

THE SUCCESS TO R. BROWN 1768 TUMBLER AND COMPARATIVE BEILBY ENAMELED GLASS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The distinctive opaque white-enameled glass tumbler inscribed “Success to R. Brown 1768” is key to our understanding of the work of William Beilby and his family of English enamellers in Newcastle upon Tyne. William Beilby is famously known for decorating glass between 1762 and 1765 in colored enamels with heraldic coats of arms. The R. Brown tumbler demonstrates convincing evidence that his style of enameled glass in opaque white enamel was the joint production of William and his younger brother Thomas, generally after 1765. This corpus of material depicts country pursuits, architectural motifs, foliage, fruiting vines, and flowers, amongst other subjects. Based on the survival of this tumbler, new research now considers that the Beilbys worked specifically between 1762 and 1769 and not beyond 1770.

Drawing comparison with other examples of dated and inscribed Beilby glass it is argued that with its simple legend and delicate portrayal of a wildfowler, this tumbler reveals not only its Northumbrian origins, but also a connection with the aristocracy of northern England and significant British political figures of the period. A wider range of Beilby glass with similar white-enameled decoration, especially tumblers, wine glasses, and goblets, is examined in detail.

The glass tumbler and its decorator which form the primary subject of this article will be familiar to close students of English eighteenth-century glass. Inscribed “Success.to, / R+Brown; / 1768” ([Fig. 1](#)), the tumbler first came to public attention when it appeared in a London auction at Sotheby’s in 1991 and more recently, in 2023, at Bonhams.¹ It was decorated in white enamel by a member of the Beilby family in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1768. In his memoir, published posthumously in 1862, Thomas Bewick (1753–1828),

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1 Sotheby’s London 1991, lot 81; Bonhams London 2023, lot 48.

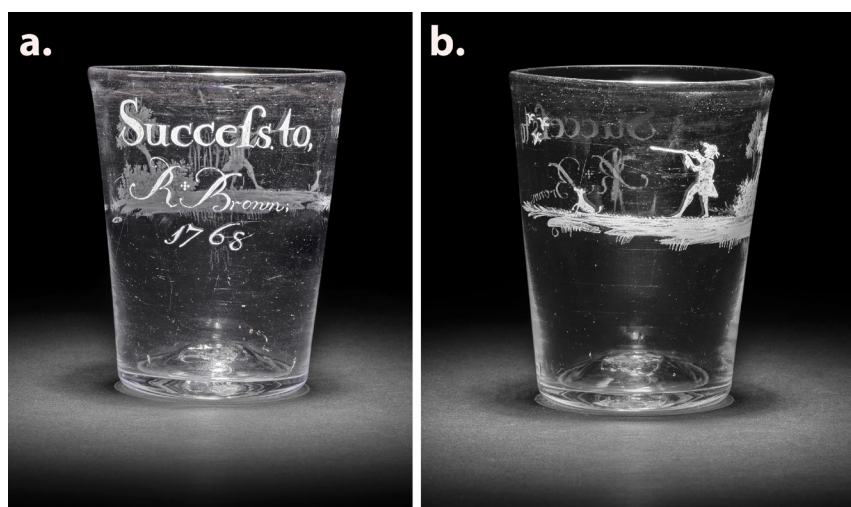


FIG 1. Success to R. Brown 1768 tumbler. Enameled. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1768. H. 9.8 cm. Private collection: (a) obverse; (b) reverse. (Photo: courtesy of Bonhams, London)

the Northumbrian wood engraver, noted the ingenious ways in which this family of five siblings—Richard, William, Ralph, Thomas, and Mary—came together on Tyneside to work as enameled glass, engravers, silversmiths, and skilled artists, in order to resolve the financial difficulties brought about by the bankruptcy in 1759 of their father, William Beilby Sr. (1706–1765), a goldsmith in Durham.²

THE BEILBY FAMILY

After William Beilby Jr. (1740–1819) served his apprenticeship to the Birmingham enameler and drawing master John Hazeldine, between June 2, 1755, and about 1762, he moved to Newcastle upon Tyne. Here he taught the art of enameling and painting to both his younger brother Thomas (1747–1826) and his sister Mary (1749–1797), who, according to Bewick, were constantly employed there.³ Based at their workshop at Amen Corner, William and Thomas appear to have been the principal members of this team of glass enameled glass, supported later by their sister. Although Mary Beilby has been credited by some authors with the enameling of a wide number of wineglasses, particularly those of a floral nature, there is no evidence to date that indicates which examples can be reasonably attributed to her hand.⁴ By 1763, at the age of 14, she would have been eligible for an apprenticeship. At that time her training in enameled glass under William's guidance may have begun, and she may therefore have been responsible for a body of work yet to be identified. According to Bewick's memoir, just before he had served out his apprenticeship in 1774, Mary is purported to have suffered "a paralytic stroke."⁵ From the evidence of William and Thomas's watercolor drawings in the 1760s and early 1770s, there are distinct parallels with almost all the decoration in white enamel found on their glass, including botanical studies.⁶ Unfortunately, no

² Bewick 1862.

