹⁰⁶⁴ Individual catalogue entries are set out below which cover only the images of Boulton and exterior views of Soho, not the remainder of the material in the album which includes designs for metalwares, views of places beyond Soho, drawing exercises and printed material. It is likely that the album is a later construct with a family member collecting together loose material, but it is probable that some of the items, particularly those with borders were intended for inclusion in some form of album or portfolio. The album was not arranged chronologically, and much is undated; the dated items run from 1792 to 1811 with the majority between 1795 and 1805.

There are two works dated 1792 which were produced before Phillp's arrival at Soho in spring 1793. The fact that both of these images are seascapes was presumably influenced by his residence in Falmouth at the time. One

¹⁰⁶⁴ BAH3782/12/45/450 J Phillp to MB, 1800 states that he will be twenty-two at midsummer. However burial record 14 July 1815 states he was thirty-three. BAH St Paul's, Birmingham Burials 1813-8 DRO 35/29 page 83, number 658. I am grateful to Nicholas Molyneux for the record of Phillp's death. No record of his birth has been found. One of the difficulties with researching Phillp is the variety of ways in which his surname was spelt, Phillp, Philp, Phillips and Philps have all been found. Boulton sometimes referred to him as Phelp or Phelps and in the sale catalogue of the Mint machinery in 1850 it was spelt Philpp. Phillp has been adopted throughout this thesis as it is the form he generally used himself.

work is dated 1793, a mountainous landscape with a lake in the foreground and is a copy of one of the plates in William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye*, 1782.¹⁰⁶⁵ It is not known whether Phillip was in Cornwall or at Soho when he copied this view, but it seems more likely that he would have had access to Gilpin's book at Soho.¹⁰⁶⁶ A later insert in the album is signed and dated C. Phillip 1830 and another C.E. Phillip 1854.¹⁰⁶⁷ It is possible that this is the compiler of the album. Not all of the work in the album is signed and it is possible some is by other hands. There are also prints, including classical statues and busts, candlesticks, *The Massacre of the French King* and *The Storming of Seringapatam* (1800). These last two were subjects of medals produced at Soho and may have been used as reference material.

Phillip's own work in the album is varied in style and purpose, and includes views labelled as sketch, finished works and very rough studies. These were mounted with no apparent order or respect for the numbering system evident on some of the material. Conservation work carried out in 2004 included the removal of the material from the album.¹⁰⁶⁸ This has enabled the back of images to be examined and has brought to light additional dates and captions. When the material was mounted in the album no additional annotation or labelling was undertaken so, the only titles we have are Phillip's own. The location of some views has been determined through research and

¹⁰⁶⁵ BMAG2003.32.98; William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye [...]*, [1782], London, 2005, p.24.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Boulton owned a copy of the fifth edition of Gilpin's *Observations on the Wye* published in 1800 but may have owned an earlier edition. He also owned copies of Gilpin's other works, see p.130.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Catalogue 41.

¹⁰⁶⁸ This work formed part of the New Opportunities Funded Digital Handsworth Project and allowed the material to be made available online at www.digitalhandsworth.org.uk. The works were removed from the album, cleaned and repaired. The original order of the material in the album was recorded prior to this.

comparison; some remain to be identified while others are likely to be imaginary or copies of other artist's work.¹⁰⁶⁹

The material in the album has tended to be viewed as a collection. This is not what Phillip would have expected. The sketches would not have been made to be shown, but were part of works in progress, studies or exercises. Other material was clearly designed to be viewed, probably as part of a portfolio or album, as a group of works as it has a numbering system and has been finished with ruled borders.¹⁰⁷⁰ This numbering suggests that there is at least one missing view of Soho.¹⁰⁷¹ It is important to consider Phillip's planned reception of these images, rather than the context in which we view them today. The division of the album into individual pieces during conservation work has perhaps helped move back towards a closer approximation of the original viewing conditions. In 1930 the album was lent to Smethwick Library and a photocopy taken which is now with Birmingham Archives and Heritage.¹⁰⁷² Comparison of the 1930 copy with the present album revealed one rough sketch of Rolling Mill Row which is no longer in the album (figure 55).¹⁰⁷³ There are other places in the album where work has clearly been removed, but this had taken place before the photocopy was made.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Phillada Ballard, *Soho House Gardens 1761-1809; Report for the Heritage Development Department Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery*, 1992 Soho House files identified a number of the views of the estate, particularly the garden buildings. See also Ballard et al. The work of George Demidowicz on the buildings of the Manufactory and Mint also enhanced the understanding of what Phillip was recording.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Wilton, pp.11, 29. Watercolours were sometimes framed and displayed, but the condition of these works makes it very unlikely that they were.

¹⁰⁷¹ It is possible that this was separated from the other works by being framed and hung.

¹⁰⁷² BMAG2003.31.3 Receipt from H.P. Marshal, 23 January 1930.

¹⁰⁷³ See catalogue 23.

Additional Phillp images have come to light via other branches of the family since Soho House opened to the public. This has so far consisted of loose material, some of which has been deposited with BMAG. Owners have also allowed copies of much of the work in private hands to be made. The topographical views relating to Soho are so far concentrated in the Phillp album; items in other collections relate largely to silver designs, silhouettes, informal portraits and imagined landscapes.¹⁰⁷⁴

For the purposes of this thesis only works which have been identified as showing Matthew Boulton, Soho Manufactory and the park have been catalogued and they have been arranged by subject rather than number or date to enable comparison and discussion.¹⁰⁷⁵ This format should not lead to an overestimation of the importance of topographical views as part of Phillp's total output; it is simply the area that has formed the subject of this study. The assignation of museum accession numbers to individual items was undertaken before the album was dismantled and so relate to the ordering given by whoever constructed the album.

MATTHEW BOULTON

18. MATTHEW BOULTON DRAWN by J. PHILLP, from a MODEL by VAN WAEYENBERGHE, 1801

(figure 49)

BMAG2003.31.52

half length bust on standing on base
pen and ink
495 x 342

¹⁰⁷⁴ Files and copies at Soho House.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Some unidentified views could be on the estate at Soho, but this catalogue includes only views which can be firmly identified. For example BMAG2003.31.107 study of a cow lying under tree; 10 study of tree in snow, 15 March 1795; 4, 7, 31, 92 are also tree studies.

inscr: on base MATTHEW BOULTON DRAWN by J. PHILLP, from a MODEL by VAN WAEYENBERGHE, 1801

This drawing was made from the wax bust of Boulton modelled by Ignatius Joseph van Waeyenberghe (1756-93) in Paris in 1786.¹⁰⁷⁶ It is likely that Phillip's attention was drawn to the bust while he was working on designs for library shelving at Soho House. Also included in the album are designs for the frontispiece of the library catalogue and bookshelves dated 1800, an undated design includes the bust of Boulton in a niche above the door.¹⁰⁷⁷ It is not clear whether this illustration of the bust was undertaken as a drawing exercise or was intended for publication in some form, but the dense cross hatching of this work might suggest that it was prepared with a view to being engraved. It is possible that Phillip was inspired by the line engraving of Boulton by Sharp after Beechey which had been under consideration since 1799 and was finally printed in 1801.¹⁰⁷⁸

Relatively few representations of Boulton by Phillip are known, there is a miniature after the von Breda signed JP.¹⁰⁷⁹ An early twentieth century newspaper article refers to an 'exquisite medallion painting of Boulton [...] for which the original sketch was made on one afternoon when the founder of

¹⁰⁷⁶ BAH3782/12/108/49 MB Notebook 1786-7 p.64 in hand other than MB's 'M. van Waeyenberghe, Sculpteur'; BAH3782/12/98 Papers relating to Paris journey, transcript of MB pocket diary Th 28 Dec 1786; BAH3782/12/107/14 MB diary 1786 18 Nov; BAH3782/12/107/15 MB diary 1787 Tues 16 Jan; Ingamells, p.558.

¹⁰⁷⁷ BMAG2003.31.53-5, 63-67 BMAG2003.31.65.1 include the bust.

¹⁰⁷⁸ I am grateful to Richard Clay for this point. See catalogue 15 and p.209 for the Sharp engraving.

¹⁰⁷⁹ There is no known provenance for this object.

Soho lay sleeping' owned by a descendant of Phillip, but its current location is unknown.¹⁰⁸⁰

SOHO MANUFACTORY

There are seven Phillip views showing the manufactory, sometimes simply in the background.¹⁰⁸¹ One further image is now lost, and known only through a copy taken in 1930.¹⁰⁸² All of Phillip's dated views including the manufactory buildings were carried out in 1796. Four of those were numbered; 'No 1', 'No 1 sketch', '2', and 'No 3 S' (presumably sketch). Numbers 1 and 2 are finished with ink and wash borders, suggesting they were finished works and intended for inclusion in a portfolio or similar. They are different sizes and have different borders and, therefore, were not considered a pair. Both appear to be predominantly concerned with accuracy and topographical recording, but also include more sophisticated techniques like aerial perspective and repoussoir to create depth in the image. Both focus on the parkland with the manufactory buildings merely forming part of the backdrop.

Phillip's views provide the most detail we have of the pools around Soho, the source of the water power that brought Boulton to Soho. The Soho Mill Pool (above the mill, visible to the right of the Principal Building in many views) had been constructed by Ruston and Eaves before Boulton came to Soho, and the

¹⁰⁸⁰ 'Boulton Centenary The story of an apprentice of Soho A Glance through old papers', *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 20 August 1909.

¹⁰⁸¹ BMAG 2003.31.26, 32, 33, 35, 41, 91 and 105. The manufactory is also shown in 2003.31.88, a reworked version of Francis Eginton's aquatint of the Manufactory.

¹⁰⁸² It appears to be an earlier version of catalogue 23 and is discussed in that entry.

water from it ran through the manufactory into Great Hockley Pool.¹⁰⁸³ In 1775 Boulton created a further pool to store water which could be pumped back into the top pool to pass through the waterwheel again.¹⁰⁸⁴ This was known as 'lower pool and island' or Little Hockley Pool and was separated from Great Hockley Pool by a causeway dam. It was extended several times (see figures 15 and 16).¹⁰⁸⁵ It was not until 1799, after the enclosure of Birmingham Heath, that Boulton was able to purchase land he had previously rented which gave him control of all of the margins of Great Hockley Pool.¹⁰⁸⁶ By 1820 these pools had been combined by the removal of the dam, and the resulting stretch of water was known as Hockley Pool or Big Hockley Pool.¹⁰⁸⁷ Later it came to be called Soho Pool or Soho Lake, was leased for public recreation in 1852, and drained in 1868.¹⁰⁸⁸ A much smaller pool lay on the hillside above Hockley Pool, known initially as the Little Pool. The addition of an artificial shell and alterations to its shape in 1778 led to it becoming known as the Shell Pool.¹⁰⁸⁹ This pool survived longer; the grounds around it were laid out and the pool reshaped in 1880 by the Boulton trustees as a garden open to subscribers, an amenity for purchasers of the new villas being laid out on the estate. It was drained in 1898.¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸³ Ballard et al, p.2; Demidowicz in Dick (ed.) p.119.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Pumping this water back was the first use of a steam engine at Soho.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ballard et al, p.10, plate 4.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ballard et al, p. 25.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ballard et al, pp.62-3.

¹⁰⁸⁸ J. Piggot Smith, *Map of Birmingham*, 1828; Ballard et al, pp.75-7.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Ballard et al, p.9. The shell is visible in catalogue 31.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ballard et al pp. 80, 85.

19. View of Soho Manufactory from Hockley Pool, 1796

(figure 50)

BMAG2003.31.26

Engine works from Hockley Pool.

watercolour

border: pen and wash pink and grey

inscr: b.l. 'John Phillp Fecit 1796 2', also signed John Phillp at waters edge
172 x 248

This view was part of a numbered series. It has a low horizon with sky forming a large part of the picture. Vegetation at the side of the pool provides sidescreens and a sense of depth. The conventions of aerial perspective are reversed with hazy blues and greens in the vegetation of the foreground and crisp reds in the buildings in the middle ground. It shows the peninsula or spit of land created in 1775, at the same time as Little Hockley Pool, and used as a kitchen garden that was partly enclosed by a fruit wall which is visible here. The trees on the right are on an island created at the same time which was intended for swans.¹⁰⁹¹ The engine works are visible and the lower buildings of the engine yard beyond with smoking chimneys.

20. View from close to Soho House, 1796

(figure 51)

BMAG2003.31.32

View from close to Soho House with outbuilding in foreground.

watercolour

border: pen and wash yellow and grey

inscr: bottom left in border John Phillp Pxt 1796 / No 1 / June; grass bottom
middle J Phillp delt

330 x 473

¹⁰⁹¹ Ballard et al, p.10, plate 4. See p.307 for the development of the pools and this spit of land. The kitchen garden and fruit wall were removed in 1809, and the land on which they had stood removed to form an extension to Little Hockley Pool, Ballard et al, p.38.

This view was also intended to form part of the numbered series which apparently included views of varying sizes. Again the image is dominated by sky with a particularly dramatic cloud formation in the centre, but a higher horizon. It emphasizes the classical sophistication of the gardens with a smooth knoll, a garden vase and a rounded dip allowing a glimpse of the pool. It looks out across Boulton's back lawn to the enclosed farmland of the 1794 Handsworth Enclosure Act on the right, alongside the as yet unenclosed land of Birmingham Heath.¹⁰⁹² The top of the Principal Building is visible and large numbers of buildings, some of them substantial, can be seen in the farmland. A number of people are walking, most individually, on the path of the far side of the pool. This view does apply aerial perspective effectively with crisp red brick in the foreground and hazy blue hills in the far distance.

21. *View of the Soho Manufactory taken from Birmingham Heath, 1796*
(figure 52)
BMAG2003.31.33

Manufactory complex from rear, latchet works and mint buildings partially visible among trees.

Pen and ink

inscr: b.c.View of the/SOHO MANUFACTORY taken from Birmingham Heath/July 1796; b.l. J Phillp Fecit/No 1 Sketch.

330 x 468

This was apparently also part of a numbered series, but bears no relation to the view numbered 1 (catalogue 20). The image is dominated by sky, with the land compressed into the bottom third of the paper, suggesting that a similar treatment to the other watercolours was planned for the sky. The heath occupies the foreground, meaning that the area of interest is compressed into

¹⁰⁹² See p.103 for details of the enclosures.

a narrow horizontal band. This is clearly a sketch; the lines are less confident and clean.

