



Going, going, gone.

The Chairman of the Collections Committee, PM Richard Herbert, is an assiduous follower of online auctions with alerts set up for anything that might be relevant to the Company. So, when a pair of swords made by a father and son, both past members of the Company, were put into an auction at Bonhams, the Collections Committee got very excited - until we realised how much they were likely to sell for. Nevertheless, the Chairman asked the Court for permission to bid on them. Past Master Wichtowski spoke eloquently about how rare such opportunities were and how as a Company we should take 'the long view'; not stress about what was the right price but rather to make sure we secured them so that they could

AN ENGLISH SMALL-SWORD
WITH FINE SILVER HILT
LONDON SILVER HALLMARKS
FOR 1739, MAKER'S MARK OF JOHN
CARMAN (I)

With tapering blade of triangular section forming a ridge over its entire length on one side, hilt cast and chased in relief and comprising asymmetrical double shell-guard with differing trophies of arms on both sides within borders of foliage and against finely punched grounds, quillon-block en suite, rear quillon formed as a monster-head, knuckle-guard with foliage centred on a Classical demi-armour, globular pommel with masks of Hercules and Mars between rocailles, rounded tang button, and grip bound with twisted silver wire (81.2 cm. blade)



The masks of Hercules and Mars on the pommel

be enjoyed by many future generations of Cutlers. PM Herbert and the Clerk attended the auction and were successful bidders. The two swords now reside in the Hall.

The swords were made by two members of the Carman family, who were prominent makers of silver-hilted swords and accessories, and leading members of the Cutlers' Company of London. The family is recorded first in the New Street area of the parish of St Bride, Fleet Street, and later in the parish of St Andrew, Holborn, both in the City of London.

John Carman (I) (1692/3¹-1741), the son of Richard Carman and his wife Martha, was christened at St Margaret's Church,

¹ Before the reform of the calendar in September 1752, each new year began on the 25th March; yet the idea of changing the year on the 1st January was gaining ground. So, in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, dates between 1st January and 25th March are often given as spanning two calendar years.



The Double Shell Guard

Westminster, on 19th March 1692/3. At 15, 'John Carman Son of Richard Carman of the parish of St Margarets Westm. deced...doth put himself Apprentice to Thomas Viccaridge [sic] for seven years from 13th May 1708. Four years later, on 3rd April 1712, he was turned over to George Atkins of the Cutlers' for the remainder of his term. Atkins died in September 1714. Exactly a year after that, on 30th September 1715, John Carman of ye Parish of St Bridget also Brides London, aged twenty one years and upwards and a Batchelor ...alleged [sic] that he intendeth to marry with Mary Atkins of the same Parish, Widow...and prayed Licence for them to be married in ye Parish Church of St Brides which the couple did, two days later. The following year, on 19th April 1716, John was sworn free of the Cutlers' Company by servitude and, as both of his masters (Vicaridge and Atkins) were dead, his freedom was verified by a 'Mr Carlton'. 15 days later, on 4th May 1716, 'John Carman in New Street free Cutder', registered his maker's mark for the Britannia standard silver, 'ca' in a rectangle, in the Smallworkers' Book at Goldsmiths' Hall.

On 15th October 1717, Carman appeared at a Court of the Cutlers' Company and 'in respect of his poverty was excus'd coming on the Livery'; he was excused again in 1718. Two years later he entered a second (sterling) mark at Goldsmiths' Hall, on 27th June

1720, giving the same address. On 5th October 1721 'John Carman being summoned to take upon him the Livery appeared and all learning that he had a great Charge of Children which the Court takeing into Consideration Ordered that he be excused coming on the Livery this year'. (By date, Carman was supporting his own children and several stepchildren, those born of his wife and George

Atkins). John and Mary's children (baptized at St Bride's, Fleet Street) were: Martha (29th July 1716); Mary and Martha (twins born 27th January 1720/1, baptized 8th February 1720/1); John (II); and Maria (baptized 18th January 1730/1).

In 1722, Carman was described as a 'Silver hilt maker of St Brides' when John Bennett (I) was indentured to him. On 11th October 1722, 'John Carman appeared [at a Court of the Cutlers' Company] and took him the Livery of this Company'. Two years later, on 29th October 1724, he was appointed a steward for the Lord Mayor's Day celebrations.

At the beginning of the 1730s, Carman is recorded succeeding Ann Vicaridge at Wine Office Court (New Street precinct, ward of Farringdon Without). He is mentioned as being there when his daughter Maria was baptized at St Bride's on 18th January 1730/1, although the change does not occur in the land-tax assessment books until 1732. In 1738, he moved again, this time to Richard Kay's former premises in Boxwood Court, New Street, St Bride's, where he remained until his death.