³ Bewick 1862, 56.

⁴ Rush 1973, 141.

⁵ Bewick 1862, 78: "From the length of time I had known and noticed Miss Beilby, I had formed a strong attachment to her, but I could not make this known to her or to anyone else. I could have married her before I was done with my apprenticeship without any fears on my part, but I felt for her, and pined and fretted at so many bars being in the way of our union. . . . Before I was out of my time, Miss Beilby had a paralytic stroke."

⁶ Charleston 1989.

such drawings exist that are either signed by or that can be attributed to Mary Beilby. However, as we have been told by Bewick that she had been trained in the arts by William Beilby, it can reasonably be supposed that certain glasses were decorated by Mary Beilby, perhaps in line with those of her elder brothers' regular work.

Using locally manufactured glass, William and Thomas skillfully fired enamel and delicate gilt decoration onto the surfaces of wineglasses, goblets, and other vessels, particularly those associated with wines and spirits. The brothers were probably undertaking this decorative technique within the confines of a glass cone—possibly that of the glasshouse of Airey, Cookson & Co., which was relatively close to their workshop and from which we have receipts for enamel-decorated glass in the 1760s.⁷ We assume this from the use of a double-pontil mark on the underside of the foot for a second firing of a glass after the application of the enamel and goldleaf.⁸ The addition of enamel marks such as those covered by the handles on punch glasses to indicate where the handles should be placed before the second firing process may also support this hypothesis.⁹

Initially under the direction of his eldest brother, Richard (1736–1766), Ralph Beilby (1744–1817) was independently responsible at Amen Corner for engraving metal and woodblocks for the printing trade. According to Bewick, Richard Beilby “had served his apprenticeship as a diesinker or seal engraver in Birmingham,” and William had lodged with him.¹⁰ Richard would thus have had expert knowledge of heraldry and calligraphy, which it is fair to assume he passed on to his brothers. He had died the year before Bewick's apprenticeship and so is not mentioned in Bewick's memoir as participating in the family business, though it is tempting to consider that Richard might have been working alongside William and Thomas in glass enameling. It was in 1767 that Ralph Beilby employed the young Thomas Bewick, who then went on to become his partner and one of Britain's leading exponents of the artistry of wood engraving. Whilst Bewick recorded his early observations of the Beilby family's industrious work, it should be recognized that he would not have had first-hand knowledge of the family prior to 1767 and therefore his familiarity with their background is only likely to have emerged through his introduction to the then four surviving members.

Much has been written about the Beilbys and their enameled glass.¹¹ Examples survive in museums and private collections worldwide, the most famous of these glasses being those colorful and intricately decorated and inscribed goblets, decanters, and punchbowls painted with coats of arms made for some of the leading politicians and aristocratic families of the day, of which 109 are currently recorded (Fig. 2). Produced between about 1762 and 1769, at least 18 pieces bear Beilby signatures. The earliest dated example is the Standard of Hesleyside produced for the Charlton family of Northumberland, inscribed 1763.¹² By comparison, their contemporary work in white enamel is, perhaps, more commonplace and consists of numerous wineglasses with opaque-twist stems, their bowls painted with borders of grape bunches and vine

7 Cottle 1986, 320, fig. 11: receipt for enameled glass dispatched to the Duke of Atholl from Airey, Cookson & Co., Newcastle upon Tyne, April 25, 1764.

8 Gudenrath 2006, 66, 68, fig. 41.2.

9 Bonhams 2022b, lot 136: a pair of small mugs bearing the crest of Walter Trevelyan of Netherwitton Hall, Northumberland, about 1766; a small mug from the same set, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1770-D5).

10 Bewick 1862, 56.

11 Rush 1973, 1987.

12 Rush 1973, 132–137.

FIG 2. Decanter. Enameled with the coat of arms of Newcastle upon Tyne. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1764. H. 23.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, C.620-1936: (a) obverse; (b) reverse. (Photo: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, used with permission)



leaves, their rims with traces of gilding. The earliest inscribed glasses in white enamel, each bearing the date 1764, are a flask, a small bowl, and a cordial glass.¹³ Amongst this production in white monochrome, other objects, such as tumblers, bowls, and wine decanters, have been inscribed with dedications alongside vignettes of sporting pastimes, architectural and rural themes, and floral and rococo scroll decoration.¹⁴ A small number of glasses (approximately 30) bear sentiments alongside dates, initials, and surnames in white enamel, most of which have yet to be identified but are presumed to represent local families from Northumberland, County Durham, Cumberland, Westmorland, and North Yorkshire.¹⁵ They may relate to marriages or christenings, the majority bearing dates between 1763 and 1769. Only three such glasses postdate 1770. Rather than a family crest, 22 armorial objects from the first half of the 1760s also bear fruiting vines or vignettes of pyramids and classical ruins in white enamel on their reverse sides, mirroring the similar subject matter in smaller scale found on many of their wineglasses, goblets, and decanters.¹⁶

