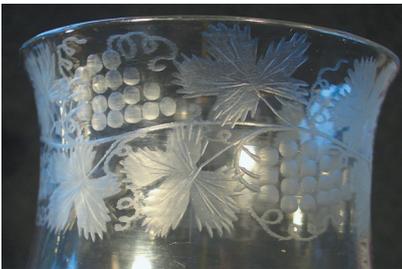


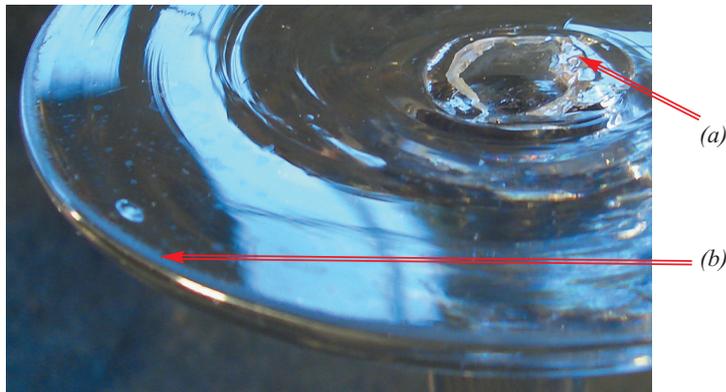
Georgian Glass



Left: wheel engraved vines from a large goblet dating from c1740-50: good, genuine period engraving.



Left: Magnified view showing the wear and tear - the nicks and knocks of centuries. This does not detract from the value of the glass.



Above: Note in the centre of the foot the clear pontil mark (a) made as the pontil rod was snapped from the glass. Note the extensive wear at the edge of the foot (b). A magnifying glass and good lighting are essential for spotting such fine detail.

Part Two: Georgian Drinking Glasses

Identification Features and Pitfalls

John Ainsley

In Part One, I set the scene within the context of the *Lennoxlove Collection of Georgian Glass*, held in November at Halls in Shrewsbury. To recapitulate I suggested that, as this was a famous collection, then one could count on its veracity. Such a collection was extremely unlikely to contain any fakes, spurious examples or mis-described lots, not always the case in the general auction or retail market where one is likely to frequently encounter such examples. However this is not a criticism of the industry, rather a fact of the market, where lack of knowledge, rather than deliberate intent is the prevailing cause. I further pointed out that studying form, that is the various shapes and types, was a key factor. Check the shapes of Georgian glasses on our website at www.antiques-info.co.uk and if you are serious buy a copy of the bible on the subject, *Eighteenth Century English Drinking Glasses, An Illustrated Guide* by L M Bickerton, this the most fundamental work in preparing for a study of the subject. I then looked at form in relation to damage to feet and rims, and how this may be overcome by repair, but how this may or may not affect value if the repair compromises form. Don't buy restored glasses where form has been compromised and don't buy damaged glasses unless they can be sympathetically restored. I went on to discuss the differences between English lead crystal and Continental soda glass and how this also affects value. I discussed wear in relation to age and how its presence or lack of presence may indicate restoration, and now we can proceed further.

All Georgian glasses will include clues to their age. Immediately obvious is their colour, being of a greyish tinted metal. Place

them next to modern glass and this darker colour will be immediately obvious. But beware. All nineteenth century glass can display the same tone and I have seen drinking glasses right through to the 1930s which on colour alone, cannot be differentiated from glass of the 1690-1830 period. Wear is also another factor. Wear to the foot is obvious, where high points have contacted with surfaces. Wear can also be found on the rim, where sometimes also a slight bump can be detected indicating where the glass in manufacture, was held by the pontil rod before being cut from the blowing iron. Everyone knows of the pontil mark - a rough scar of glass in the centre of the foot where, the gather of glass, used to adhere the glass to the pontil rod, was snapped off. Georgian glasses were made in, two, three and sometimes four parts if the stem were divided into two separate parts. Wear can appear anywhere. The nicks, knocks and scratches of centuries can be apparent particularly on the sides of the foot, and anywhere else, particularly on bowls. As early as the 1760s a few manufacturers began grinding out the rough pontil although this usually suggests a post 1800 date. As rough pontils disappeared feet could flatten instead of being cone shaped as it no longer mattered that the whole of the foot was in contact with surfaces. Ground pontils appear throughout the nineteenth and even into the twentieth century on glasses that were hand-made. So beware of what, in historiographical terms is called 'periodisation' that is loosely attaching a date or period to an event without sufficient evidence. I have seen glasses, and particularly rummers, with rough pontils, dating to as late as the 1850s evidenced by form, style

and other manufacturing characteristics, or datable attributions in the form of engravings.