This view makes it apparent how wooded this area was, Soho House is on top of the hill but cannot be seen for trees. Again, a number of other buildings are visible in the background. The image shows clearly how the manufactory sat in the landscape and emphasises the change in level of the ground between the Principal Building and Brook Row at the back of the site. This topography has now been lost as the back of the site was built up when it was used as a refuse tip in the late nineteenth-century.¹⁰⁹³ This is a rare glimpse of the site from the back, not one of the standard views Boulton used to promote the business.

22. Hockley Pool with boathouse and Soho Manufactory, 1796

(figure 53)

BMAG2003.31.35

Boat house on Hockley Pool with engine works in background.

pen and ink with ink wash

inscr: explain where '1796/Sketch taken on the spot at SOHO' 'J Phillip 1796' 'No 3 S'.

328 x 462

This was presumably intended as part of a numbered series, it is a similar view to that labelled 2 (catalogue 19), but a slightly different angle has allowed the inclusion of the boathouse. The contrast between the ink wash, loose vegetation and boathouse in the foreground, and the more precise pen lines of the manufactory building, fence and wall in the right and background is

¹⁰⁹³ Ballard et al, p.78.

used to create depth; the narrow pen lines are less visible and appear to recede. Although made on the spot, this is a confident sketch with crisp, clean lines to the building. The vegetation fills the image, the sky reduced to the top right hand corner above the buildings. If it had been worked up into a watercolour, it would have resulted in a much darker image than Phillip's other examples. He did label some work as taken on the spot or from nature in a variety of media including pencil, ink, wash and small scale watercolours. This suggests that some were worked up later from sketches rather than *en plein air*. Wilton notes that working outdoors encourages directness and spontaneity and that sketches undertaken outdoors were often more personal and were not intended for public viewing.¹⁰⁹⁴

23. View of the Soho Manufactory, taken on the Spot, 1796

(figure 54)

BMAG2003.31.41

View across Mill Pool looking south east showing end of Principal Building, looking squarely at Rolling Mill Row.

pen and ink

inscr: b.c.'View of the Soho Manufactory taken on the Spot'; b.l. 'John Phillip Fecit 1796'.

420 x 618

The missing view known only in the 1930 photocopy of the album (figure 55) appears to have been a preliminary sketch for this work. The missing view is at a slightly more oblique angle and shows more of Rolling Mill Row, but does not include the Latchet Works or the hill with the stables. It appears to be pencil, but this may be a softening effect of the copying technique. There is

¹⁰⁹⁴ Wilton and Lyles, p.132.

writing at the top of this sketch which it has not been possible to read in the photocopy, but probably comments on the reason for abandoning the sketch.

Phillip's completed work provides a square view of the buildings of Rolling Mill Row which are shown at an oblique angle on many of the printed views. It emphasises the changing ground levels as Rolling Mill Row runs down the hill. The end of the Principal Building forms the focal point of the view; it is centrally placed, with the cupola and weather-vane. The fence visible in the anonymous watercolour (figure 20) is shown, as is the wall enclosing the forecourt. The gates in this wall match those added to the robbery drawing (figure 24).¹⁰⁹⁵ Many of the chimneys and rooftops beyond Rolling Mill Row seen in the preliminary sketch have been omitted to provide a more pleasing, less confusing view.

The buildings run out of the right-hand side of the frame (in the earlier version more of the buildings were included), the wooded hill to the left has been added and the circular toilet building omitted. While these omissions may be artistically more acceptable, they do not convey the scale or complexity of the site in the way that the rough sketch does. Some attempt to compensate for this is made by allowing the viewer to see through the archway of the staff entrance into the yard beyond. As in catalogue entries 19-21, the sky forms the top half of the picture and water is shown covering much of the foreground, restricting the interest to a narrow band and suggesting a dramatic sky was planned for the finished watercolour. The culvert where

¹⁰⁹⁵ See p.276 for more on this enclosing wall and the gates.

water from the pool was taken into the canal and moved into Hockley Pool is visible. The edge of the pool and a path lie on the left-hand side of the image and act as a side screen, helping to create depth and lead the eye into the picture. Soho House is on the hill to the left, hidden by trees.

24. Soho Manufactory

John Phillip with trees by Amos Green, nd [c.1797-8]
(figure 19)
BMAG203.31.91

Looking south from the approach road at the Principal Building.
pen and ink and pencil with some crayon.
inscr: pencil, b.r. 'The Trees Sketched by Amos Green York'.
255 x 340

This is an undated, unfinished study; the buildings are shown in ink line only with some landscape and vegetation in the foreground and background in pencil and crayon. The building is set well back, with park and vegetation in the foreground to emphasise the landscape setting, the Principal Building again set at an angle. The buildings and the edges of the pond are in ink, in Phillip's characteristic tight hand, while the vegetation and track in the foreground, the fields behind the Manufactory and the trees between the buildings were added much more loosely by Amos Green in pencil and crayon. They overlap the mint buildings so must have been added after the buildings but how much later is not known. The vegetation in the foreground includes a number of small trees and bushes similar to those visible in images in the *Monthly* and *Copper Plate* magazines (figures 26 and 27) which do not appear in later printed views by Francis Eginton junior where there is

grassland instead. Green uses a distinctive pair of trees as a framing device on the left hand side which are included in Eginton's views, but not the others.

Phillp's view includes more buildings, shows a domed roof on latched works, the same curving approach track as the *Monthly* and *Copper Plate* (figures 26 and 27) and little detail of the landscape beyond which both printed images do show. The vegetation added by Green is taller, more mature than in either the *Monthly* or *Copper Plate*. In those publications the vegetation appears to be low scrub whereas Green's includes trees, both deciduous and coniferous. Green's vegetation cannot be an entirely imaginary illustration of methods of drawing trees as the distinctive pair of trees on the left appear in the views by Francis Eginton junior.

Amos Green (1735-1807), best known as a fruit and landscape painter, had been apprenticed to Boulton's friend, the printer and papier-mâché maker, John Baskerville, where he decorated trays and boxes.¹⁰⁹⁶ Originally from Halesowen, he exhibited at the Society of Artists with a Birmingham address between 1760 and 1765. His brother Benjamin (c.1739-1798), a drawing master and engraver based in London had been used by Boulton and Fothergill to produce engravings of goods which Fothergill could use on his sales trips.¹⁰⁹⁷ Amos found a wealthy patron in Anthony Deane which

¹⁰⁹⁶ Except where noted otherwise the account of Green given below is from L.H. Cust, rev. N. Grindle, 'Amos Green', *Oxford DNB online* accessed 24 June 2007 and *1951 Festival Exhibition of Pictures by the 18th Century Halesowen Artists James, Amos & Benjamin Green*, Council House, Halesowen, 1951, pp.22-32. The Greens of Halesowen are not related to the mezzotint artist Valentine Green or William Green the Lake District artist, both of whom had connections with Soho and the Boultons.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See p.65. Tim Clayton, 'Benjamin Green' *Oxford DNB online* accessed 24 June 2007; BAH3782/12/60/5 John Fothergill to MB 24 May 1762; BAH3782/12/60/42 JF to MB 20 March 1766.

enabled him to move away from the Midlands, spending time in Suffolk, Bath and London. He lived with the Deane family for thirty years, acting as drawing tutor to Deane's children.¹⁰⁹⁸ Throughout this period Green kept in touch with Boulton, telling him about silver he had seen in London shops and acting as an informal agent for Boulton and Fothergill while he was living in Bath.¹⁰⁹⁹ A series of letters complained of candlesticks damaged in transit or not an exact pair and the delay providing the goods while he had customers waiting.¹¹⁰⁰ Green also introduced visitors to the Manufactory and secured a place for the young Matthew Robinson Boulton at the Revd Mr Parby's school in Suffolk, attended by Mr Deane's boys.¹¹⁰¹ He married Harriet Lister (1750/1-1821), also an artist, and an enthusiast of the Picturesque. They had met in 1793 in Bath through Harriet's friend Mary Hartley who had written to Gilpin in 1789

'Mr Green [...] draws & paints better than any gentleman that I know; & he is so enthusiastic about all these effects that you speak of, from mists, clouds, streams of light, & other accidental causes of light & shade, that I wish you cou'd have some conversation together.'¹¹⁰²

She lent Green all of Gilpin's works and explained that he wished to buy them all, but she was worried that he would not be able to find editions of the Welsh or Cumberland tours 'with good impressions of the prints.' She later wrote of the Greens, 'they travel in pursuit of picturesque beauty; they take sketches

¹⁰⁹⁸ Harriet Green, *Memoir of Amos Green, Esq. [...]*, York, 1823, pp.73-4.

¹⁰⁹⁹ BAH3782/12/23/158 Amos Green to MB 30 October 1769.

¹¹⁰⁰ For example BAH3782/1/23 Amos Green to MB 17 Jan 1774, Amos Green to John Scale 24 Jan 1774, 5 Feb 1774, Feb 1774, 20 March 1774.

¹¹⁰¹ BAH3782/1/25/5 Amos Green to Boulton and Fothergill 27 May 1776; BAH3782/12/38/155 Amos Green to MB 21 Sept 1793; BAH3782/12/45/206 Amos Green to MB 6 July 1800; BAH3782/12/30/10 Amos Green to MB 2 Feb 1785.

¹¹⁰² Mary Hartley to William Gilpin 15 Aug 1789. quoted in C.P. Barbier, *William Gilpin, His Drawings, Teaching, and Theory of the Picturesque*, Oxford, 1963, p.164. Mary Hartley was the daughter of philosopher David Hartley.

whenever they come, pursuing the course of rivers, & riding upon ponies, or climbing on foot, where carriages cannot pass.¹¹⁰³

They moved to York after their marriage in September 1796 which suggests that the inscription, and probably the trees, were added to Phillip's drawing after that date.¹¹⁰⁴ Green introduced his wife to Boulton who showed them the mint and 'every thing most worthy of observation at Soho' around November 1797.¹¹⁰⁵ They stayed at Soho in the summer of 1800, and with the Galton family at Duddeston in August 1804.¹¹⁰⁶ It seems likely that on such a visit Green was asked to give some help or tuition to John Phillip, resulting in the addition of the trees to his view of the manufactory. However, Phillip's portion of this view predates many of these visits as he shows the Latchet Works with the domed central roof and hipped roofs to the end of the wings, in the same way as the unsigned watercolour, *Monthly and Copper Plate* magazines (figures 20, 26 and 27). This suggests that, like the magazines, Phillip's view predates the completion of the Latchet Works and was showing them as intended rather than as eventually built.¹¹⁰⁷ This portion of the drawing must therefore be 1798 or earlier, but post the 1797 rearrangement of the track and gates. Like the image in the *Copper Plate Magazine*, the planned Latchet building has had to be constructed for this view, and the existing 1791 Mint added beyond. This may suggest that Phillip

¹¹⁰³ Mary Hartley to William Gilpin 12 Nov 1801 W.L. Benson quoted Barbier, p.164.

¹¹⁰⁴ Barbier, p.164.

¹¹⁰⁵ Harriet Green, 1823, p.125

¹¹⁰⁶ BAH3782/12/45/206 Amos Green to MB, 6 July 1800; BAH3782/12/45/251 Amos Green to MB, 20 Aug 1800; Green, p.239.

¹¹⁰⁷ See p.275 for the construction of the Latchet Works.

provided the original drawing for the *Copper Plate* or that he was influenced by that image.

25. Design for medal showing the Principal Building, nd [c.1797]
(figure 56)
BMAG2003.31.105

Principal Building, looking south, in a circular frame with blank exergue.
pen and ink
92 x 130

This shows the Principal Building at its usual angle, but closer than other views, including the wing but none of the adjacent buildings. It depicts the gateway to the manufactory terrace and is enclosed in a circular frame with a blank section at the bottom and a border above as if leaving space for a date (an exergue). This suggests that this is a design for a medal. The penmanship is rough and cross hatching is used to add tone and suggest the water of the canal in the foreground. The work is unsigned and, while it is likely to be by Phillip as there are examples of his work which display a looser technique and use cross hatching, it is not a characteristic Phillip drawing. This image contrasts strongly with his clean, exact numismatic designs such as the Hafod and St Albans Friendly Society medals and halfpennies.¹¹⁰⁸

This medal design does not appear to have been produced; only two medals showing the buildings of the Manufactory are known. Kempson produced a series of tokens showing buildings of Birmingham for sale to collectors in the

¹¹⁰⁸ BMAG2003.31.111 Hafod medal of 1798, BMAG2003.31.112 St Albans Medal of 1803 and BMAG2003.31.128 and 129 designs for halfpennies, c.1802.

late 1790s. The obverse of each token promoted Peter Kempson, a 'Maker of Buttons, Medals &c.' and the reverse featured a number of buildings including St Paul's Church, the General Hospital and Soho Manufactory, showing the Principal Building from the usual oblique angle.¹¹⁰⁹ The other depiction is the Soho Manufactory medal which is dated 1792 and depicts Boulton on the obverse and the Principal Building on the reverse. This view was taken from further back and included more of the surroundings than Phillip's design. Only two examples of the latter are known so, it does not seem to have been struck in any quantity.¹¹¹⁰ It is possible that Phillip's drawing was simply an exercise; there is a design for a banknote in the album and no suggestion that there were ever any plans for involvement in their design and production at Soho.¹¹¹¹ Alternatively, it could be a proposal for Matthew Boulton's memorial medal which was distributed by Phillip at his funeral.¹¹¹²

26. *Mr Boulton's Manufactory at SOHO near BIRMINGHAM*

Original plate by Francis Eginton, 1773 with later reworking c.1797, probably by John Phillip.

(figure 57)

BMAG2003.31.88

Looking south at the Principal Building with Rolling Mill Row.

Aquatint over etching.

inscr: below 'Mr Boulton's Manufactory at SOHO near BIRMINGHAM.'

guidelines visible

232 x 359

¹¹⁰⁹ David Symons, catalogue 200 in Mason (ed.), 2009.

¹¹¹⁰ BMAG1978N1 and Ashmolean CM 148-1974. The BMAG example was bought from a dealer with no prior provenance. The other may have been part of the set of the Mint's production given to the University of Oxford by Matthew Robinson Boulton in 1827 and subsequently transferred to the Ashmolean, Pollard, 1970, p.315.