13 An octagonal flask, Torre Abbey, Torquay, Devon (M/N 113/6/1955), the rectangular form with canted corners and short neck inscribed in white: "How blest / is the life of / retirement. / But yet / more blest the / Happy pair" on one side, and on the reverse: "S I / To / Mr. / Hutchinson. / STONY GILL / 1764"; the sides each with a tall flower, the shoulders with scroll and pendant flowerheads, flattened ball stopper with air beads, H. 19 cm; a small bowl, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, painted in white and inscribed: "JOHN & MARGt: DIXON / Hawkwell 1764," the reverse with an oval medallion flanked by scroll and diaper, H. 5.7 cm, Diam. 11.4 cm; a gin or cordial glass, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.621-1936), painted in white and inscribed: "HC 1764" on one side, the reverse with fruiting vine, H. 10.8 cm.

14 Cottle 1989.

15 Cottle 2023, 153–157.

16 For a discussion of the origins and attributions of the royal goblets and other armorial goblets and punchbowls, see Cottle 2015, 180–195.

RICHARD BROWN OF THE SUCCESS TO R. BROWN TUMBLER

Of the 21 tumblers known to have survived, of which several are inscribed and dated, that with “Success.to, / R.+Brown; / 1768” (H. 9.7 cm) is one of the more interesting. It is also decorated on the reverse with a sportsman aiming a shotgun at a flock of game-birds with his dog at point, and flanked by an oak tree and shrubbery (see [Figure 1b](#)). Whilst there are several individuals to whom the name could refer, that of Richard Brown of Kirkharle in Northumberland is the most likely.

Richard Brown (1747–1823) was the estate surveyor or land agent of the Northumberland estate of William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland (1738–1809), at Bothal Castle, near Morpeth.¹⁷ He was also the nephew of the famous landscape architect Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716–1783), who had worked as the head gardener’s apprentice at Sir William Loraine’s kitchen garden at Kirkharle Hall until he was 23. From the extensive Portland (Welbeck) Collection of papers held in the archives of the University of Nottingham, it is known that following the death of Lancelot’s elder brother, John Brown (1714–1766), who was the land agent for the Portland Estate, it was Lancelot who had recommended to the 3rd Duke on March 18, 1766, John’s son, Richard, as his father’s successor. The position of estate surveyor at Bothal had also been previously held by William Brown(e) (1684–1720), John and Lancelot Brown’s father.

The son of John Brown and his wife Jane Loraine (b. 1702), the daughter of Sir William Loraine (1658–1744), 2nd Baronet of Kirkharle, Richard Brown was in bond with one other to the Dowager Duchess of Portland as of May 14, 1766, for two thousand pounds for “carry[ing] out their duties properly.” Lancelot Brown was prepared to join in the bond of security for his nephew on June 19.¹⁸ William Robson (d. 1767) of Hexham had taken Richard on as a steward on May 21, 1766. Robson was John Brown’s executor and the agent of Sir Walter Calverley-Blackett at Wallington Hall.¹⁹ Blackett was sheriff of Northumberland and a former mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne. Almost a year later, on March 12, 1767, Richard Brown wrote to the 3rd Duke from Wallington reporting on the death of William Robson and hoped that the duke would continue to employ him, assuring the duke that he would have the assistance of George Robson, steward of Sir Ralph Milbank (1722–1793), 5th Baronet of Halnaby Hall, Yorkshire. Richard subsequently promised, on March 24, 1767, his “unwearied diligence” in the 3rd Duke’s service.

Writing to the duke from his home at Hampton Court on March 30, 1767, Lancelot repeated the report of the death of William Robson and appealed to the duke for his nephew to continue as his agent in Northumberland, assuring him that Robson’s brother, George, would assist Richard. In a further letter to the duke of May 4, 1767, Lancelot discussed his nephew’s position, commenting that “Mr. Robson has left him a pretty good fortune which I hope he will deserve.” William Robson had also been Richard Brown’s executor on the death of his father. To add to his good fortune, Richard had previously been left a legacy of one hundred pounds by his grandmother Anne Lady

17 Pw F 1838, Pw F 8100, Pw F 1835, Pw F 1834, Pw F 1837, Pw F 1831.

18 Pw F 8103.

19. A claret decanter in [Figure 2](#) bears the crest of Sir Walter Calverley-Blackett on one side and the coat of arms of the town of Newcastle upon Tyne on the other, signed “Beilby Junr pinxit & Invt N’Castle,” H. 23.5 cm. This decanter was probably commissioned for Sir Walter when he became mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1764, a year before the death of William Beilby’s father, William Beilby Sr. (1706–1765), hence the use of “Junr.” in the signature as a distinction between the younger and elder William.