John Carman (I) died in 1741, probably aged 48. Jacob Moore was bound to 'Mary Carman, widow of John, Citizen & Cutler of London, on 3rd December 1741' and the land-tax books record John



The indenture of John Carman II to John Carman I



John Carman's trade card: At the Ewer and Sword.

for the last time in the year 1741-2. His apprentices were William Strange; John Bennett (I) ; Peter Marsh; Thomas Sawson (bound 9th June 1731, free 6th November 1738); John Carman (II); and William Western (bound 23rd August 1740).

Mary Carman (I), widow of John (I), succeeded at Boxwood Court, New Street, in 1741, where she is recorded until about 1748. Her apprentice, Jacob Moore, became free on 7th October 1756. It is probable that the maker's mark, mc, found on several silver- hilted swords of the 1740s is hers, a mark no doubt registered in the now lost Smallworkers' Book of 1739-57.

John Carman (II) (1721/2-64), silver-hilt maker, sword cutler and a Master of the Cutlers' Company, was born on 5th March 1721/2, the son of John and Mary Carman, and baptized at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street on 14th March 1721/2. At 14, he was indentured to his father for seven years from 19th June 1736 and was sworn free by servitude of the Cutlers' on 5th June 1743. He later took livery and was elected to the Court of Assistants of the Company.

On 4th July 1748, he registered his maker's mark as largeworker at Goldsmiths' Hall (Grimwade 1990: no. 1225), although another mark was also probably entered in the now lost Smallworkers' Book mentioned above. This procedure indicates that



Bartlett's Buildings - a cul de sac just off Holborn Circus.

John had succeeded his mother at Boxwood Court, New Street, although the change from Mary to John does not occur in the land-tax books until 1749.

In 1752 John moved to the 'Ewer & Swords, Bartlett's Building, Holborn in the precinct of St Andrews, Farringdon Without, where he remained until his death. His trade card is shown above.

He entered another mark on 12th October 1756. He was elected Under Warden of the Cutlers' Company for 1759-60, Upper Warden 1760-1 and Master for 1761-2.

John Carman (II) died in January 1764 aged 41 and was buried at St Andrew's Church, Holborn, on 12th January 1764. His brief will, leaving everything to his wife and executrix, Margaret, was made on 5th November 1745 and proved two days after burial on 14th January 1764, the testament being 'lawfully constituted by Oath of Margaret Carman'. His apprentices were William Brockus (or Brochus) (bound 18th April 1746); Tompkins Martyr (bound 29th October 1747); George Fayle (turned over from Peter Marsh); Willoughby Shipman (bound 8th December 1752); James Perry; Edward Carman (bound 19th July 1757, free 10th January 1765); William Early (bound 31st May 1760); John Reynolds; and Charles Redwood (bound 23rd September 1762) (the last two boys were turned over to James Perry in



1765).

Mary Carman (II) succeeded and registered her mark at Goldsmiths' Hall as a 'Silver hilt Maker in Holborn' on 20th January 1764. There seems to be a conflict of names here as Carman's will gives 'Margaret' as his executrix and widow. About 18 months later, in the summer of 1765, James Perry succeeded to the Holborn premises, as recorded in the land-tax book for 1765-6. On 5th July 1765 John Reynolds and Charles Redwood, 'both apprentices of the late John Carman', were turned over to Perry by 'Martha [sic] Carman Widow and Extrix of the said John Carman'. A very rare example of Mary (II)'s mark is struck on the silver hilt of a small-sword in the Royal Armouries (ix.3687) with date-letter for 1763-4.

by P. L. A. Giariser (but acknowledgement to Leslie Southwick who wrote all this in his book "London Silver-hilted Swords". PS You can't buy it for love nor money).

LEFT: AN ENGLISH SMALL-SWORD WITH FINE SILVER HILT

LONDON SILVER HALLMARKS FOR 1758, MAKER'S MARK OF JOHN CARMAN (II)

With colichemarde blade of tapering hollow triangular section etched on both sides of the forte with panels of symmetrical foliated strapwork framing 'Honi Soit Qui Maly Pense' in an oval, hilt cast and chased in low relief with differing satyrs' masks, rocailles and foliage, comprising asymmetrical double shell-guard, arms, lobed rear quillon, knuckle-guard, globular pommel with tang button, and grip bound with silver ribbon and two thicknesses of twisted silver wire.

ABOVE: The handle showing John Carman II's mark and the hallmark for 1758.