¹¹¹¹ BMAG2003.31.141.

¹¹¹² The limited time available to strike the medal meant that it had to be a much simpler design than this, David Symons, catalogue 387-88 in Mason (ed.), 2009.

associated items:

further print from reworked plate BAH3782/12/102/7

from plate in original state, BM 1978,1216.3.1; WSL SV VII.23a

This is a reworking of the aquatint plate produced in 1773 by Francis Eginton senior, discussed in chapter one.¹¹¹³ Whoever undertook the reworking and printing was not confident in the medium. The original caption 'Vue des Magasins &c &c appartenants a la Manufacture de Boulton & Fothergill Située a Soho pres de BIRMINGHAM en Angleterre' has been polished out and replaced (this was necessary following the death of Fothergill and the formal ending of the partnership in 1782).¹¹¹⁴ The guidelines ruled for the new text were scored too deeply and are visible in the print. The sky has been altered, and the whole is printed much darker than the earlier version. This means the subtlety of shadow on roofs, definition and detail of windows at the far end, detail of vegetation in foreground, steps down to pool, figure leaning on the wall and the clock above the worker's entrance have all been lost. Excess ink has been smudged around the edges. Only two prints from the reworked plate are known, this copy and one in the Archives of Soho. Its inclusion among Phillip's material suggests that he undertook the reworking of the plate. This is not, however, conclusive, there is printed material by others in the album and he may simply have been interested in the process undertaken by another.

¹¹¹³ Prints from the unaltered plate are not catalogued because neither BMAG nor BAH have copies, for discussion of the production of the plate and attribution to Eginton see p.76.

¹¹¹⁴ Quickenden, 1990, p.225.

SOHO HOUSE

John Phillip's distant views of Soho House show it before and after the creation of a new front elevation for the house. Morriss suggested that by 1796 Boulton probably felt sufficiently confident in his future financial position to ask James Wyatt to draw up a scheme to transform the house 'from a relatively humble home into a mansion more in keeping with his status as one of the most important industrialists of his time.'¹¹¹⁵ This may have been the impression he wished to convey, but finances continued to be difficult.¹¹¹⁶ Wyatt's plans were to retain the existing house, remodel the western wing and add a new principal block to the front of the house, the work to be carried out in stages. Preliminary works, like raising the height of the top floor and alterations to the western wing, began in summer 1796 but progressed very slowly. In October, Boulton told Wyatt that he had paid a large sum of money to make his house the most uncomfortable state possible. By 1798 the plans for the new principal block had been abandoned.¹¹¹⁷ This was probably due to financial uncertainties and the further disruption such an addition would have caused to the household of the now seventy year-old Boulton. James's brother, Samuel, was brought back to undertake smaller scale works to the house including creating the front elevation which survives today and cladding the exterior in slate which was painted to look like stone.¹¹¹⁸ This finish would finally have unified a building that had undergone many alterations and additions (figure 17).

¹¹¹⁵ Morriss, p.41. It should be noted that this report was commissioned to look at the physical archaeology of the building and the documentary evidence was based on very early searches in the archive and much has come to light since.

¹¹¹⁶ BAH3782/12/69/5 MB to Charlotte Matthews 16 Feb 1797.

¹¹¹⁷ Morriss, pp.41-45.

¹¹¹⁸ Morriss, pp.51-55.

27. Distant view of Soho House, 1796

(figure 58)

BMAG2003.31.28

Birmingham Heath in the foreground, looking north.

watercolour

border: pen and wash pink and grey

inscr: bottom left 'John Phillip Decr 1796'; bottom left in border 'JP 1796 4'

170 x 246

This is apparently another of the numbered series of watercolours. A little under half of the image is sky with scrub and heathland in the foreground. A number of pedestrians, figures on horseback, and a horse drawn wagon transporting an engine cylinder are using the track across the heath which was not enclosed until 1802.¹¹¹⁹ Like the pen sketch No 1 (figure 52) taken from another part of the heath the detail is compressed into a narrow horizontal band in the centre of the picture. The smooth light green of the park with individual feature trees and the curved edge of the plantation is contrasted with the rougher, darker green of the scrub of Birmingham Heath. The image hints that more might lie beyond the hill of the heath. Part of Hockley Pool can be seen and the buildings of the Manufactory and Soho House can be glimpsed among the trees.

28. Hockley Pool with Soho House in the distance, 1796

(figure 59)

BMAG2003.31.29

Distant view of Soho House across Hockley Pool, looking north.

watercolour

border: pen and wash pink and grey

inscr: in border 'John Phillip 1796 5' and in painting bottom right centre

173 x 248

¹¹¹⁹ Brown, p.55.

This shows the house from a similar viewpoint to catalogue 29, a view that was used by several artists including Barber and Eginton junior.¹¹²⁰ Again this was part of an intended series. It depicts Soho House from the far side of Hockley Pool, but from the waters edge rather than from the heath and from further to the right. Half of the image is the empty water of the pool and two-fifths sky so, yet again, the interest is in a narrow horizontal band. More of the house can be seen than in the previous image, it is not masked by the trees but sits among them. A few of the manufactory buildings can be seen at the bottom of the hill. A picturesque broken down fence and vegetation in the bottom left corner provide some interest and break up the expanse of water. It is very similar to the view in the *The Tablet* (figure 18) and was perhaps inspired by Barber's work. Phillip's view feels cold and bleak, the house open and exposed, largely due to the cold colours used, particularly the vast expanse of water. Barber's view and Phillip's later similar view (catalogue 29) break up that water by the inclusion of land in the foreground.

29. Sketch of Soho House taken from Birmingham Heath, 1799

(figure 60)

BMAG2003.31.36

Soho House from a similar viewpoint after the alterations, Hockley Pool in middle distance.

Pen and ink with ink wash, pen border.

inscr: l. in grass 'Sketch of Soho house taken from Birm heath June 1799./John Phillip Delt'; b.l. in border 'JP F. 1799. S'.

330 x 446

¹¹²⁰ See figures 18, 30 and 33.

This sketch is from a similar viewpoint to the watercolour above (catalogue 28). It shows the house after the major alterations with the new patent slate cladding, the ionic pilasters and new portico. It also shows an urn on the plinth on the roof. This does not survive and there is no physical evidence of any form of fixing for such an urn, but it is conceivable that something did stand there without being fixed.¹¹²¹ The wing which was added to the left of the main façade is hidden in the trees. Smoking chimneys among the trees indicate the manufactory complex with the cupola and weathervane of the principal building and other roofs visible. There is open parkland to the front of the house with feature trees, some staked and protected by fencing. Thornhill House is visible on the extreme left (see catalogue 45).

Over half of the image is given over to sky, but the pool does not dominate the foreground in the way it did in the earlier view (about a quarter of the image in the foreground is heathland). The pool is also broken up by the inclusion of figures enjoying the water recreationally; there are fishermen, a boat and a woman gazing out across the water. The figures are very tall and thin and the swan's necks and heads are out of proportion. The right hand edge has a framing tree and picturesque, tumbledown fence and rough ground. Eginton junior would do something similar (figure 33), but make it more picturesque by curving the path. Phillip's image shows the path leading to the edge of the water, while Eginton's curves to run alongside the pool with a gate leading to the same trees which had grown more by 1801. Phillip's view clearly predates Eginton's as some of the feature trees can be identified in both images, other

¹¹²¹ Eginton junior showed something similar in figure 32.

trees do not correspond, suggesting that either or both artists altered the landscape to achieve artistic effects.

GARDEN BUILDINGS

Temple of Flora

30. Temple of Flora, 1794

(figure 61)

BMAG2003.31.8

Temple of Flora with grass in foreground, shutter and gate partially open.
ink and watercolour
inscr: b.l. '(J Phillp delt) 1794'; on reverse in pencil 'view of a temple belonging to Mr Boulton'.
80 x 114

31. Temple of Flora and Shell Pool, n.d.

(figure 62)

BMAG2003.31.16

Temple of Flora in woodland setting with Shell Pool in foreground.
Pen and ink.
98 x 140

32. View across Hockley Pool to Temple of Flora and Cascade building, n.d.

(figure 63)

BMAG2003.31.22

View across Hockley Pool and island with cascade building on far shore, cascade leading up to Shell Pool (not visible) and Temple of Flora.
Pen and ink
99 x 150

The Temple of Flora was probably inspired by Charles Hamilton's Temple of Bacchus at Painshill, seen by Boulton 1772 and sketched in his notebook.¹¹²²

¹¹²² BAH3782/12/108/7 MB notebook 8, 1772.

The ground was levelled and the paths laid out in 1775-6 and the temple built in October 1776 by Benjamin Wyatt at a cost of £43/10/7. It was extensively repaired in 1795.¹¹²³ A cascade was constructed to run from the Shell Pool to Great Hockley Pool in 1774. The building with the arched window on the far shore of the Hockley Pool in figure 63 is probably the 'cascade building' or 'cascade library tower' built in 1776 and pulled down in 1801.¹¹²⁴ An artificial shell was added to the little pool in 1778 at the point where the spring water ran in and is visible in figure 62 at the shore to the right of the tree branch.¹¹²⁵

The first view shows the building in isolation with no background and very little foreground making the building look as if it is sitting on a mound. In fact, Phillip has drawn the grassed path leading up to it, but not the flower beds on either side which are visible in the second image. These three views of the Temple of Flora, each retreating further from it, the last with only a glimpse at the top of the cascade, combine to give an idea of the series of unfolding vistas within the garden. It is possible that the second and third were intended as a pair as they are a similar size and both show dense vegetation and almost completely exclude the sky, creating a dark, woodland feel (in spite of the fact that there would have been more sky visible in this area because of the break in the trees for the Shell Pool). The second uses a tree with an overhanging branch as framing device left and bottom. Both use curves in the shape of the pool and the trees in contrast to the straight lines of the buildings.

¹¹²³ Ballard et al, pp.8-9.

¹¹²⁴ Ballard et al, p.8.

¹¹²⁵ Ballard et al, p.52.

The Temple of Flora is also one of the elements of a composite view, see catalogue 38.

Hermitage

33. Hermitage, 1795

(figure 64)

BMAG2003.31.11

Thatched hermitage with path and chair in foreground.

Pen and ink

inscr: b.l. 'IP 1795'

border: black ink

113 x 77

34. Hermitage in snow, n.d.

(figure 65)

BMAG2003.31.17

Thatched Hermitage in woodland setting.

pen and ink and watercolour

96 x 142

35. Interior of Hermitage, 1799

(figure 66)

BMAG2003.31.23

Interior of Hermitage, plaque to left of door titled 'A FAITHFULL RECORD OF THE VIRTUES OF', remainder of plaque left blank. Decorative tribute and portrait between windows.

ink and watercolour

inscr: b.r. 'John Phillip Delin 1799'

100 x 152

The Hermitage was constructed in 1776, close to the monument to Boulton's friend William Small (1734-1775). It was perhaps inspired by Shenstone's groves at the Leasowes which also had monuments to dead friends.¹¹²⁶ The setting was described by Boulton in a letter to Watt as

¹¹²⁶ Ballard et al, p.12.

[...] the prettiest but most obscure part of my garden; [...] 'Tis a sepulchred grove, in which is a building adapted for contemplation; from one of its windows, under a Gothic arch framed by trees, you see the church [St. Phillip's, Birmingham] in which he [Small] was interred and no other object whatsoever except the monument. It is a sarcophagus standing upon a pedestal.¹¹²⁷

There is a similar building at Painshill which is likely to have influenced Boulton. The Hermitage had walls clad with bark and was thatched with ling (heather). It was repaired in 1778-9 with entries for a carpenter 'gluing ornaments' in the accounts. A flower bed was established around it in 1788 and further carpenter's work was required in 1793.¹¹²⁸ Phillip's interior view appears to show a memorial or tribute which may link to the monument outside. The work is signed 'delt.' which suggests that Phillip did draw something in situ because where he has drawn imaginary views they tend to be signed invt. or invenit (see catalogue 38). However, it is not obvious who the tribute is to; there is a plaque to record the 'virtues of' which is left blank. There is also a portrait but it has been altered or retouched and is not recognisable as any particular individual. It could be Small, to link to his monument, it has also been suggested that it is Boulton but this remains unclear.¹¹²⁹ The portrait is surrounded by implements connected with gardening and farming, perhaps inspired by a French book on architectural ornaments owned by Boulton.¹¹³⁰ Small's monument is illustrated in Muirhead's, *Life of James Watt*, 1858, through the arched window of the Hermitage, credited as a facsimile woodcut by Branston. By the time

¹¹²⁷ James Patrick Muirhead, *The Life of James Watt with selections from his correspondence*, London, 2nd edition, 1859, pp.246-8.

¹¹²⁸ Ballard et al pp.12-13,18.

¹¹²⁹ Both Phillada Ballard and Shena Mason have suggested it depicts Boulton but I would argue that the image does not resemble Boulton.

¹¹³⁰ Ballard et al, p.12.

Muirhead was writing, the monument was no longer there and it is not clear what Branston used as a source.¹¹³¹ Shown through a stone window in this illustration, it was probably made some years after the Hermitage too had ceased to exist.

As with the pen and ink views of the Temple of Flora, the pen and ink view of the Hermitage (figure 64) almost completely excludes the sky to create a feeling of dark woodland. The trunks behind the Hermitage are unrealistically regular and dense. Two deciduous trees act as framing devices on either side, using repoussoir to create depth in the image. The watercolour of the Hermitage in snow is more open and feels less enclosed. This is partly due to the fact that it is winter and the deciduous trees have lost their leaves, but the inclusion of more sky and the use of a landscape format rather than the portrait of the other view also create a feeling of greater space.

OTHER BUILDINGS

36. Soho House Stables, 1799

(figure 67)

BMAG2003.31.24

View of the Soho House stables, looking towards Mill Pool.