Loraine on her death in 1755.²⁰ By 1768 Richard Brown would have come of age and would therefore have been welcomed into the duke's service as a qualified land agent. Perhaps it was on his reaching his majority and obtaining the appointment that the tumbler was inscribed "Success.to, / R+Brown / 1768." Is it possible that this congratulatory glass may have been commissioned for his nephew by Lancelot "Capability" Brown?

Thus, extensive correspondence in the Portland (Welbeck) Collection indicates that Richard Brown was responsible for the land management of the 3rd Duke of Portland's Northumberland estate from 1766, rising in the 1770s to a wider, more senior role encompassing all the duke's property in England. On July 16, 1770, Sir Walter Blackett wrote to the duke from Spa in Belgium, complaining that the Dowager Duchess of Portland had ordered Mr. Richard Brown of Kirkharle to "employ a person to kill moorgame and Partridge and send them to her Grace in the South," but he, Sir Walter, has requested that his gamekeeper should do so instead.²¹ This is an unusual request since one aspect of Richard's role was maintaining the gamebirds on the Portland estate for regular shooting parties.

Richard Brown married Sarah Dillon at Hartburn near Kirkharle and Kirkwhelpington, Northumberland, on July 27, 1771.²²

A similar combination of a sportsman holding a shotgun together with an inscription can be found on a Beilby glass flask now in the Ashmolean Museum (Fig. 3). Enamelled in white, the flask is inscribed "Tho^s Brown / Nenthead / 1769," the reverse with an almost identical portrayal of a sportsman with his shotgun and dog at point.²³ A Thomas Brown (d. 1770) (no relation to Richard Brown) is recorded as a wealthy gentleman at Nenthead in Cumberland who was possibly associated with the lead mines in the region.²⁴ Lead ore was an important component of glassmaking, especially for those glasshouses situated in Newcastle upon Tyne, from where the ore from Nenthead

FIG 3. Flask. Enamelled with an inscription. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1768. L. 21 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, WA1957.24.2.181: (a) obverse; (b) reverse. (Photo: © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, used with permission)



20 Will of Dame Anne Loraine, widow of Sir William Loraine baronet, widow, of Kirkharle in the county of Northumberland, September 17, 1753, Durham Probate Records, DPRI/1/1755/L4/1, Durham University Library.

21 Pw F 1419.

22 Pw F 1923, July 20, 1771.

23 Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (WA1957.24.2.181).

24 Will of Thomas Brown, Nenthead, June 18, 1769, Durham Diocese, Registered Wills 1526–1858.

would also have been exported countrywide. With the Success to R. Brown tumbler, these two glasses are the only known dated examples which bear a dated inscription and the same shooting scene. The sportsmen on these objects are shown wearing a long coat and a brimmed hat, standing with one leg extended to assist aiming their gun.

COMPARABLE BEILBY GLASSES

Over 400 examples of Beilby glass of all types have been identified (at least 278 in public institutions, 117 in private collections, and approximately 50 whose current whereabouts are unknown). A study of examples of the same object type, with similar decoration, and inscriptions helps to put the tumbler and its decorative style within the wider context of Beilby glass.

The 20 extant tumblers in public and private collections range in height from 9 cm to 13 cm, of which the majority are around 10 cm high. Including the Success to R. Brown tumbler (at 9.5 cm), 6 are inscribed and dated.²⁵ The second is inscribed “Jno & M. HARRISON / 1768” (Fig. 4),²⁶ together with a peacock on the reverse, whilst the third simply bears the inscription “Success to the Sword.makers / 1767” (H. 11.5 cm) with the initials “WAO” on the reverse for William and Ann Oley, who were married in 1759 (Fig. 5).²⁷ The Oleys were swordmakers at Shotley Bridge, County Durham.



FIG 4. Tumbler. Enameled with an inscription. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1768. H. 11.5 cm. Diageo Collection, Turin. (Photo: Christie's London)

²⁵ Cottle 1986, 320, fig. 12; a sixth example, painted in colors in opaque enamel with the coat of arms of the Dukes of Atholl, dated 1767, was previously questioned as being the work of the Beilby workshop but may now be reattributed.

²⁶ Christie's 1972, lot 198.

²⁷ Charleston 1964, Wilkinson Sword Ltd. Collection.