Tool marks are an important period characteristic. These are near vertical, almost invisible 'creases' occurring at several points round the bowl near the rim, caused by the glass, as it was being spun by the gaffer being touched and shaped by the calliper to form the bowl. This tool also causes the striations, that is the horizontal markings, again usually near the rim where the glass is finally shaped. By about 1780, wooden inserts were placed in the jaws of the calliper. When they touched the molten glass this set up a smoke screen as the wood burnt, enabling the gaffer to complete a bowl virtually without any tool marks or striations. By about 1800, the bowls of Georgian glasses are clear and indicate a late date. Additionally in Georgian glasses the batch of glass used was prone to containing impurities, whether from materials in the batch which hadn't melted, such as tiny particles of lead, which we call 'seeds' to other impurities or non-melted 'stones' from the batch. Foreign objects might also fall into the batch with similar results. Impurities are found in all genuine Georgian drinking glasses but beware. I have seen impurities in glasses as late as the 1930s.

A knowledge of all of the factors I have discussed and a good knowledge of forms should protect the newcomer from fakes and reproductions but there are still further, and more sophisticated pitfalls which could trap the unwary. So you have found a glass, say of three pieces, bowl, stem and foot and in all respect it measures up to your knowledge and ticks all of the boxes covered. However

it may still be the case that these three pieces never started off life together. Restorers and fakers can remove any parts of any glass that may be damaged beyond repair, and replace them with a genuine part of the same period. I once viewed about a dozen Georgian glasses at auction. Individually they all passed muster in almost every respect but something was wrong. None of the glasses showed any signs of wear and yet undoubtedly every part of every glass was period. I went over and over them! One or two glasses could conceivably have been hidden in an attic for 200-300 years, or simply never been used. Such glasses appear from time to time, but it began to dawn on me that here was a major fraud. Experience was telling me that several of the combinations of foot, stem and bowl were unusual. I had never before seen for example that type of foot with that type of stem. I had to conclude that these glasses had been made up, in recent times, from genuine period parts, then repolished and all wear removed. I didn't bid, but their 'rarity' was so attractive that all of them fetched good prices between about £300 and a £1,000 each.

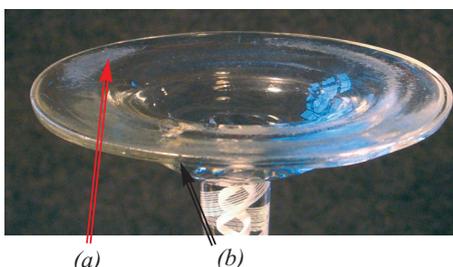
Recently a collector asked me to run my eye over about 40 glasses he had acquired from major London auctions in the last several years. He bought from these sources to ensure his purchases were genuine as his knowledge was scant. A few of his glasses

were fakes, several were spurious and a number had hidden restoration. About a third were suspect. His theory was that dealers buy from auction so he could cut out the middle man! His prize glass was a cordial, bought from the same source for about £800 hammer - this he assured me was guaranteed to be right. Wrong! The foot was about 1750, the stem was about 1750, but the bowl was made about 1820-1830! This glass was probably put together in this late Georgian period by using a foot and stem, still stored in the glass house from early days. It was a good glass, but not worth the £1,000 paid.

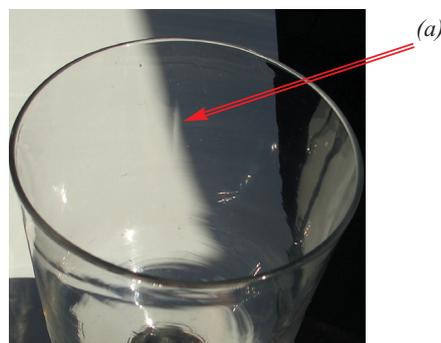
Every specialism requires years of study and of practice before a high level of competence can be expected. I have seen specialist Georgian drinking glass dealers with 300 glasses on their stands, who are still unable to spot the rare shape or the extra early glass. They view only the market in which they operate. What they see is what they know.