Pen and ink.

inscr: b.l. JP 1799

90 x 136

These stables were designed by William Hollins (who had taught Phillip architectural drawing) and were built between 1798 and 1800 by Benjamin Wyatt, a builder from Sutton Coldfield, another member of the extensive Wyatt

¹¹³¹ Muirhead, 1859, pp.247, 249.

family. They replaced a block at right angles to the service wing of the house which had been built in 1770, extended in 1785 and then demolished to allow further extensions to the house. The new stables consisted of a main block facing a smaller block, enclosing a courtyard. It combined architectural features of the house and manufactory with a central cupola and dovecote echoing the Principal Building.¹¹³² The way the stables looked from the approach to the manufactory was important; they had to convey the same messages of taste and sophistication as the factory itself. Boulton did not wish to see the stables from the house and in March 1798 had trees planted 'to stop up the view to the stable yard', telling the gardener to use particularly good soil.¹¹³³

This is another view where Phillip uses pen and ink to portray dense vegetation but because he has used a low viewpoint which meant the inclusion of more sky the view does not create the feeling of gloom and shade of the others.

37. Scale elevation of octagonal building, probably the observatory, 1796
(figure 68)

BMAG2003.31.58

Scale elevation of an octagonal Gothick lodge with smoke coming from opening in roof. Scale of 18 Feet below.

Pen and ink.

inscr: bottom left, pencil 'JP [illegible] 1796'

98 x 98

lit: Andrew Lound, *Lunatick Astronomy: The Astronomical Activities of the Lunar Society*, Birmingham, 2008, p.30.

¹¹³² Ballard et al, p.33.

¹¹³³ Ballard et al, pp.33-5.

Work started on an observatory in the park in March 1774 with the equipment installed the following year. Four years later Alexander Aubert described a Telescope in a round building which had suffered from the wind and rain as it was unprotected by the roof. It is possible that this measured elevation by Phillp shows the observatory as other examples of octagonal observatories were known.¹¹³⁴ If this does show the observatory, it would have been disused for many years and it is likely that Phillp did not understand its use which is why he depicted it with smoke emerging from the roof.

38. Interior of garden building with views from windows, 1799

(figure 69)

BMAG2003.31.155

Elevation of a wall with two open windows, with landscape beyond.
Watercolour.

inscr: b.r. 'IP Invt 1799'.

in pencil, vertically on right hand side 'the shade on left window to be corrected'

This image is likely to be a construction invented by Phillp but heavily influenced by views at Soho. The pencil note about the correction of shadow and the deep set windows from one point perspective may mean that this was a drawing exercise. A perspective view of a columned hall with the floor and gridded ceiling exists, showing that Phillp did undertake such exercises.¹¹³⁵ The incorrect shadow also suggests that the painting may not have been made from life and is an imaginary view. The image is signed 'invt.' for inventit (invented), a term Phillp does use for other work in the album, but only for

¹¹³⁴ Andrew Lound, *Lunatick Astronomy: The Astronomical Activities of the Lunar Society*, Birmingham, 2008, pp.29-31.

¹¹³⁵ BMAG 2003.31.159.

things he has designed.¹¹³⁶ Where he drew subjects from life he used delineavit (drew) and its abbreviations. Occasionally he used both invt. and delt. for candelabrum where he had both designed and drawn them, showing that he had a clear understanding of the difference between the terms.¹¹³⁷

Ballard has suggested that this was an interior of the cascade building and the views from its windows.¹¹³⁸ This was based on the fact that the view from the left hand window appears to be the Temple of Flora on Shell Pool. The view from the right hand window is not clear, but may be the Manufactory from the rear. It seems unlikely that these views could be seen from any one building and probable that Phillip combined them into a constructed view. It is possible that the interior is also modelled on a real building, perhaps the cascade building.

GARDEN STATUARY

39. Measured drawing of a sphinx, 1796

(figure 70)

BMAG2003.31.44

Measured drawing of a sphinx on a plinth.

Pen and ink, ink border.

inscr: b.l. of plinth 'John Phillip Delint 1796'; b. scale.

600 x 411

associated items:

BMAG2001 P37.1-2 Pair of stone sphinxes which passed by descent through the Boulton family. This form of sphinx is not unique, but the provenance makes it certain this was the pair which sat on the sphinx walk.

¹¹³⁶ For example silver, bookshelves for the library, the baffles for the mint ceiling and an oak wreath.

¹¹³⁷ BMAG2003.31.125 and 143.

¹¹³⁸ Ballard et al, plate 9.

This drawing shows one of the pair of sphinxes on the 'sphinx walk' which were bought in 1795 from Edward Gray Saunders (at whose London architectural office William Hollins had been trained).¹¹³⁹ Two stone sphinxes, three stone vases, and their packing cases cost £30.¹¹⁴⁰ They were brought up by boat and installed by William Hollins. His bill includes moving the sphinxes, repairing and cleaning the vases, making and erecting pedestals for the vases and sphinxes.¹¹⁴¹ The inclusion of repair and cleaning suggests that the vases, and possibly the sphinxes, were second hand. The construction of the sphinx walk was part of Boulton's major works to the gardens in 1796 which led Ann Watt to write 'Mr Boulton is going on in spending money. He is now narrowing his broad Gravel walks and has placed two Gigantic synphaxes [sphinxes] near the house [...] I believe he is gone crazy —'¹¹⁴² This measured line drawing shows one of the pair of sphinxes with no context other than a dotted line to indicate ground level.

40. Measured drawing of a Garden Vase, 1795

(figure 71)

BMAG2003.31.45

Measured drawing of garden vase.

Pen and ink. with ink wash.

inscr: 'GEOMETRICAL ELEVATION of a Vase. Belonging to M Boulton Esqr' 'Scale of 2 Feet'. On plinth of vase and bottom right 'J Phillp Delint 1795'.

620 x 435

41. Loose overlay for section of the above vase

C.E. Phillp, 1854

(figure 72)

BMAG2003.31.46

¹¹³⁹ Michael Fisher, 'William Hollins', *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 24 June 2007.

¹¹⁴⁰ BAH3782/6/195/6. Edward Gray Saunders to MB. ?-8 Aug. 1795.

¹¹⁴¹ BAH3782/6/195/15 W. & J. Hollins to Matthew Boulton. 25 Sep. 1795-19 Mar. 1796.

¹¹⁴² BAH3219/7/1/26 Ann Watt to Gregory Watt, 10 November 1795.

Loose cut-out flap showing copy of base of vase.
Pen and ink with ink wash.
inscr: on reverse, pencil 'C E Phillp/1854'
104 max x 186 max

A garden vase is visible on a grassy knoll in figure 51 but is of a different form and appears to be open at the top. It is not known where the vase shown in this measured drawing was placed. The cut out section of the base seems to be a copy undertaken by C.E. Phillp, a later member of the family.

BOATS AND BOATHOUSES

42. Scale elevation of a voussioired boathouse entrance, n.d.
(figure 73)
BMAG2003.31.59

Boathouse doors set within stone doorway with scale in feet.
Pen, ink and watercolour.
98 x 137

There were several boathouses on the pools at Soho. This may have been the boathouse built at the far end of Great Hockley Pool in 1801.¹¹⁴³

43. Boat on Hockley Pool, 1796
(figure 74)
BMAG2003.31.39

Boat at water's edge, boathouse on opposite side of pool.
Pen and ink.
inscr: 'Sketch taken on Hockley Pool near Birmingham. By J Phillp 1796'
bottom left, on boat 'J Phillp Delint 1796/SOHO'.
414 x 605

¹¹⁴³ Ballard et al, plate 10.

This shows the boat with the Boulton family crest on Hockley Pool with a boathouse in the distance. The boat is very much the focus of the image with stronger darker lines, the vegetation in the distance is made up of much softer lines.

Boathouses are also shown in catalogue 22 and 50.

OTHER VIEWS RELATING TO SOHO

44. Soho House lawn and parkland with sheep netting, 1801
(figure 75)
BMAG2003.31.12

Front lawn of Soho House, sheep grazing in parkland.
Pen and ink.
inscr: b.l., pencil '1801'; on reverse in ink 'Sketch in Soho 1801'
75 x 106

The foreground shows deciduous trees in formal flower beds and the lawn at the front of Soho House with animals grazing in the parkland beyond. The net and chain fence to keep the animals off the lawn was erected in 1795.¹¹⁴⁴

This had been one of the items on Boulton's lists: 'make a Chain & Net fence to keep Sheep out of the garden'.¹¹⁴⁵ The larch tree with circular bench seat is the one which can also be seen in other views by Phillip and Eginton junior.¹¹⁴⁶ The gardener's cottage is on the right with a row of houses on the turnpike road visible to the left.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ballard et al, p.34.

¹¹⁴⁵ BAH3782/12/108/70 MB notebook 1795, p. 29.

¹¹⁴⁶ See figures 33 and 60.

The difference between the smooth lawns of the house and the grazing land is created by hatching the rough grass. Only three sections of the chain link fence are filled suggesting that this may have been a rough sketch intended to be worked up later. The horizon in this view is a little lower than halfway but large trees break up the mass of sky, suggesting it was not intended to have one of the dramatic skies evident in some of Phillip's other works.

45. Thornhill House, 1796

(figure 76)

BMAG2003.31.20

Thornhill House surrounded by vegetation.

watercolour

inscr: on reverse in pencil 'No 1 from Nature view taken about half past 8 o'clock in a fine evening June 1796'

93 x 135

On the boundaries of the Soho estate, Thornhill House was the home of the Scales family in 1796. John Scales, who had been the manager of the Manufactory, died in March 1793. His widow and family remained in the house until 1799, when John Scales junior offered to sell it to Boulton.¹¹⁴⁷

This is a looser, softer, wetter style than many other Phillip views; it is a redder and bluer palette than his usual, red in sky and in front of house, blue in trees and sky.

¹¹⁴⁷ G to P&F, John Scale; Mason, p.127.

46. View across Hockley Pool, nd [c.1802]

(figure 77)

BMAG2003.31.25

View across Hockley Pool, boat and boathouse, Hockley Abbey in the background.

Pencil

Finished sketch with single border.

172 x 248

This is another of Phillip's views dominated by sky and water. The boathouse was built on the former Birmingham Heath c.1802, now surrounded by enclosed fields. Hockley Abbey, to the left, was a house built to resemble a ruined abbey by Richard Ford. It could be seen from Soho and was considered by Boulton when planning the views from his estate.¹¹⁴⁸ It was constructed in 1779 of waste slag from Aston Furnace and had a date of 1473 on the front.¹¹⁴⁹ Bisset wrote of it immediately before his description of Soho

Now further glance your eye beyond the town,
Where purple Heaths appear, or dusky brown,
Close by yon LAKE'S pellucid stream, behold
A GOTHIC PILE, which seems some sent'reis old,
VULCANIC FANCY there display'd her taste,
And rear'd the fabrick on the barren waste;
The FORGE materials for the work provides,
Rude cinders clothe the front – compose the sides.
Where bogs and brakes, and marshy fens were seen,
We now behold a turf-enamel'd green;
It's hoary sage, withdrawn from toil and care,
Both ease and solitude possesses there;
The moss-clad turrets, ivy-clasped, o'er grown,
Look as if PEACE had mark'd the spot her own.¹¹⁵⁰

There were pleasure grounds and a grotto associated with the house which also inspired a number of poems by Mary Darwall. She too emphasized the

¹¹⁴⁸ See p.134.

¹¹⁴⁹ Deborah Kennedy, *The Ruined Abbey in the Eighteenth Century* *Philological Quarterly* (*Univ. of Iowa, Iowa City*) (80:4) [Fall 2001], p.501. citing Ann Messenger, *Woman and Poet in the Eighteenth Century: The Life of Mary Whateley Darwall (1738-1825)* (New York: AMS Press, 1999), pp. 136-38; Robert.K. Dent, *Old and New Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1880, p.209.

¹¹⁵⁰ Bisset, 1800, p.12.

secluded nature of the site as a retreat from the world.¹¹⁵¹ This adjoining estate would have made Soho feel larger than it actually was; it extended the views beyond the boundaries of Boulton's own grounds.

47. View of Hockley Pool, Birmingham Heath and part of Birmingham, 1798

(figure 78)

BMAG2003.31.34

Looking south west across Hockley Pool towards Birmingham.

Pen and ink over pencil

inscr: bottom 'View of Hockley pool, Birmingham Heath, & part of Birmingham./Sketch'd on the spot. Soho, April 1798'. 'J Phillip Delt April 1798' 'John Phillip'.

332 x 470

This view looks from the grounds at Soho across Hockley Pool towards Birmingham and shows Boulton's land being improved by rolling with a horse-drawn roller. Hockley Abbey is visible to the left and Perrot's folly, a tower built on the open land of Rotton Park by John Perrot in 1758 is on the skyline.¹¹⁵² Three male figures are standing separately in the foreground, dressed in the clothes of gentry, one watching the man and horse at work. Like the figures in catalogue 29 (figure 60), these are too tall and thin which suggests that Phillip added them from imagination rather than drawing them from life.

¹¹⁵¹ Mary Darwall, *Poems on Several Occasions by Mrs Darwall*, Vol. I, London, 1794. She had published a volume of verses under her maiden name of Whateley in 1764 which was edited by William Shenstone, Jennifer Breen, 'Mary Whateley' in *Oxford DNB online*, accessed 2 Sept 2009.

¹¹⁵² Peter Leather, *A guide to the buildings of Birmingham*, Stroud, 2002, p.54, Foster, p.220.

OTHER MATERIAL

48. Verses on Soho, 1798

(figure 79)

BMAG2003.31.81

Trompe l'oeil page with 'VERSES ON SOHO' 'John Phillip Delt 1798'.
Pen and ink with colour wash.
495 x 337

See appendix 1.6 for transcription and Boulton's alternatives to some sections.

Phillp created a trompe l'oeil version of this poem about the Goddess of Invention creating a plan for Soho which was carried out by Boulton. The anonymous author had seen the estate both before and after the major work had been carried out. Poetry was commonplace at this time, essays were sometimes accompanied by verse and it was regularly published in newspapers and periodicals.¹¹⁵³ There was a strong connection between poetry and landscape in the topographical poem, a popular form during the eighteenth century which often evoked the view from a particular point.¹¹⁵⁴ The industrial poem was also beginning to emerge at this time.¹¹⁵⁵ J. Morfitt, a Barrister-at-Law from St. Paul's Square in Birmingham, wrote a topographical poem about the view from Key Hill, most of which was about Soho Manufactory and estate.¹¹⁵⁶

¹¹⁵³ Paul Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, London, 2008, pp.63-4.

¹¹⁵⁴ Walsh, Wilkinson and Donnachie, 2004, p.52.