FIG 5. Success to the Swordmakers tumbler. Enameled with an inscription. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1768. H. 11.5 cm. Wilkinson Sword Collection: (a) obverse; (b) reverse. (Photos: after Rush 1973; James Rush)



The fourth tumbler, inscribed “M.Bell / 1778” (**Fig. 6**),²⁸ and the fifth, a Masonic tumbler inscribed “T*M / 1779,”²⁹ are the last dated examples of Beilby glass, there being oddly a lapse of five and six years respectively between the latter two glasses and the previous glasses bearing a date. An opaque-twist goblet (H. 19.5 cm) inscribed “P.Bairnsfather 1773” is also unusual for its late date of production, its deep round funnel bowl being slightly different from those of the regular examples with bucket, ogee, or small round funnel bowls (**Fig. 7**).³⁰ However, with its large bowl, it is quite like the armorial goblet (H. 23.5 cm) painted in colors with the coat of arms of the Van Dongen family of Zeeland and with gilding, albeit 5 cm shorter.³¹ Another goblet in the Victoria and Albert Museum (C.634-1936), with an intricate but as yet unidentified coat of arms all in white enamel, is also of similar style and scale (H. 19.5 cm). If one can make any distinction between the hands of William and Thomas Beilby, the style of the decoration on both glasses may owe more to the work of William than of Thomas, and the latter appears to have left the enameling trade behind him when he left Newcastle in 1769, before these glasses were made.³² The Van Dongen goblet was possibly produced in the late 1760s, when the Beil-

28 Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York (79.2.71).

29 Bonhams 2022a, lot 121, a masonic tumbler inscribed “T*M / 1779” in opaque white, within a rococo scrollwork cartouche, the reverse with the square and compasses enclosing the letter G in yellow, red, and white, H. 9.5 cm.

30 Bonhams 2018, lot 104.

31 Pilkington Glass Museum, St. Helens, painted in colors with the coat of arms of the Van Dongen family of Zeeland within a rococo cartouche, with sprigs, grasses, lattice panels, and foliate festoons, gilt rim, H. 23.5 cm; illustrated in Rush 1973, 109, fig. 61.

32 Thomas’s departure from Newcastle upon Tyne in 1769 is significant as it coincides with the survival of a large group of examples dating specifically to the period between 1767 and 1769. This may indicate that Thomas was at least responsible for decorating much of the glass in the late 1760s, especially as Bewick mentions that after his training by William, Thomas was “constantly employed” as a glass enameler in Newcastle. This would have been before Thomas left the town. His departure date is suggested by a 1769 notice: “T. Beilby, from Newcastle,



FIG 6. Tumbler. Enameled with an inscription. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1778. H. 9.8 cm. Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York, 79.2.71, gift of The Ruth Bryan Strauss Memorial Foundation. (Photo: Corning Museum of Glass)



FIG 7. Bairnsfather goblet (left). Enameled with an inscription. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1773. H. 17.5 cm. Private Collection. (Photo: Bonhams, London)

bys appear to have been marketing their work in Holland and the United Provinces and thereby attracting commissions from Dutch families.³³

Further glasses known from the 1767–1768 period include a small Masonic firing glass inscribed in white enamel “P+B / 1767” (Fig. 8), an exceptional pair of color-twist wineglasses, a tea flask and stopper inscribed “BETTY HODGON / AP 1767,” and a set of Masonic firing tumblers. The wineglasses are each inscribed in white enamel with “the Providence” above a ship portrait, the reverse with “JO:N ELLIOT. / 1767.”³⁴ The ship is painted in a limited color palette of white, with its banners and flags picked out in red. The unusual stem—edged with four spiral threads tinted in red, yellow, and blue and a pale emerald-green thread around an opaque white-enamel corkscrew—may represent the heraldic crest of the Elliot family, a significant Scottish clan in the eighteenth century. The essential elements of strong red, yellow, and blue are specific to the clan colors, but as the less obvious, translucent emerald-green spiral is not present in the blazon, this theory might be disproved. Three small Masonic firing tumblers, painted with a pair of compasses, a ruler, and a sunburst in yellow, highlighted in red—as well as a larger example in the British Museum—are each inscribed “P T 1768” in opaque white enamel (Fig. 9).³⁵



FIG 8. Masonic firing glass. Opaque-twist stem and terraced foot, enameled with inscription “P+B.” Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1767. H. 10.4 cm. Private collection. (Photo: Bonhams, London)

proposes opening a Drawing School in a commodious Room (i.e., in Leeds) to initiate young Ladies and Gentlemen into a knowledge of the several branches of the polite and useful accomplishment. Enquire at Mr GRIMSHAW’s Academy” (*Leeds Mercury*, October 24, 1769). A further notice (*Leeds Mercury*, October 16, 1770) shows that the school was prospering.