Finally to engraved glasses, a fertile field for the faker. How can you tell whether an engraving is contemporary with the glass, or done at some later date, or is recent? The answer is you can and you can't. There is a myth in the trade that old engravings have a kind of patina which indicates great age, like the patina on furniture, but this is not true. Glass does not age so the comparison is false. However, experts in Georgian drinking glasses, who are also experts in engraving, or

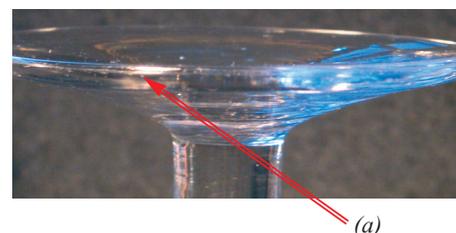
indeed are engravers themselves are able to study engravings from a professional as well as a technical perspective - just like an art specialist can recognise an artist or a genre without a signature. However such skill is rare. I do not have it but I do have knowledge which can at times help. For example the faking of Jacobite engravings has become an epidemic because there is money in it. There were only half a dozen original engravers for the Jacobite period in the years following on from Culloden in 1746. When these engravers are identified then such glasses can be worth four and even five figures. Today at auction, the euphemism 'of Jacobite significance' is often used when the date of the engraving is uncertain. Jacobite symbols have been engraved on genuine Georgian drinking glasses for 250 years, and it is estimated that 94% of 'Jacobite' glasses have been engraved at a later date. If you want to know more buy *The Jacobites and their Drinking Glasses* by Geoffrey B Seddon, published in 1995 by the *Antique Collectors' Club*.



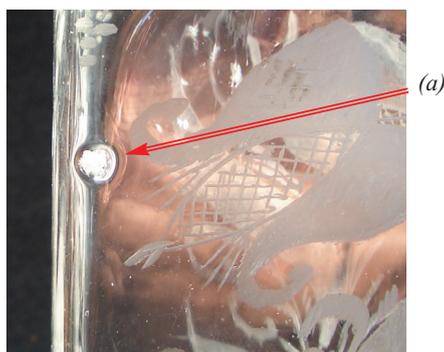
This double series opaque twist glass with a domed foot shows intensive 'moss-like' wear (a) on the flat areas of the glass which would make contact with surfaces. Note also the nicks and wear on the edge of the foot (b), none of these being large enough to detract from the value in any way. All of this wear is a desirable feature of a genuine Georgian drinking glass.



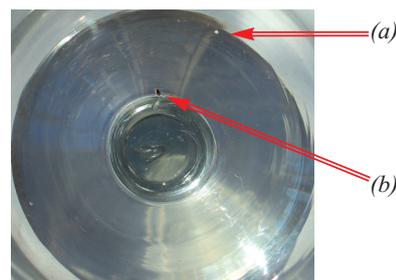
Tool marks (a), near vertical lines or folds appearing near the rim, are caused by contact with the tool as the gaffer shaped the bowl. These tool marks and the horizontal striations disappear towards the end of the eighteenth century. See text for an explanation. Dating on one or two features only is risky - every feature described here must be present to ensure authenticity.



The outside rim of the foot of a genuine Georgian drinking glass will usually show nicks and wear marks from several centuries of contact with other glasses. Their presence against the fire-polished finish indicates not only genuine age, but also that the foot has not been ground down.



A larger than average stone in a Low Countries decanter from the second half of the 18thC.



The bowl of a Georgian drinking glass, c1750, showing stones (a) and seeds (b) both impurities in the glass mixture.



A close up of genuine wheel engraving on a Georgian drinking glass from c1750. Note the presence of an impurity in the mix just above the bird's head. Note all over the surface minute nicks and scratches associated with 250 years of age and use. These elements are present in almost all genuine Georgian drinking glasses.