¹¹⁵⁵ Rudolph Beck, 'From Industrial Georgic to Industrial Sublime: English Poetry and the Early Stages of the Industrial Revolution', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27 (2004), pp.17-36.

¹¹⁵⁶ Anon, *The Concise History of Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1802, pp.xi-xiv.

Appendix One

Descriptions of Soho and Boulton accompanying images

- 1.1 *The New Birmingham Directory, and Gentleman and Tradesman's Compleat Memorandum Book*, 1773.
- 1.2 *The Monthly Magazine and British Register*, No.XVII Vol.III, May 1797.
- 1.3 *The Copper-Plate Magazine, or, Monthly Cabinet of Picturesque Prints*, 1798.
- 1.4 Bisset's *Magnificent Directory*, 1800 and 1808.
- 1.5 Stebbing Shaw's *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*, Volume II, Part I, 1801.
- 1.6 Trompe l'oeuil page with Verses on Soho by unknown author, 1798.
- 1.7 'Mr. Matthew Boulton' from *Public Characters of 1800-1801*, London, 1801.
- 1.8 Inscription on Boulton's memorial at St Mary's Church, Handsworth.

Appendix Two

Directory description of Soho without image

- 2.1 *The Birmingham Directory: or a Merchant and Tradesman's Useful Companion [...]*, 1777 and 1780.

APPENDIX ONE

1.1 *The New Birmingham Directory, and Gentleman and Tradesman's Compleat Memorandum Book.*

Published by Myles Swinney, 1773

Catalogue 2, accompanying figure 10.

title page:

EMBELLISHED WITH
A NORTH EAST VIEW OF THE SOHO,
NEATLY ENGRAVED ON COPPER.

The description is included in the unpaginated preface to the main text of the volume.

SKETCH of the SOHO,
Of which the FRONTISPIECE annexed is a
NORTH EAST VIEW.

THIS Place is situated in the Parish of Handsworth, in the County of Stafford, two Miles distant from Birmingham. The Building consists of four Squares, with Shops, Warehouses, &c. for a Thousand Workmen, who, in a great variety of Branches excel in their several Departments; not only in the fabrication of Buttons, Buckles, Boxes, Trinkets, &c. in Gold, Silver, and a variety of Compositions; but in many other Arts, long predominant in France, which lose their Reputation on a Comparison with the product of this Place: And it is by the Natives hereof, or of the Parts adjacent, (whose emulation and taste the Proprietors have spared no Care or Expence to excite and improve) that it is brought to its present flourishing State. The number of ingenious mechanical Contrivances they avail themselves of, by the means of Water Mills, much facilitates their Work, and saves a great portion of Time and Labour. The Plated-Work has an appearance of solid Silver, more especially when compared with that of any other Manufactory. Their excellent, ornamental Pieces, in Or-Moulu, have been admired by the Nobility and Gentry, not only of this Kingdom, but of all Europe; and are allowed to surpass any thing of the Kind made abroad: And some Articles lately executed in Silver-Plate, shew that Taste and Elegance of Design prevail here in a superior Degree, and are, with Mechanism and Chymistry, happily united.

The environs of this Building was Seven Years ago a barren, uncultivated Heath; tho' it now contains many Houses, and wears the appearance of a populous Country: And notwithstanding the number of People in that Parish is double what they were a few Years since, yet the Poor's Rates are diminished, which is a very striking instance of the good effects of Industry.

1.2 *The Monthly Magazine and British Register*, No.XVII Vol.III, May 1797
Catalogue 6, accompanying figure 26.

pp.371-2.

For the Monthly Magazine
ACCOUNT OF SOHO, NEAR BIRMINGHAM
With an engraved View, from a Drawing
taken for the purpose, on the spot.

THIS celebrated seat of manufactory, situated on the border of Staffordshire, about two miles from Birmingham, contained, about thirty-five years ago, only a small mill, with a few mean dwelling-houses. Mr. BOULTON, in conjunction with his then partner, Mr. FOTHERGILL, purchased the spot, and erected on it, at large expense, a handsome and extensive edifice for manufacturing buttons, buckles, toys, and the usual articles of the Birmingham trade. To these were soon added the plated wares commonly made at Sheffield, consisting of a variety of useful and ornamental articles. By means of connections established through all the northern parts of Europe, a very extensive sale was obtained for these goods; and the partnership exporting on their own account, added the advantage of the merchant to that of the manufacturer. In proportion to the success of the undertaking. Mr. BOULTON'S laudable ambition to excel and improve extended itself. He resolved to render his works a seminary of taste, and spared no expense to procure the most able and ingenious artists in every branch. He imitated the French or moulu in a great variety of elegant ornaments, and fabricated services of plate, and other pieces of silver, both light and massive.

By his connections with that celebrated and ingenious mechanist, Mr. WATT, he added a very capital and useful manufactory to the works of Soho – that of steam-engines on an improved plan, now adopted in numerous concerns throughout the kingdom, to the great mutual benefit of the makers and employers. A most ingenious and capital apparatus for coining or stamping has also been erected by these gentlemen, which, after several ineffectual offers, has at length, it is said, been really set to work on a new copper coinage for the public, to be executed in a very superior manner. By successive additions, the buildings of Soho now cover several acres of ground, and have spread plenty and population over a large tract of barren heath. The number of persons employed in them must, of course, greatly vary with the state of the general trade. It has been carried so upwards of six hundred.

At no considerable distance from the Soho manufactory is a neat white edifice, the residence of the ingenious Mr. EGINTON, where the art of staining or painting on glass, with vitrified colours, is brought to a degree of perfection, far superior to any of the ancient productions now remaining.

The conversion of St. Paul, &c. in St. Paul's chapel, Birmingham, the large window in the banqueting-room at Arundel castle, the resurrection of our Lord in Salisbury cathedral, the same subject in Lichfield cathedral, the east

window in St. Alkmond's church, Shrewsbury, the monumental and historical windows in the parish churches of Hatton and Aston in Warwickshire, and a great number of other considerable performances, have already come from the hands of this excellent artist, and procured him a very great share of public approbation.

An historical and minute account of the above manufactories, and their parish of Handsworth, will soon appear, with large engravings, in the first volume of Mr. STEBBING SHAW'S History of Staffordshire.

1.3 *The Copper-Plate Magazine, or, Monthly Cabinet of Picturesque Prints, No. 80, 1798.* Reissued in *The Itinerant: A Select Collection of Interesting and Picturesque Views in Great Britain and Ireland: Engraved from Original Paintings and Drawings. By Eminent Artists.*, 1799. Catalogue 7, accompanying figure 27.

SOHO

On the spot now ornamented by the celebrated pile of building known by the name of SOHO, stood, but thirty-five years since, only a small mill and a few mean dwelling-houses. It is situated on the border of Staffordshire, about two miles from Birmingham, and was purchased by Mr. BOULTON, in conjunction with his then partner Mr. FOTHERGILL; and on it they erected, at a great expense, an extensive and handsome edifice for manufacturing buttons, buckles, toys, and other articles common to the Birmingham trade. To these were soon added the plated wares usually made at Sheffield, comprising a variety of useful and ornamental articles. By means of connexions established through all the northern parts of Europe, a very extensive sale was obtained for these goods; and the partnership exporting on their own account, added the advantage of the merchant to that of the manufacturer.

Mr Boulton at length resolved to render his works a seminary of taste, and at a very considerable expense procured the most able and ingenious artists in every branch. He imitated the French or moulu in a great variety of elegant ornaments, and fabricated services of plate, and other pieces of silver, both light and massive.

Connecting himself with Mr. WATT, the celebrated mechanist, Mr. Boulton has since added a very capital manufactory to the works of SOHO, that of steam engines on an improved plan, now adopted in numerous concerns throughout the kingdom. An ingenious apparatus for coining or stamping has also been erected by these gentlemen, which has been recently employed by government on a copper coinage of penny and twopenny pieces.

By editions and enlargements from time to time, the buildings of SOHO now cover several acres of ground, and have spread plenty and population over a considerable tract of barren heath. The number of persons employed in them must, of course, greatly vary with the state of the trade in general; but it has often amounted to six hundred.

At no great distance from the SOHO manufactory is a neat white edifice, in which resides the ingenious Mr. EGINTON, by whom the art of staining or painting on glass, with vitrified colours has been brought to a degree of perfection that exceeds what is to be found in any of the ancient productions now extant.

Soho had previously been mentioned in the text accompanying the plate of Birmingham in issue 46 of the magazine but was not visible in that illustration:

The spirit of manufactory is not confined to BIRMINGHAM alone, but spreads to a considerable distance round; one place we cannot omit noticing; *Soho*, about two miles off, was, a few years ago, a barren heath, and now exhibits one of the largest manufactories in the world, employing several hundred persons in the fabrication of buttons, buckles, &c.

1.4 Bisset's Poetic Survey round Birmingham with a brief description of the different curiosities and manufactures of the place, accompanied with a magnificent directory, with names and professions, &c., superbly engraved in emblematic plates, 1800. Expanded edition issued 1808. Catalogue 8, 9, figures 29, 30.

title page, 1808 edition only

EXCLUSIVE OF
A VIEW OF THE
ROYAL MINT
AND
SOHO MANUFACTORY.
DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,
To his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

p.7, within 'A brief Description of Birmingham'

[...]
SOHO, where GENIUS and the ARTS preside,
EUROPA'S wonder, and BRITANNIA'S pride!

About a mile from Birmingham stands the very elegant and extensive Manufactory of SOHO, belonging to those ingenious and scientific gentlemen, Messrs. Boulton and Watt. A superb Mint, for Government Coin, was erected there in 1788, and since that period the coining mill has been much improved:- it is adapted to work eight machines, and each is capable of striking from 70 to 84 pieces per minute, the size of a guinea; which is equal to between 30,000 and 40,000 per hour; and at the same blow, which strikes the face and reverse, the edge of the piece is also struck, either plain or with an inscription. See elegant coins now in circulation.

It is greatly to be lamented, that, an improper use having been made by some foreigners, of the indulgence granted them in being admitted to see the manufactory, restrictions have been the consequence, and no part of the premises are now open for exhibition, except the elegant Show Room.

[...]

Footnote: For a View of the Royal Mint and Soho Manufactory, see Plate T. in the Magnificent Directory.

within 'A Poetic Survey round Birmingham, &c.'

p.10 pointing out specific places which could be seen from the dome of St Phillip's.

Of course I can, with ease, each Fact'ry show,
And say – "There HANDSWORTH lies – or there SOHO."

p.12

[...]

On Yonder gentle slope, which shrubs adorn,
Where grew, of late, "rank weeds," gorse, ling, and thorn,
Now pendant woods, and shady groves are seen,
And nature there assumes a nobler mien.
There verdant lawns, cool grotts, and peaceful bow'rs,
Luxuriant, now, are strew'd with sweetest flow'rs,
Reflected by the lake, which spreads below,
All Nature smiles around – there stands SOHO!

SOHO! – where GENIUS and the ARTS preside,
EUROPA'S wonder and BRITANNA'S pride;
Thy matchless works have rais'd Old England's fame,
And future ages will record thy name;
Each rival Nation shall to thee resign
The PALM of TASTE, and own – 'tis justly thine;
Whilst COMMERCE shall to thee an altar raise,
And infant Genius learn to lisp thy praise:
While Art and Science reign, they'll still proclaim
THINE! ever blended, with a BOULTON'S name.

[...]

Footnotes explain that Soho is the seat of M. Boulton Esq., shown in plate A, and Soho is about 'two miles from Birmingham, on the Walsall and Wolverhampton Road. For a view of this elegant and splendid manufactory, see plate T.'

p.15

Where curling eddies of black smoke ascends,
STEAM ENGINES wond'rous force and pow'r portends,
A WATT and BOULTON'S Fame they sure must raise,
Far, far beyond, my Muse's feeble praise:
Tho' on a theme so grand she'd wish to shew,
Respect to TALENTS and to GENIUS due.

Footnotes explained that 'Watt and Boulton's Ingenious and celebrated steam engine, secured to them not only by a common Patent, but by Act of Parliament' and referred the reader to plate Q, a view of Birmingham from the Warwick canal which included prominent plumes of smoke signifying steam engines.

within 'Ramble of the Gods through Birmingham A Tale', the story of Apollo, Mercury, Hermes and Bacchus visiting Birmingham

p.26, regarding the fares for coaches

But those who visit HANDSWORTH or SOHO,
Had better make a bargain, ere they go.

pp.30-31

These seen, they next resolv'd with speed to go,
To visit BOULTON'S, at the great SOHO,
The wonders of that magic place explore,
And with attention, view its beauties o'er.

They went – but here description fails, I ween,
To tell you half the curious works were seen.
Suffice it then, such scenes were there display'd,
The GODS, with rapture fraught, the whole survey'd;
FAC SIMILIES that moment, strike their eyes;
Whilst at the MINT, th' invention of the MILL,
Seem'd as if Coin was form'd by magic skill.

But when the ponderous ENGINES were survey'd –
THEY ev'ry tribute due to merit paid:
Then, with reluctance, forc'd themselves away,
Resolv'd to see all that they could by day.

Footnotes explained that the facsimiles came from Watt and Company's Patent Copying Machine, about the improvements to the coining mill with reference to 'elegant Coins now in circulation'. They also noted the advantages of applying the steam engine to the production of coins, referring the reader to Stebbing Shaw's History of Staffordshire.

p.35

The ROYAL PATENT, here, is found in scores;
[...] Spring LATCHETS for the shoes, [...]

The footnotes explain that this patent is Messrs. Boulton and Smith's and refers readers to plate T. Boulton and Smiths was a partnership with Benjamin and James Smith formed in 1793, often known as the Latchet Company.

1.5 Stebbing Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*, Volume II, Part I, 1801.

Catalogue 10, 11, accompanying figure 32, 33.

pp.117-121

SOHO MANUFACTORY, &c.

We shall commence our account of this curious and delightful place with a letter from a learned and philosophical admirer of the works of art and science, addressed to the rev. Mr. Feilde, of Brewood, then engaged in a History of Staffordshire.

Dear Sir,

If you admit into your account of Staffordshire the wonders of art as well as those of nature, I know no curiosity in this county so worthy your attention as Mr. Boulton's works at Soho.

On the other side I have sent you an account of his situation and manufactory; and am, dear Feilde,

Your affectionate humble servant,
August 16, 1768.