³³ Cottle 2011a, 21–22.

³⁴ Masonic firing glass: Bonhams 2009, lot 60, H. 10.4 cm; tea flask: Sotheby’s 1992, lot 141; Bonhams 2023, lot 48, H. 15.9 cm; Bonhams 2011, lot 135, H. 16 cm. A John Elliott was a naval officer and Member of Parliament for Cockermouth, Cumberland, in 1767–1768. However, he is not recorded as a commander of a ship named *The Providence*.

³⁵ Christie’s 2005, lot 78 (part), two glasses, H. 8 cm, another purchased at an unknown auction in 2019 (whereabouts unknown), H. 8 cm. A larger example is in the British Museum, London (1946,707.1), H. 9.4 cm.



FIG 9. Masonic tumbler. Enameled with inscription "PT." Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, dated 1768. H. 8 cm. Private collection. (Photo: Bonhams, London)

Minor variations of the shooting scene on the tumbler can be found on ten Beilby wineglasses painted in white enamel. These examples, each with an opaque-twist stem and ogee bowl, can be divided into four groups of sportsmen wearing frock coats. Comprising six wineglasses, the first group portrays a sportsman with an open stance, wearing a brimmed hat like that on the Success to R. Brown tumbler and the Thomas Brown flask. In the second group, made up of two wineglasses (Fig. 10), each has a wildfowler wearing a peaked hat and loose tailcoat who is in an open-legged stance, like that of the sportsman on the tumbler. The third variation (Fig. 11) is a single glass depicting a sportsman with legs closed and wearing a peaked hat, whilst the fourth example also has the hunter standing with his legs closed but is bare headed (Fig. 12).³⁶

To date, only five of the existing inscribed Beilby glasses bear a legend that begins "Success to . . ." Apart from the two beakers mentioned above, the other three are goblets. Of the goblets, the most important and tallest (H. 25 cm)—with an opaque-twist stem and bucket-shaped bowl—is the so-called Whitehaven Goblet, which bears the royal coat of arms of King George III in polychrome enamels on one side and a ship on the reverse, with an inscription above in beautiful calligraphic white-enamel script: "Success to the / African trade of WHITE-HAVEN"; the goblet is signed by William Beilby.³⁷ The ship is either the *King George* or *Prince George*, reportedly built and launched in 1763 in the Cumberland port town of Whitehaven, owned by the politician and major landowner Sir James Lowther (1736–1802), 5th Baronet of Lowther

³⁶ Bickerton 1986, pls. 1079, 1080, for two of these examples; Bonhams 2017, lot 25; Bonhams 2022b, lot 139; Graham Vivian Collection, Delomosne, June 9, 2015.

³⁷ The Beacon Museum, Whitehaven, painted in colors with the royal arms of George III, flanked by rose, thistle, supporters, rococo scrollwork, and mantling, the reverse with ship portrait and inscribed: "Success to the / African trade of WHITE-HAVEN," with traces of gilding to the rim, signed "Beilby junr invt & Pinxt" in white; H. 25 cm, acquired 1985.

FIG 10. Sportsman wineglass. Opaque-twist stem, enameled. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1767. H. 15 cm. Private collection. (Photo: Bonhams, London)



FIG 11. Sportsman wineglass. Opaque-twist stem, enameled. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1767. H. 15 cm. Private collection. (Photo: Private collection)





FIG 12. Sportsman wineglass. Opaque-twist stem, enameled. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1767. H. 14.1 cm. Private collection. (Photo: Bonhams, London)

and Whitehaven, later 1st Earl of Lonsdale. A cousin of the Beilby family of Newcastle upon Tyne, Lowther was a Whig Member of Parliament (MP) and married to Mary Crichton-Stuart, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Bute, the former Whig prime minister under King George III.³⁸

A smaller opaque-twist goblet with a large ogee-shaped bowl in the Corning Museum of Glass is inscribed "Success to Sedbergh" (**Fig. 13**).³⁹ Sedbergh in the West Riding of Yorkshire is a town that has prospered on the sale and manufacture of wool and woollen goods from medieval times. It has been suggested that the sentiment on the goblet may be linked to the 1761 parliamentary election in Westmorland