E. DARWIN.

"Soho is the name of a hill in the county of Stafford, about two miles from Birmingham; which, a very few years ago, was a barren heath, on the bleak summit of which stood a naked hut, the habitation of a warrener.

"The transformation of this place is a recent monument of the effects of trade on population. A beautiful garden, with wood, lawn, and water, now covers one side of this hill; five spacious squares of building, erected on the other side, supply workshops or houses, for above six hundred people. The extensive pool at the approach to this building is conveyed to a large water-wheel in one of the courts, and communicates motion to a prodigious number of different tools. And the mechanic inventions for this purpose are superior in multitude, variety, and simplicity, to those of any manufactory (I suppose) if the known world.

"Toys, and utensils of various kinds, in gold, silver, steel, copper, tortois-shell, enamel, and many vitreous and metallic compositions, with gilded, plated and inlaid works, are wrought up to the highest elegance of taste, and perfection of execution, in this place.

"Mr. Boulton, who has established this great work, has joined taste and philosophy with manufacture and commerce; and, from the various branches of chemistry, and the numerous mechanic arts he employs, and his extensive correspondence to every corner of the world, is furnished with the highest entertainment as well as the most lucrative employment."

About the year 1745 Mr. Boulton, then of Birmingham, invented, and afterwards brought to great perfection, the inlaid steel buckles, buttons, watch-chains, &c, which Dr. Johnson mentions in one of his papers in the World, as becoming fashionable in this country; whilst they were re-purchased from France, under the idea of their being the production of that kingdom.

In the year 1757, John Wyrley, of Hamstead, esq, lord of the manor of Handsworth, granted a lease to Messrs. Edward Ruston and Eaves, of these tracts of common; viz. Handsworth heath, Moneybank hill, Crabtree bank, Warrens, for 99 years, with certain inclosed lands, with liberty to make some additions to the same, and to make a cut for the turning of Hockley brook, to make a pool, with powers to build a water mill. In consequence of which a small house and feeble mill were erected, for the purpose of rolling metal. On Lady-day 1762, Mr. Boulton purchased the aforesaid lease, with all the premises and appurtenances, to apply the same to such branches of the manufactory established at Birmingham as would tend to diminish expence and labour.

In order to procure his designs and improvements, &c. he soon after enlarged and rebuilt these premises, and then transplanted the whole of his manufactory from Birmingham to Soho; and though he had made very considerable additions to these buildings, he found them not sufficient for his great designs: he therefore, in 1764, laid the foundation of the present superb manufactory, which was finished in the following year, at the expence of 9000 l. From that period he began to turn his attention to the different branches of manufactory; and, in conjunction with Mr. Fothergill, then his partner, established a mercantile correspondence throughout Europe; by which means the produce of their various articles was greatly extended, and the manufacturer, by becoming his own merchant, eventually enjoyed a double profit. Impelled by an ardent attachment to the arts, and by the patriotic ambition of bringing his favourite Soho to the highest degree of perfection, the ingenious proprietor soon established a seminary of artists for drawing and modelling; and men of genius were now sought for and liberally patronised, which shortly led to a successful imitation of the Or Molu. These metallic ornaments, consisting of vases, tripods, candelabras, &c. by the superior skill and taste bestowed upon them here, soon found their way, not only to the admiration of his majesty, and to the chimney-piece and cabinets, &c. of the nobility and curious of this kingdom; but likewise to France, and almost to every part of Europe. From this elegant branch of the business the superior skill of Mr. Boulton led his artists by a natural and easy transition, to that of the wrought silver; upon which he soon found the necessity of applying to parliament for, and establishing, in 1773, an assay office at Birmingham.

About this time that ingenious art of copying pictures in oil colours, by a mechanical process, was invented at Soho; and, under the patronage of the above proprietor, was brought to such a degree of perfection as to be taken for originals by the most experienced connoisseurs. This extraordinary piece of art was principally conducted by the ingenious Mr. F. Eginton, which led him to that of painting upon glass, now carried on at his neighbouring manufactory, as hereafter separately described.

Mr. Boulton finding from experience that the stream of water which had induced him to build a mill and transplant his manufactory to Soho, was insufficient for its purpose, he applied horses, in conjunction with his water-mill; but finding that both troublesome, irregular, and expensive, in 1767 he made a steam-engine, on Savery's plan, with the intention of returning, and raising his water about 24 feet high; but this proving unsatisfactory to him, he soon after formed an acquaintance with his present partner and friend, Mr. James Watt of Glasgow, who in 1765 had invented several valuable improvements upon the steam-engine, which in fact made it a new machine. For these improvements Mr. Watt had obtained a patent in January 1769, and afterwards came to settle at Soho, where in that year, he erected one of his improved engines, which he had brought from Scotland; and, after full proof of its utility, obtained from parliament in 1775 a prolongation of the term of his patent for 25 years from that date. He then entered into partnership with Mr. Boulton, and established a very extensive manufactory of these engines at Soho, whence most of the great mines and manufactories of England are supplied, they being now applied to almost every mechanical purpose where great power is requisite.

The application of this improved steam-engine at Soho to raise and return the water, extended the powers of the water-mill; which induced Mr. Boulton to rebuild it a second time upon a much larger scale, and several engines were afterwards erected at Soho for other purposes, by which the manufactory was greatly extended, the source of mechanical power being thus unlimited.

Amongst the various applications of the steam-engine, that of coining seems to be of considerable importance, as by its powers all the operations are centered on the same spot; such as rolling the cakes of copper hot into sheets; 2dly, fine rolling the same cold in steel polished rollers; 3dly, cutting out blank pieces of coin, which is done with greater ease and rapidity by girls than could possibly be done by strong men; 4thly, the steam-engine also performs other operations, such as shaking the coin in bags; and 5thly, it works a number of coining machines, with greater rapidity and exactness, by a few boys of twelve to fourteen years of age, than could be done by a great number of strong men, without endangering their fingers, as the machine itself lays the blanks upon the die perfectly concentric with it, and when struck displaces one piece and replaces another.

The coining mill, which was erected in 1788, and has since been greatly improved, is adapted to work eight machines, and each is capable of striking from seventy to eighty-four pieces of money per minute, the size of a guinea, which is equal to between 30,000 and 40,000 per hour; and at the same blow which strikes the two faces the edge of the piece is also struck, either plain or with an inscription upon it, and thus every piece becomes perfectly round, and of equal diameter; which is not the case with any other national money ever put into circulation.

Such a coining mill, erected in the national mint, would, in cases of emergency, be able to coin all the bullion in the Bank of England at a short

notice, without the necessity of putting dollars, or any other foreign coin into circulation; and by erecting double the number of presses a double quantity may be coined.

Dr. Darwin, in a more recent compliment paid to Soho than his letter above printed, says, after a short description of this mint, that the whole of this magnificent and expensive apparatus moves “with such superior excellence and cheapness of workmanship, as well as with works of such powerful machinery, as must totally prevent clandestine imitation, and in consequence save many lives from the hand of the executioner; a circumstance worthy the attention of a great minister. If a civic crown was given in Rome for preserving the life of one citizen, Mr. Boulton should be covered with garlands of oak.”

It is worthy observation, that the ground of the silver money coined by this machine has a much finer and blacker polish than the money coined by the common apparatus.

In consequence of Mr. Boulton’s money being perfectly round, and of equal diameter, he proposed the following coincidence between money, weights, and measures, in the copper coin, part of which he hath lately executed for the British government; viz. a 2-penny-piece to weigh 2oz. and 15 of them to measure 2 feet, when laid flat in a straight line; 1 penny-piece to weigh 1oz. and 17 of them to measure 2 feet; $\frac{1}{2}$ penny to weigh $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and 10 of them to measure 1 foot; a farthing to weigh $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. and 12 to measure 1 foot. This plan of coincidence was prevented from being put into execution by the sudden advance in the price of copper.

In the year 1788 Mr. Boulton struck a piece of gold, the size of a guinea, as a pattern (similar to those in copper); the letters were indented instead of in relief; and the head, and other devices (although in relief), were protected from wear by a broad flat border; and, from the perfect rotundity of the shape, &c. with the aid of a steel gage, it may with great ease and certainty, by ascertaining its specific gravity, be distinguished from any base metal. Previous to Mr. Boulton’s engagement to supply government with copper pence, in order to bring his apparatus to the greatest perfection, he exercised it in coining silver money for Siera Leona and the African Company, and copper for the East India Company and Bermudas. Various beautiful medals of our celebrated naval and other officers &c. have likewise been struck here from time to time by Mr. Boulton, for the purpose of employing and encouraging ingenious artists to revive that branch of sculpture, which had been upon the decline in this kingdom since the death of Symons in the reign of Charles II.

Mr. Boulton, having sent as a present to the emperor of Russia some of the most curious produce of this manufactory, was lately honoured in return with a very handsome letter and valuable accompaniments.

The emperor’s letter, which is in French, is to the following purport:

Mr. Boulton, I thank you for the divers articles made at your manufactory, which you have sent me. I receive them as a mark of your attachment for me. Mr. S. who has communicated to me a knowledge of your character, will remit to you this letter on my part: and I recommend him to your favour.

I send you herewith a medal in gold, as a mark of my esteem and of my affection: and I pray God to take you into his holy protection.
Moscow, the 15/16 April, 1797. PAUL.

This gold medal is deemed a very strong likeness of his imperial majesty, and is finely engraved; but, what adds most to its curiosity and value is, that the die from which it was struck was engraved by the hands of his imperial consort, who distinguished her taste and talents in her early youth by modelling some of the portraits of her majesty's family and friends in wax, and afterward made considerable progress in engraving, both in stones and in steel.

Besides the above medal, his imperial majesty honoured Mr. Boulton with such other presents as he thought would be acceptable and useful to him, viz. a collection of Siberian minerals, and of all the modern money of Russia, in gold, silver, and copper; the Russian measures and weights; with a collection of about 200 very large, and finely engraved, bronzed copper medals of all the distinguished characters of that country, recording most of its victories and great events; also the portraits of his two sons, the present grand-duke and his brother.

IRON FOUNDRY.

In order to obtain the desired degree of perfection in the manufactory of steam-engines, Messrs. Boulton and Watt found it necessary to erect and establish an iron foundry for that purpose; and they have accordingly, in partnership with their sons (to whose activity, genius, and judgement, it must be attributed, that this great work was begun and finished in the course of three winter months), erected at a convenient distance and contiguous to the same stream, at Smethwick, a great and compleat manufactory and foundry, into which a branch from the Birmingham canal enters; and thereby the coals, pig iron, bricks, sand, &c. are brought, and their engines, or other heavy goods, are transported in boats to every part of the kingdom, there being a wet dock within their walls for four boats to lie.

The plan of this work being well digested and settled previous to laying the first stone, the whole is thereby rendered more compleat than such works as generally arise gradually from disjointed ideas. And, from the great experience of the proprietors, they have applied the power of steam to the boring of cylinders, pumps, &c. to drilling, to turning, to blowing their melting furnaces, and whatever tends to abridge human labour, and obtain accuracy; for, by the superiority of all their tools, they are enabled to attain expedition and perfection in a higher degree than heretofore. In viewing this immense fabric, and its extensive premises, the spectator is most agreeably struck with the extraordinary regularity and neatness which pervades the whole, from the

common operations of the anvil, to the working and fabricating the ponderous and massive parts of the steam-engine. The following facts shew the wonderful powers and superiority of these engines.

One bushel of Newcastle or Swansea coals applied to one of Boulton and Watt's engines will raise

30,000,000 of pounds weight of water one foot high; or

3,000,000 ditto ten feet high; or

300,000 ditto one hundred feet high;

or the like proportion to any other height.

Or one bushel of coals will do as much work as ten strong horses can do acting together for one hour; or will turn from 1000 to 1200 or more cotton spinning spindles for one hour; or will grind and dress from 11 to 12 bushels of wheat; or will grind 33 1/3 quarters or 266 bushels of malt for a brewery, &c. What a contrast this! to the following account of the poor substitutes antecedent to Savery's first invention, and even to his and Newcomen's imperfect attempts.

"Of the first introduction of the fire or steam engine into the coal pits, co. Stafford.

"Towards the latter end of the last century, the demand for coals on account of the iron manufacture being very great in this part of the county (Willenhall), and most of them that lay near day, in the workman's phrase, or to the surface of the earth, having been gotten by the means of drains, horse ginns, and other small engines, many began to be in pain left the manufacture should be removed to some other part of the kingdom, where they could be gotten at a less expence, and in greater plenty. On the 14th June, 1699, one Mr. Thomas Savery, commonly called Captain Savery, presented to the Royal Society a model and short account of an engine to raise water by fire, or rather by the steam of boiling water. This consisted of a boiler, two cylindric vessels, some valves and two beams, one to act by stamping, the other by pumping or suction. Two years after, in 1701 he published a small treatise about it, called "The Miner's Friend," wherein he gives a larger account, and better design, of the machine, which was to be placed within the ground or pit to be drained; and the regulator, which let the rarified air pass into the tube, or hindered it from doing so, was moved backward and forward by a man that constantly stood by and worked it. It had two boilers, a bigger two-thirds full of boiling water, and one-third full of air; and a lesser boiler to supply what water was evaporated out of the bigger by working the engine. This gentleman set one of these engines down about year....in the liberty of Wednesbury, near a place called then the Broad Waters, which is now dry land again. The engine thus erected could not be brought to perfection, as the old pond of water was very great, and the springs very many and strong that kept up the body of it; and the steam, when too strong, tore it all to pieces: so that, after much time, labour, and expence, Mr. Savery was forced to give up the undertaking; and the engine was laid aside as useless; so that he might be said to have discovered a power sufficient to drain any kind of mine, but could not form an engine capable of working and making it useful.

“Mr. Harris, in his *Lex. Tech.* published a draught of Mr. Savery’s engine, and gave an account of this power and machine, which, falling into the hands of Mr. Newcomen, of Dartmouth, he formed anew the model of an engine by it, fixed it in his own garden, and soon found out its imperfection. When he had done this he obtained a patent, and fixed the first that ever raised any quantity of water at Wolverhampton, on the left hand of the road leading from Walsall to the town, over against the half mile-stone.”

The following account contrasts Mr. Watt’s invention with the state of the engine immediately antecedent to his improvements: 1. The steam is condensed in a distinct vessel; and not (as in Newcomen’s engine) in the body of the cylinder, in which the powers of steam are exerted. 2. The steam cylinder is kept as warm as the steam that enters it, by surrounding it with steam, or with bodies that part with heat slowly; and not (as in Newcomen’s) alternately heated and cooled, by the admission of hot and cold water. 3. The air that is either mixed with the steam, or enters the cylinder through defective joints, or otherwise, together with the condensed steam, and the injection water, are extracted by the air pump; and not (as in Newcomen’s) blown out by the steam, namely, the air at a snifting clack or valve; and the water through an eduction pipe and valve. 4. The piston is pressed down by the expansive power of the steam; and not (as in Newcomen’s) by the weight of the atmosphere. 5. Oil, wax, and other similar substances, are used to keep the piston air tight; and not water, as in Newcomen’s.

A few years ago, Messrs. Hornblower and Winwood attempted to infringe upon the patent of the proprietors of these steam-engines in a very bold and insulting manner; asserting, in several advertisements, 1791 and 1792, “that they have by their engine, at Tin Croft, in Cornwall, exhibited a machine which evidently surpasses every other of the kind in double proportion;” and that they will undertake “to produce the same effects with three bushels of coals, as is done with five bushels in Boulton and Watt’s engines,” &c. And, in a paper delivered to the members of the House of Commons, Mr. Hornblower asserted, “That his machine, on a just comparison with Mr. Watt’s, is found to be as sixteen to ten superior in its effects.” These, and similar false assertions, were clearly confuted in “An Address to the mining Interest of Cornwall, on the Subject of Mr. Boulton and Watt’s, and Mr. Hornblower’s engines, by Thomas Wilson, 1793;” in which the author, by tables, &c. proves the very reverse of Mr. Hornblower’s assertions to be the real facts, and that the Tin Croft engine was an infringement of Messrs. Boulton and Watt’s patent. But Facts decided that point without reference to a court at law, for Mr. Hornblower’s engine was so extremely defective in its construction that very few were made by him; yet sufficient to prove the great superiority of the engines of Boulton and Watt’s construction. The question of plagiarism was however tried before the House of Commons, and upon that ground Mr. Hornblower’s application for an extension of his patent was rejected upon a division of the House, after hearing of Counsel and witnesses, the numbers being, in favour of Boulton and Watt 63, for Mr. Hornblower 22. See Journals of the House of Commons of April 1792.

It would fill a large and curious volume to detail all the suits which other piracies of Mr. Watt's inventions have occasioned. Suffice it to say, that in numberless instances, both in law and equity, Messrs. Boulton and Watt have uniformly prevailed over their opponents, and their patent right is now fully established by the unanimous decision of the court of King's Bench, on a writ of error brought before them in the cause Boulton and Watt, and Maberly and Hornblower.

In a national view, Mr. Boulton's undertakings are highly valuable and important. By collecting around him artists of various descriptions, rival talents have been called forth, and by successive competition have been multiplied, to an extent highly beneficial to the publick. A barren heath has been covered with plenty and population; and these works, which in their infancy were little known and attended to, now cover several acres, give employment to more than 600 persons, and are said to be the first of their kind in Europe.

To enumerate all the various productions of the Soho manufactory would be tedious and superfluous. We shall, then, briefly notice, besides the very curious one-wheeled clocks that were made here, the following articles, under the several firms:

Buttons in general; gilt, plated, silvered, semilor, Pinchbeck, platina, inlaid with steel, hard white metal, fancy compositions, mother of pearl, polished steel, and jettina. And steel toys; polished steel watch-chains, patent cork-screws, &c. - By Boulton and Scale.

Patent latches and buckles; silver, strong-plated, pinchbeck, and steel. - By Boulton and Smith.

Plated and silver wares; in general, for the dining-table, tea-table, sideboard-vessels of various kinds, candlesticks, branches, &c. - By Matthew Boulton and Plate Company.

Medals; in general, and of various metals. - By Matthew Boulton.

Iron foundry: Patent steam-engines, with rotative motions for mills of every kind or with reciprocating motions for pumps or mines, or for any other mechanical purposes, requiring different powers, from 1 to 200 horses acting together. Pneumatic apparatus; large or portable, for preparing medicinal airs. - By Boulton and Watt and sons.

Copying machines; large for counting houses, and portable for travellers. - By the sons of Messrs. Boulton and Watt, under the firm of J. Watt and Co.

Mercantile trade carried on in Birmingham; to Europe and America. - Matthew Boulton.

Having already noticed the effects of this manufactory on the population and increase of houses, it may be proper to mention, that every precaution has been always taken, and in the most judicious manner, by the proprietors, to diminish the poor's levies, and keep their numerous workmen from becoming troublesome to the parish, &c. One great instance of which is a long-established society for the sick and lame, &c. for the better management of which are printed, on a large sheet,

“ Rules for conducting the Insurance Society belonging to the SOHO MANUFACTORY.”

These consist of xxv articles; some of which are these:

“I. That every person employed in the SOHO MANUFACTORY shall be a member of this society, who can earn from 2s. 6d. per week, or upwards.”

“II. Each member shall pay to the treasure-box, agreeable to the following table,” which is divided into eight parts; viz. the member who is set down at 2s. 6d. per week shall pay ½d per week; 5s. 1d. ; and so on, in like proportion, to 20s. 4d. ; and none to exceed that sum.

VI. If any member is sick, lame, and incapable of work, he shall receive, after three days notice to the committee, as follows, during his illness; viz. if he pays in the box for 2s. 6d. he shall receive 2s. per week; and for 5s. 4s. and so in like proportion;” &c.

The rules of this manufactory have certainly been productive of the most laudable and salutary effects. And, besides the great attention to cleanliness and wholesome air, &c. this manufactory has always been distinguished for its order and good behaviour, and particularly during the great riots at Birmingham.

No expence has been spared to render these works uniform and handsome in architecture, as well as neat and commodious, as exhibited in the annexed plate. The same liberal spirit and taste has the great and worthy proprietor gradually exercised in the adjoining gardens, groves, and pleasure-grounds, which, at the same time that they form an agreeable separation from his own residence, render Soho a much-admired scene of picturesque beauty. Wandering through these secluded walks, or on the banks of the several fine lakes and water-falls which adorn them, we may here enjoy the sweets of solitude and retirement, as if far distant from the busy hum of men.

In scenes like these the studious and philosophic mind occasionally finds a most agreeable and salutary asylum.

That the poet has likewise felt their influence appears by the following tribute to the memory of a departed friend.

At the termination of the walk beyond the cottage, in the secluded grove, where nothing intrudes upon the eye but the new church at Birmingham, where Dr. Small was buried, is erected a tribute to his memory, on which are the following elegant lines by Dr. Darwin.

M.S.
GULIELMI SMALL,, M.D.
QUI OB. FEB. XXV.
M.DCC.LXXV.

YE gay and young, who, thoughtless of your doom,
Shun the disgusting mansions of the dead,
Where Melancholy broods o'er many a tomb,

Mouldering beneath the yew's unwholesome shade;
If chance ye enter these sequester'd groves,
And Day's bright sunshine for a while forego,
Oh, leave to Folly's cheek the laugh and loves,
And give one hour to philosophic woe!
Here, while no tilted dust, no sainted bone,
No lover weeping over beauty's bier,
No warrior frowning in historic stone,
Extorts your praises, or requests your tear;
Cold Contemplation leans her aching head,
On human woe her steady eye she turns,
Waves her meek hand, and sighs for science dead,
For Science, Virtue, and for SMALL, she mourns!

This is one of the oldest groves between the house and manufactory. Let us now turn our attention to the more recent improvements on the opposite side; where, in the extensive new plantations, we see the most extraordinary effects produced by irrigation, with the powerful aid of the steam engine, which, when at liberty from its other labours, forces up water by pipes to the summit of these grounds; so that, in the driest season, when all other vegetation was perishing for want of rain and water, these plantations were amply supplied, and now as amply reward the ingenious contriver by their flourishing foliage. Here also we see the New Hydraulic Ram, which is a self-moving water-work applicable to agricultural purposes, and constructed with great ingenuity and simplicity.

The house, which was before much too small for the hospitable purposes of its generous owner, has been lately enlarged. At the top of the roof, which is made very neat and commodious, either for common or telescopic observations, the prospect is extensive and beautiful, commanding an agreeable view of the principal part of Birmingham to the South, the antient Gothic splendour of Aston hall Eastward, with Barr beacon, and all the rich scenery of the intermediate vallies toward the North, Sandwell park, and the new foundry at Smethwick, &c. to the West.

1.6 Verses on Soho by an unknown author, 1798.

Trompe l'oeil page by John Phillip, BMAG2003.31.81.
Catalogue 52, figure 79

'These few lines were Addressed to Matthew Boulton Esq by a friend who saw Soho when Mr B first settled there in 1775,¹ And saw it again in 1796 in its improved state.

[left hand side top]

Where Nature seem'd to have left a spot for waste,
And barren heath defied all human taste
Where tree nor Shrub, except the furze bush grew,
Became the chosen seat of Art and you
First twas your care to guard the bleak retreat
With young plantations, future storms to meet;
The thriving firs well liking their Abode,
Soon sheltered modest science from the road;
Next to the desert spot Invention came,
Who soon of Boulton's genius spread the fame,
Under his Auspices the Goddess sped.

1.

And Midst a Crowd of Patents rear'd her head;
She kenned around the wild uncultured scene
Of Horrid Heath with furze and weeds scarce green,
"Is this, she cried, the Seat of Every Art,
"Where Nature seems t'have grudged to do her part,
"Where Culture seems in vain, but I will try
"What I can do with th'help of Industry.
"I'll change this scene, make fertile soil of sand,
"I'll plan a mansion fit for its chosen band,
"And that so soon they'll think of Fairyland"
Then to her cell the Goddess quick withdrew,
To sketch the plan now² realized by You.

[middle]

2.

Nor Tree, nor Shrub around 'ere knew this land
Till planted nurse'd and reare'd by my command
By Industry and Art, a dreary Waste
Now boasts a garden of my homely taste.
Rest here – the Vista and the Shady bowers
Enrich my farm encircled now with flowers:
But Knight, nor Price nor Burk can here boast skill
Fancy suggested, I obeyed her Will.
Tis useless then, to blame or criticize,
For all around us is grateful to my Eyes:

¹ Either Phillip or the poet is mistaken, Boulton did not first settle at Soho in 1775.

² 'Just' added in margin.

Since to please all, was beyond human Art,
I have pleased myself, you'll think no selfish Part.

[right hand side top]

Nor Burke nor Smith nor Left have merit there
To your own taste you owe your own Parterre
May you long live t' enjoy your well earned fame,
Whilst science lives, none will forget your Name.
May a long line of Sons enjoy a Seat,
Where, Welcome All, the best skilled often met,
May Genius, Virtue, Science, Wit or Art,
When in the course of Nature you depart.
Never desert that Mansion, to bemoan
A loss for which none living can atone!
Avaunt the idea! Nature will be slow
To give to Art and Science such a blow.
But when you change this Mortal Crown for one
Which some kind Angel surely will put on,
(P'rhaps Charity, Him to reward she'll crave
Who poured the balm to wounds he never gave.)
May your example long Soho inspire
And kindle in your Sons the same desire
Of doing good, by serving Virtue's cause,
And adding science with as much applause,
May they shine forth and to Posterity
Transmit their names as yours, from censure free
This last best wish comes from a sincere friend
May Boulton's good name live to this World's End!

Liverpool July 1st 1796.

[bottom left]

J Phillp 1798 [in tear in 'paper']
Nor Tree nor Shrub around 'ere knew this land
Till planted nurs'd & watered by my hand,
By industry & art, a dreary Waste
Now shews a Garden of my homely taste.

Nor Knight, nor Price, nor Burk, Sublime,
I will not ape in Prose or Rhime,
Nor Forest make, but Garden neat,
With here and there a resting seat.
Formd from the dreary Waste by me,
Who planted every Shrub & Tree,
To skreen me from the Northern Breeze,
But most of all myself to please.

[margin]

John Phillip Decr 1798

The verses marked thus [last two verses] I found on detached pieces of paper in Mr Boulton's hand-writing, And, I suppose as an alteration of the above Verses 1&2, which were written on separate pieces of paper in the same hand-writing, but by whom I could never learn.

It is not known who wrote the poem. The uncertainty of the date of the original visit complicates the issue, Boulton did not settle at Soho in 1775 but in 1766 and the date is presumably a mistake. By 1775 Boulton had already undertaken some work, much of it inspired by his visit to Painshill and the estate would not have resembled the barren waste the poet describes. Therefore it seems likely that 1775 is a mistake either by the poet or by Phillip in his transcription.

Boulton drafted an alternative in his notebook:

No Forest, but a Garden neat
an easy Walk a resting seat
made from the barren Wast by me
Who planted every Flower and Tree
To skreen me from the NE Broose
And most of all my self to please
Nor Knight nor Price nor Burk sublime
I ape, in Landskip, nor in Rhime

3782/12/108/70 MB Notebook, 1795. The dating of notebooks is based on the date each was started so this garden notebook ran on into 1796.

1.7 'Mr. Matthew Boulton' from *Public Characters of 1800-1801*, London, 1801.

pp.1-8

MR. MATTHEW BOULTON

If genius and indefatigable industry, directed by the purest patriotism, have any claim to the notice of our readers, and authentic account of this gentleman cannot but be highly acceptable to them. When we contemplate the enlarged extent of his views, the wide and rapid circulation of his improvements and discoveries in the most important branches of art, and the numerous and honourable connections which he has formed in every part of the civilized world, we shall be obliged to admit that few men possess greater claims to the attention and gratitude of their country.

Matthew Boulton, son of Matthew Boulton, by Christian, daughter of Mr. Peers, of Chester, was born at Birmingham the 14th of September 1728. He received the chief part of his education at a private grammar-school kept by the Rev. Mr. Ansted, who officiated at St. John's Chapel, Deritend.

So early, we believe, as the year 1745, Mr. Boulton, having lost his father, who left him in flourishing circumstances, distinguished himself by the invention of a new and most ingenious method of inlaying steel. Buckles, watch-chains, and a great variety of other articles wrought at his manufactory, were exported in large quantities to France, where they were eagerly purchased by the English, who affected to have no taste for the productions of their own country.