³⁸ Owen 1990, 175, 184. John Beilby JP (1635–1702) of Micklethwaite Grange, Yorkshire, married Barbara Lowther (1634–1705?) at Killerby, Cayton, Yorkshire. They married September 12, 1661, at Lowther, Westmorland. Barbara Lowther was born in July 1634 at Lowther Hall, Westmorland, the daughter of Sir John Lowther, 1st Baronet of Lowther (February 20, 1605–November 30, 1675). He was an English lawyer, landowner, and politician who sat in the House of Commons for Westmorland in 1628 and in 1660. He married twice—Barbara was the daughter of his first wife, Mary Fletcher. Between 1663 and 1670, John and Barbara Beilby lived at Micklethwaite Grange, Collingham, West Riding of Yorkshire. John Beilby died at Micklethwaite Grange in 1702. Richard Beilby (Bridlington, 1672–Scarborough, 1726), John and Barbara Beilby's son, married Margaret Woolfe or Johnson (1670–1722) in Bridlington on November 28, 1695. They had several children, of whom William Beilby Sr. was one, born March 12, 1706, died March 1765. Sir James Lowther, 5th Baronet (1736–1802), was also a direct descendant of Sir John Lowther, 1st Baronet and Mary Fletcher.

³⁹ Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York (2009.2.33), H. 18 cm.



FIG 13. Sedbergh goblet. Opaque-twist stem, enameled.
Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1768. H. 18 cm.
Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York, 2009.2.33. (Photo:
Corning Museum of Glass)

between Sir James Lowther and John Upton (b. 1718) of Middelton, Westmorland, and of Ingmire Hall. It is, however, more likely to be the election of 1768, when Upton stood as a Lowther candidate against Thomas Fenwick, the choice of Lord Suffolk and the Duke of Portland. Although a Yorkshire town, Sedbergh looked more toward the adjacent county of Westmorland. Ingmire Hall is on the outskirts of Sedbergh. The Lowthers owned land nearby. Whilst clearly Sedbergh landowners could not have voted directly in the Westmorland elections, there may well have been indirect influences and certainly land holdings that spanned both counties. It is therefore probable that this glass was used as an electioneering goblet in a contest in which Upton sought support locally for his candidacy. In the House of Commons, Upton was a regular Lowther follower and supporter of the Earl of Bute.⁴⁰

The Sedbergh Goblet with its bowl shape, stem form, inscription, and rococo cartouche in opaque white enamel is almost identical to those of the two Clavering Goblets (Fig. 14), albeit the latter with red and yellow enamel rococo cartouches.⁴¹ Both inscribed “Liberty & Clavering For Ever” in white enamel, the Clavering Goblets are also electioneering glasses and were probably made for Sir Thomas Clavering, 7th Baronet (1719–1794) of Axwell Park, County Durham. Sir Thomas, a Whig politician, fought for the constituency of Durham and was elected on his third attempt in 1768. With the Sedbergh Goblet, the three electioneering goblets are almost certainly linked to the parliamentary election of that year.

⁴⁰ Namier and Brooke 1964, 3:56–60, 571.

⁴¹ Namier and Brooke 1964, 3:217–218; Churchill 1937, fig. 25, no.113, now in the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York (79.2.63, gift of The Ruth Bryan Strauss Memorial Foundation), H. 19.4 cm. The second, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (C.632-1936), H. 19.4 cm.



FIG 14. Clavering goblet. Enameled, opaque-twist stem. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1768. H. 19.4 cm. Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York, 79.2.63, gift of The Ruth Bryan Strauss Memorial Foundation. (Photo: Corning Museum of Glass)

Another very similar opaque-twist goblet with a large ogee bowl is inscribed in white enamel “SUCCESS / to the / TOWN and TRADE / of LEITH” within a rococo cartouche below a gilt-edged rim (Fig. 15).⁴² Since the decoration and its inscription are so close to those of the Sedbergh and Clavering goblets, it is possible that this glass is also linked to the election of 1768, where Sir Lawrence Dundas was returned as the MP for Edinburgh.⁴³

Sir Lawrence Dundas (1712–1781), a wealthy landowner with estates in North Yorkshire and Scotland, stood as a Whig politician in 1768. A suburb on the north side of Edinburgh, Leith was a significant area of its constituency. Born in that city, Sir Lawrence was part of the Dundas family of Fingask, a minor landowning branch of the Dundas family of Arniston House in Edinburgh. There is an important Beilby royal goblet at Arniston House today which is believed to have been in the Dundas family since the early 1760s.⁴⁴ Sir Lawrence Dundas entered the Society of Dilettanti in 1750 and was a keen patron of art and architecture, and an art collector. In Edinburgh, Dundas was a governor of the Royal Bank and helped pass the legislation to build the New Town in the center of the city in 1766, later taking advantage of his position to purchase the best site in the New Town plan to build his own mansion, Dundas House, on St. Andrew Square. Using his influence to acquire votes throughout the Edinburgh constituency for his re-election, it is entirely plausible that the Leith Goblet and Sir Lawrence Dundas are linked—just as the Sedbergh Goblet with Sir John Upton. The Leith Goblet may have been commissioned and therefore used at a pre-election event in Edinburgh.