The confinement of a populous town was but ill suited to such an establishment as soon became necessary for Mr. Boulton's further experiments. Accordingly, in the year 1762, he purchased those extensive tracts of common, at that time a barren heath, with only a small house and mill, on which the Soho manufactory now stands. He laid the foundation of his present extensive works at the expense of nine thousand pounds. To this spot his liberal patronage soon attracted great numbers of ingenious men from all parts; and by their aid he so eminently succeeded in imitation the or moulu, that the most splendid apartments in this and in many foreign countries received their ornaments from Soho. Here, too (a most astonishing proof of enterprize and skill!), the works of the greatest masters in oil colours were mechanically taken off, with such ease and exactness that the original could scarcely be distinguished from the copy. This mode of copying was invented, we believe, by Mr. Eggington, whose performances in stained glass have since introduced his name to the public.

The utmost power of the water-mill, which Mr. Boulton had hitherto employed, fell infinitely short, even with the aid of horses, of that immense force which was soon found necessary to the completion of his designs. Recourse was therefore had, about the year 1767, to that *chef-d'oeuvre* of human ingenuity, the steam engine. In speaking of that wonderful machine, we shall adopt the

animated language of a late excellent Review:- The steam engine, approaching to the nature of a perpetuum mobile, or rather an *animal*, is incapable of lassitude or sensation, produces coals, works metals, moves machines, and is certainly the noblest *drudge* that was ever employed by the hand of art. Thus we “put a hook in the nose of the Leviathan”; thus we “play with him as a child, and take him for a servant for ever³”; thus “we subdue nature, and derive aid and comfort from the elements of earthquakes⁴”.

The first engine that Mr. Boulton constructed was on M. Savary’s plan, of which the reader will find one of the most satisfactory accounts in Professor Bradley’s “New Improvements of Planting and Gardening⁵”, &c. But the machine was yet, as it were, in its infancy, and by no means answered Mr. Boulton’s expectations. In the year 1769 Mr. James Watt, of Glasgow, obtained a patent for such a prodigious improvement of it, that Mr. Boulton immediately sought his acquaintance, and induced him to settle at Soho. At this place, the facility of its application to a variety of concerns, wherein great force was requisite, soon manifested its superior utility and vast advantages to the public: Parliament, therefore, in 1775, cheerfully granted a prolongation of Mr. Watt’s patent for twenty-five years. A partnership now commenced between Messrs. Boulton and Watt; and a manufactory of steam-engines, on their improved plan, was established at Soho, which still supplies the chief mines and manufactories throughout the kingdom.

Aided by such talents, and commanding such unlimited mechanical powers, Mr. Boulton’s views soon expanded, and Soho began to exhibit symptoms of the extraordinary advantages it had acquired. The art of coining had long stood in need of simplification and arrangement; and to this art Mr. Boulton no sooner turned his attention, than, about the year 1788, he erected a coining-mill on an improved plan, and struck a gold medal of the full weight of a guinea, and of the same form as that of his new copper coinage lately put into circulation. The superior advantages of that form are obvious. The impression is far less liable to friction; and by means of a steel gauge of equal diameter, money coined on that principle may be examined by measure as well as by weight, the rim being exactly circular. Moreover, the intrinsic is so nearly equal to the current value of every piece, that, without a steam-engine and adequate apparatus, every attempt to counterfeit the Soho coinage must be made with less. The fabrication of base money seems likely, by these means, to be speedily checked, and, it is to be hoped, entirely defeated. The reason why Mr. Boulton has not yet been employed by government in the coinage of gold and silver, we have not been able to learn.

The mill at Soho works eight machines, *each of which receives, stamps, and delivers out, by the aid of only a little boy, from seventy to ninety pieces of copper in one minute*. Either of them is stopped without the smallest interruption to the motion of the others. In adjoining apartments all the preparatory processes are carried on with equal facility and dispatch; such as rolling the copper into sheets, dividing them into blanks, and shaking them

³ Job, xli. 2-4

⁴ Analytical Review, Feb. 1792, p.220.

⁵ Seventh edit. p. 325.

into bags clean and ready for the die. Without any personal communication between the different classes of workmen, &c. the blanks are conveyed to the room where they are shaken, and from thence to the coining-room, in boxes moving with immense velocity on an inclined plane, and accompanied by a ticket of their weight.

The Sierra Leone company have employed Mr. Boulton's mint in the coinage of silver, and the East India company in that of copper. Two complete mints have likewise been lately sent to Petersburg.

Since the demise of the late empress Catharine, Mr. Boulton presented her successor, the late emperor Paul I, with some of the most curious articles of his manufactory, and in return received a polite letter of thanks and approbation, together with a splendid collection of medals, minerals from Siberia, and specimens of all the modern money of Russia. Among the medals, which for elegance of design and beauty of execution have never yet been equalled in this or any other country, is a massy one of gold, impressed with a striking likeness, it is said, of that monarch. Our readers will be surprised, when they are told that this unrivalled piece was struck from a die engraved by the present empress dowager, who has from her youth taken great delight in the art of engraving on steel.

With the view of still further improving and facilitating the manufactory of steam-engines, Messrs. Boulton and Watt have lately, in conjunction with their sons, established a foundry at Smethwick, a short distance from Soho. Here that powerful agent is employed, as it were, to multiply itself, and its various parts are fabricated and adapted together with the same regularity, neatness, and expedition, which distinguish all the operations of their manufactory. Those engines are afterwards distributed to all parts of the kingdom by the Birmingham canal, which communicates with a wet dock belonging to the foundry.

To such amazing perfection has the steam-engine at length been brought, that the consumption of one bushel of Newcastle coals will raise nearly six thousand hogsheads of water ten feet high, and will do the work of ten horses for one hour. This remarkable abridgement of human labour, and proportionate diminution of expense, are, in a great measure, the result of trials made under the auspices of Mr. Boulton. But for a more complete account of these machines, their power, &c. we must refer the reader to Dr. Darwin's Botanic Garden⁶.

It could scarcely be expected that envy would view with indifference such singular merit, and such unexampled success. The inventions and improvements of Messrs. Boulton and Watt were first imitated, and then either decried or disputed. Reason laboured in vain to silence the clamours of injustice, and to defeat the stratagems of fraud. At length, in the year 1792, a solemn decision of Parliament, and, about the same time, the concurrent opinion of the court of king's bench, forbad any further encroachment.

⁶ Fourth edit. Note xi, p.287.

The last discovery for which Mr. Boulton obtained a patent, was the important "Method of raising Water and other Fluids ;" an ample description of which our readers will find in the Monthly Magazine, a publication which is in every body's hands.⁷ The uses to which this engine may be applied are various: besides the raising of water for the use of brewers &c. it may be employed in raising water from the sea for salt works, in draining marshes, and in pumping ships, and by supplying with water those canals which are carried over or by the side of rivers. One great excellence of this apparatus is, that it requires no expence of fuel, nor attention from workmen. When once set a-going it will work of itself without any trouble; requiring only to be now and then inspected and kept in repair.

Whoever contemplates the merit and utility of a long life devoted to such valuable pursuits, as we have here briefly and very imperfectly described, and recollects without emotion, that the spot whereon so much has been done, and is still doing; where hundreds of women and children easily earn a comfortable subsistence⁸; where population is rapidly increasing, and the means of national prosperity increasing in proportion, was lately a bleak, swampy, and sterile waste, must want understanding to comprehend, or sympathy to appreciate, the happiness of his fellow-creatures.

Mr. Boulton is now in his seventy-third year, and he appears to possess the hilarity of youth. Extraordinary exertions, often both of body and mind, seem not to have impaired a constitution which must have been naturally robust. He is fond of music, and takes great delight in the company of young people. One son, a young man of considerable accomplishment and great promise in his father's line, and one daughter, both of them unmarried, have survived their mother. Mr. Boulton is fellow of the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh, and of the Free Economical Society of Petersburg, as well as of many other foreign institutions.

⁷ Vol. v p.294; vol. vi p.124.

⁸ We have been unable to ascertain the number of hands employed by Mr. Boulton at this time, which must frequently vary according to the changes that necessarily take place in the demand for different articles, but we know, that when Mr. Boulton junior came of age in 1791, seven hundred workmen sat down to an entertainment given by his father.

1.8 Inscription on Boulton's memorial at St Mary's Church, Handsworth
Figure 45

Sacred to the Memory of

MATTHEW BOULTON, F.R.S.

By the skillful exertion of a mind turned to Philosophy and Mechanics
The application of a Taste correct and refined
And an ardent Spirit of Enterprize, he improved, embellished and extended
The Arts and Manufactures of his Country,
Leaving his establishment of Soho a noble Monument of his
Genius, Industry and Success.
The Character his talents had raised, his Virtues adorned and exalted.
Active to discern Merit and prompt to relieve Distress
His Encouragement was liberal, his Benevolence unwearied
Honoured and admired at home and abroad
He closed a life eminently useful, the 17th of August 1809 aged 81
Esteemed, loved and lamented

This same text also appears on a memorial medal, see figure 45.

APPENDIX TWO

2.1 *The Birmingham Directory: or a Merchant and Tradesman's Useful Companion [...] Printed and sold by Pearson and Rollason, 1777 and 1780 editions*

The only plate in this directory was an unsigned east view of Birmingham.

pp. xxxii-xxxv

We must here take leave of Birmingham, and direct our attention to a spot, not very remote from thence, which only a few years ago was barren, desolate, and unnoticed; but which now, by the diffuse blessings of trade, is occupied by numerous inhabitants, securely participating in all the comforts which health and labour can supply. This spot, called

S O H O

Is now the seat of perhaps the first manufactory of its kind in Europe; and includes a greater variety of articles than we can believe any other, of the same nature near us can boast of.

To justify these assertions, we shall attempt a concise history of its progress and productions.

The building which forms so conspicuous a part of these environs, is situated in Staffordshire, at the foot of a hill, two miles north-west of Birmingham. It hath a plain but elegant front, of 180 feet in length, occupies between 4 and 5000 square yards, and can employ upwards of 700 people within its walls. It was raised with vast labour and difficulty, upon a marshy piece of ground, the adjoining parts of which are now converted in to useful earth, and pleasant streams of water. It is enriched upon the south with agreeable gardens, which give an uncommon life and cheerfulness to the situation, and exhibit proofs of the masterly skill and taste of the projector, who could draw forth such beauties from so wild and disordered a state of nature.

The productions of this opulent manufactory, were, in its infant state, nothing more than what was common to the surrounding artists; such as buttons, buckles, etwees, belt-hooks, watch-chains and trinkets, snuff-boxes, chapes, &c. and it is to the amazing consumption of these smaller commodities, multiplied into an infinite variety of kinds and qualities, that Birmingham and its neighbourhood principally owe their wealth and importance.

The founders, however, of this manufactory, engaged in an extensive trade of large plated wares, comprehending candlesticks, coffee-pots, tea-urns, terrenes, sauce-boats, bottle-stands, and many other more minute articles.

These solid and more useful branches, being well established, we shall see the proprietors opening into a new field of great latitude, unopposed by any

neighbouring competitors; borne forwards and supported only by their own spirit, fortune and ingenuity.

Taste, that rare, but in many places, coldly-cultivated plant, had long been here nurtured with peculiar solicitude and attention; and the culture thereof yielded those local benefits which were due to such liberal care and assiduity.

Works of grandeur and elegance were now introduced in stone, bronze, and Or Moulû. This novel manufacture consisted of all kinds of vases, candelabra, clock-cases, watch-stands, ice-pails, and many other particulars equally valuable, and received on its introduction the sanction and encouragement of his majesty and of the principal nobility in the kingdom, while its spirit and reputation were effectually maintained by sound taste, and masterly execution.

These costly superfluities, by their rapid circulation and acknowledged elegance, greatly diminished the importation from France, of a similar species of manufacture; eclipsed that reputation it had obtained in the fashionable world; and became an article of commerce with the most polite cities of Europe; reaching even the distance court and empire of Russia, and receiving distinguished marks of that sovereign's liberality and munificence.

The additional ability in point of ingenious workmen, and in the abridgement of labour; which the proprietors had acquired from their success in the undertaking just spoken of, induced them to embark in another, closely allied with the former, almost of equal novelty in this part of England, but by far more weighty and important. This was the manufacture of Wrought Plate. Previously, however, to the establishment of this branch in any extent, it was necessary that Birmingham should have an office of its own, to assay and regulate the purity of the metal, without enhancing the price of the merchandize and to prevent tedious delays, by carriage to and from London or elsewhere. This object, though violently opposed by the whole body of artists in the metropolis, in the same line, was, however, attained; chiefly we believe, by the vigilance and influence of one of these proprietors. Since that time Wrought Plate hath made a very conspicuous figure among the productions of this manufactory. To this was added a method of Multiplying Paintings, so as to render faithful and correct copies of the best masters, attainable at very moderate prices. This discovery, though yet but dawning, hath, by its specimens, given reason to expect, that it will be of considerable service to the lovers and patrons of the polite arts.

While these branches of elegant decoration, as well as those for more subordinate purposes, were making very extensive and successful advances, the mechanical genius of this place gave existence to an improvement in the construction of the common Steam Engine, which promised to exceed, in private benefit and public utility, every other part of the trade in which the proprietors hereof were engaged.

This improvement consisted in raising an equal quantity of water, in the same space of time; BUT with a materially less weight of coal than was consumed

by a common engine of the same dimensions. The importance of this discovery, and its practical application, are fully demonstrated in the act which Parliament hath granted the proprietors, for an exclusive enjoyment of the advantages arising there from, during the space of twenty-one years; in the number of new engines, which have been raised upon the ruins of those before used; and in the still greater number now in execution and demand. We must, however, refer the scientific and inquisitive reader, to a late ingenious publication*, for an ample and explicit account of all its properties, powers and superior advantages, as it doth not come within the design of this publication to give a minute explanation of its component parts, or to exhibit a comparative view of its unrivalled excellencies. Thus far it may be allowed us to assert, that its utility will be more general and diffusive; its returns of profit to the proprietors more considerable; and its benefits to the kingdom at large, more permanent, than any, or perhaps every other production which this Nursery of Arts hath afforded.

Upon the whole, the credit and reputation which this manufactory hath acquired in the commercial, mechanical and polite world, totally preclude those observations which we might otherwise be induced to make on its extensive benefits and national importance.

* See the Appendix to Pryce's dissertation on Mineralogy.

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