42 Cottle 2011a, 19, fig 3.; Cottle, 2011b, 11. fig.12; Bonhams 2021, lot 8, H. 19.2 cm.

43 Namier and Brooke 1964, 2:357–361.

44 Cottle 2015, 180–195.

FIG 15. Leith goblet. Enameled, opaque-twist stem. Beilby workshop, Newcastle upon Tyne, about 1768. H. 19 cm. Private collection. (Photo: Bonhams, London)



Coincidentally, Sir Lawrence Dundas's main estate was at Aske Hall near Richmond in North Yorkshire, where the gardens were initially laid out in 1769 by Lancelot "Capability" Brown, the famous uncle of Richard Brown, subject of the Success to R. Brown tumbler. Several wealthy landowning families within Yorkshire have connections with the Beilbys and the Browns. Sir Lawrence's son, Thomas Dundas (1741–1820), married Lady Charlotte Wentworth, daughter of the 3rd Earl Fitzwilliam, in May 1764. Lord Fitzwilliam was married to Lady Anne Watson-Wentworth, daughter of the Earl of Malton in North Yorkshire. Lord Malton was later created Marquess of Rockingham; Lady Anne's brother was the future prime minister Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, who inherited a large amount of land in North Yorkshire. It was Charles who commissioned an important goblet from the Beilbys, painted with the family's coat of arms, which is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.⁴⁵

CONCLUSIONS

From the evidence of those glasses described above, the Beilbys appear to have been highly active with their enameled glass production between 1767 and 1769. There are, however, clear indications that by 1769 both William and Thomas were seeking new opportunities and had physically moved in different directions. In 1767, William had opened a drawing school in The Close in Newcastle upon Tyne in what appears to have become his primary motivation. Here he taught young ladies and gentlemen "in the several branches of the art of drawing."⁴⁶ As previously mentioned, Thomas left Newcastle

⁴⁵ Fitzwilliam Museum 1978, 97, fig. 238 (C.510.1961), painted in colors with the arms of Watson, Marquis of Rockingham, and the crest of Bright.

⁴⁶ *Newcastle Journal*, February 14, 1767, carried the advertisement: "DRAWING. William Beilby proposes teaching young ladies and gentlemen in the several branches of the art of drawing, at his house in the Close, Newcastle upon Tyne." It has been generally assumed that the school carried on until 1778, in which year the *Newcastle Journal* (October 3) carried the advertisement: "Drawing Academy. Mr Beilby returns thanks for favours received from his patrons during the continuance of his drawing school, and desires to inform them that he proposes an exhibition of the drawings and paintings of his pupils at his house in Northumberland Street,

for Leeds in 1769 to pursue a similar course as a drawing master. Both brothers traveled together on sketching tours in the north of England in the late 1760s and 1770s, visiting the estates of the aristocracy and landed gentry in Northumberland and Yorkshire especially. Indeed, several of their signed and dated watercolor drawings depict the same location and view. Other skillfully produced pen and ink drawings of a more Italianate and Classical nature survive in museum collections.⁴⁷ Following the death of their mother in 1778, William moved to Battersea in London, where he established the Battersea Academy, taking with him his younger sister, Mary, who had been an invalid since 1774.⁴⁸

In conclusion, therefore, the year 1768 is a pivotal moment in the history of Beilby enamel glass. The Success to R. Brown tumbler has drawn together a combination of their decorative styles, seemingly replacing their earlier, far more sophisticated heraldic work and calligraphy in polychrome and white enamels. It is interesting to speculate, therefore, that the Success to R. Brown tumbler of 1768, the Thomas Brown Flask of 1769, and the group of wineglasses with shooting scenes may have been painted by Thomas Beilby just prior to his decision to depart for Yorkshire. This was shortly before what might appear to be the dissolution of William and Thomas's joint glass-decorating business and ten years before William's move to London. In those intervening years, between 1769 and 1779, it is likely that William devoted much of his time in Newcastle upon Tyne to the teaching of watercolor drawing. This may be indicated by the very few glasses bearing dates after 1770 and the lack of individual personalized items produced to commission. From this we must conclude that there is little evidence to offer beyond what was previously believed of William Beilby's continuance as a highly productive enameler of glass after 1770. If after Thomas Beilby's departure Mary continued this production on her own, Thomas Bewick as her then close friend and admirer does not provide this recollection in his memoir. Thus, the period 1761 to 1769 may be seen as the highpoint of the enameling technique in England in the eighteenth century, and especially in Newcastle upon Tyne, when William Beilby was the earliest decorator in the family's workshop, later assisted by his brother Thomas and their sister Mary.

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⁴⁷ Charlestone 1989; in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Paul Mellon Foundation, Washington, DC.

⁴⁸ William Beilby had arrived in London by March 4, 1779, when his name is listed in the Battersea vestry minutes of that month.

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